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History**

**Annales
d'histoire de l'art
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Thoughts of Peace and Joy: A Study of the Iconography of the Croscup Room

This article deals with the sources for the iconography of a room painted sometime in the eighteen-forties, with a series of extraordinary scenes.¹ It is known as the *Croscup Room* after the family (figs. 1, 2) in whose house the room was originally located. First discovered by Cora Greenaway in 1963, the room was acquired in 1976 by the National Gallery of Canada and permanently installed there in 1981.² The *Croscup Room* can be classified as folk art, if one accepts the definition drawn up by Jean Lipman and Alice Winchester:

In simplest terms, American folk art consists of paintings, sculpture and decorations of various kinds, characterized by an artistic innocence that distinguishes them from so called fine art or the formal decorative arts. This is hardly a definition: it is necessarily an impression, even a subjective designation.³

One of the most striking features of the Croscup murals is their light-hearted innocence. All of the panels are composites of different scenes, the components of which we have largely been able to identify as wood-engravings from the *Illustrated London News*⁴, the first illustrated newspaper of the nineteenth century.

We commence our investigation of the iconography of the room by a discussion of its original function. The Croscup house is a simple Cape Cod cottage located in Granville Ferry near Annapolis Royal on Nova Scotia's north shore (fig. 3). The room (used to store grain at the time of its discovery in 1963) was originally a parlour.⁵ In the standard Victorian house the parlour was an oasis carefully preserved amidst the hurly-burly of normal domestic life; it was recognized as the leading feminine room of the house, ruling, alongside the masculine dining room, over the lesser chambers of the house.⁶ Although the



(1) Anonymous, **Portrait of William Croscup**, solar print with charcoal. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

Croscup family was a relatively humble one, its owners followed enough of the rituals of Victorian society to devote different rooms within the house to different functions. The parlour was devoted to polite amusements and was probably furnished with small tables, chairs and sofas where the occupants and their guests could engage in conversations, reading aloud, needlework, the inspection of albums of sketches, prints and photographs, musical performances and games of cards. The furniture in the *Croscup Room* undoubtedly obscured some of the murals while the room was in use.



(2) Anonymous, *Portrait of Hannah Amelia Croscup*, solar print with charcoal. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).



(3) **Croscup House**, Granville Ferry, N.S. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

Painted rooms are not uncommon in Nova Scotia in this period⁷, and many examples have been preserved in other parts of Eastern North America.⁸ As the patterned wall paper which became popular in the United States after the American Revolution was too expensive for most rural Americans, itinerant painters developed the art of stencilling and painting freehand on walls. Many portraits and scenes of domestic life dating from the late eighteenth-and early nineteenth-centuries show interiors with painted patterns on the walls, and often on the baseboards and floors as well. Houses decorated in this way have been found in Québec and Ontario, as well as in Nova Scotia, New England and New York State. Usually the room chosen to be stencilled or painted was the parlour, but bedrooms and public meeting-rooms in inns were often decorated as well.

In the period 1800 to 1850 several manuals were published for lay people, teaching them how to paint their own rooms. Several of these were the work of Rufus Porter, one of the itinerants who produced a large body of authenticated work.⁹ Porter took up mural painting in 1825 and in the year that followed he published his first volume on do-it-yourself decoration, entitled *A Select Collection of Valuable and Curious Arts, and Interesting Experiments* (Concord: 1826). Subsequently, he rewrote and revised his instructions for two journals he founded and edited: *The New York Mechanic* and *Scientific American*. In the first volume of the latter, published in 1846, he gave a thorough description of his techniques for mural painting, claiming that the four walls of a parlour could be completely painted in watercolours in less than five hours, at a total cost of ten dollars. This rapid technique was made possible by reducing the subject matter to the simplest possible. Architectural features were rendered by stencils, while complicated figures or objects like steamboats were done by transfer. Foliage could be rapidly stamped on with a cork bottle stopper or stippled with a brush. Porter most often used every colour in his murals but only examples in monochrome grey, plum and grey-green are extant. The landscapes Porter and his followers produced are often based upon the familiar New England countryside, although he rarely attempted to reproduce an actual view, but made composite scenes, using elements drawn from observation of his surroundings. Other rooms are decorated with exotic tropical views, or with a mixture of the familiar and the fanciful. The *Croscup Room* is an example of the latter, combining, as it does, a picture of Signal Hill, Halifax, deciduous and coniferous trees found in the local forests and roads coloured the exact red of the earth of the Annapolis Valley, with views of London and St. Petersburg.

At this point we must spend a little time examining the significance and influence of the *Illustrated London News*. This pioneer illustrated newspaper was first published on Saturday, May 14th,

1842. As Arthur Bryant states in the introduction to Leonard de Vries' study of the *ILN*:

Viewed in their entirety the volumes of the *Illustrated London News* constitute what is probably the most important single pictorial source for the social history of any age or country... Here is a living contemporary picture, drawn from week to week, of the life of Britain and the British people and of every country with which they were associated in that span of time.¹⁰

The *ILN* was started by Herbert Ingram, a printer from Boston in partnership with his brother-in-law Nathaniel Cooke and Henry Vizetelly who had an engraving and publishing business. The *Illustrated London News* was born March 1842, when a million copies of a prospectus were printed and distributed to the public. The prospectus described a new illustrated paper which would contain thirty engravings of the most interesting events of the day plus forty-eight columns of news. "Engagements have been made," the prospectus continued, "with artists of ability in every important town in England and Paris and otherplaces on the Continent."¹¹ This was not strictly true, for the illustrators did not usually draw directly from nature. John Gilbert, for example, one of the *ILN*'s artists, read the news cuttings about an event, like a fancy dress ball at Buckingham Palace (May 14th, 1842), and using his imagination to draw the figures, completed a picture. Illustrations were also copied from paintings. The christening of Prince Albert in the January 1843 issue was copied from a painting by Hayter.¹² Another method used by the artists was to read the news item about a foreign city, copy the background from a print and draw in the figures illustrating the news item in the foreground. Artists working for the *ILN* included Henry Anelay, Alfred Crowquill, Myles Birket Foster, H.G. Hine and Kenny Meadows. Wood engravers included Ebenezer Landells and Stephen Sly. Both the latter ran large workshops and employed many assistants and pupils; the signatures "Landells" and "S. Sly" appear below many of the engravings.

The *ILN* was a great success from its inception. The sale of the first issue exceeded 26,000 copies, and the average for subsequent issues was 24,000 weekly. The paper was also sold in bound volumes from the beginning of the second year:

Conceived in a liberal spirit of enterprise — conducted with a view to the promotion of National Intelligence, and the more ennobling principles of moral philosophy — presenting a new, beautiful and hitherto un-filled field to the Novelist and Historian — dedicated to Justice and the good of Society, and above all, clasping Literature and Art together in the firm embrace of Mind: — it appeared in a new and comely aspect — commanded admiration almost

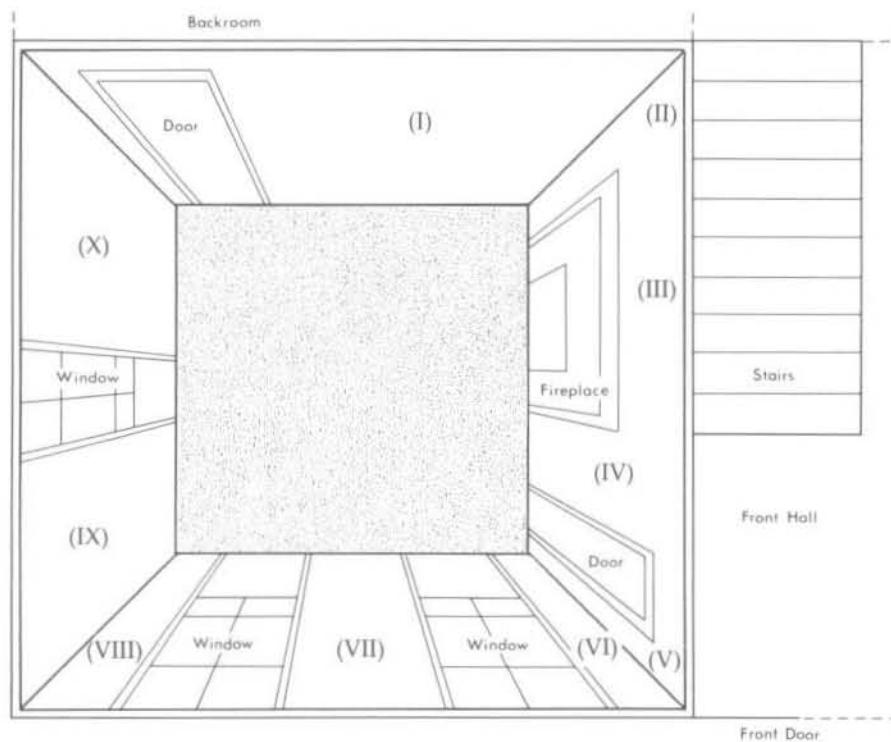
as fast as notice, and won its way into the popular heart with a rapidity and success commensurate with the far spread and kind enthusiasm which it had so suddenly called up.¹³

As the writer remarked, this volume would be an unequalled source for the history of the nineteenth century; if only there had been such a publication to record the Elizabethan age! The Preface concludes with a Dedicatory Sonnet:

To the great public — that gigantic soul
Which lends the Nation's body life and light,
And makes the blood within its veins grow bright
With gushing glory — we this muster roll
Of all the deeds that pass neath its controul
Do dedicate — the page of simple news
Is here adorned and filled with picture life,
Coloured with thousand tints — the rainbow strife
Of all the world's emotions — all the hues
Of war — peace — commerce; — agriculture rife
With budding plenty that doth life infuse
And fair domestic joy — all — all are here
To gild the new, and from the bygone year
Present a gift to take — to cherish and use.

The *Croscup Room* bears witness to the excellent use one artist made of the newspaper. A visitor to the *Croscup Room* quickly becomes aware that the paintings have not been executed at random; they are the result of a very carefully thought out programme (fig. 4). Upon entering the parlour from the front hall, one faces two large murals separated by a window. The mural on the left shows a view of London (fig. 8), while that on the right depicts St. Petersburg (fig. 10). The whole is a *coup d'oeil* of astonishing effect. To gain the full original effect, one must imagine oneself back in time in the little village of Granville Ferry in 1846, walking into this small room and being faced with two seven foot high murals showing in deep perspective the massive civic and religious architecture of two capital cities of Europe. The impression then would have been absolutely overwhelming.

Since the door to the parlour opens on the inside to the right, it is only when one is completely inside that one can see any other mural. The second glance would fall directly upon the vast ship launching scene (fig. 5). If the door next to it were open, a third of that mural would be hidden also; it is only fully revealed when the door is closed. As one progresses to the centre of the room, one is confronted by the panel over the fireplace of Victoria ensconced in her parlour, flanked by two side panels with their large figures (fig. 6). One more turn and one faces the three slim panels between the windows (fig. 7).

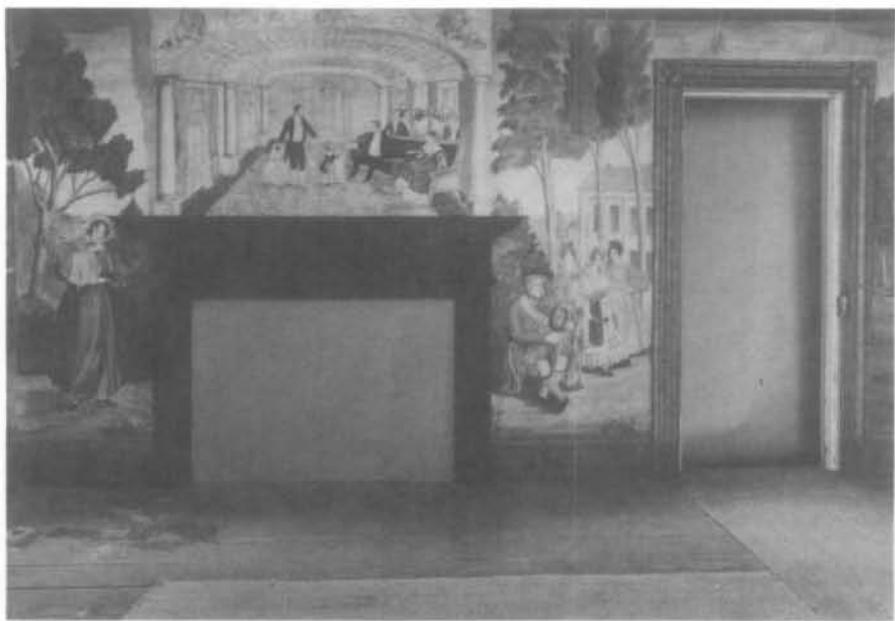


(4) Croscup Room, top view as it appeared in the house in Granville Ferry:

(I) Ship-Launching (II) Mother and Child (III) Victoria and Albert (IV) Piper and Three Elegant Ladies (V)&(VI) Micmac Indian Family (VII) Hunter and His Dog (VIII) Landscape with Waterfall (IX) Trafalgar Square (X) St. Isaac's Cathedral



(5) Anonymous, **Ship-Launching**, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).



(6) Anonymous, **Mother and Child** (left), **Victoria and Albert** (overmantel), **Piper and Three Elegant Ladies** (right), oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).



(7) Anonymous, **Micmac Indian Family** (left), **Hunter and His Dog** (centre), **Landscape with Waterfall** (right), oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

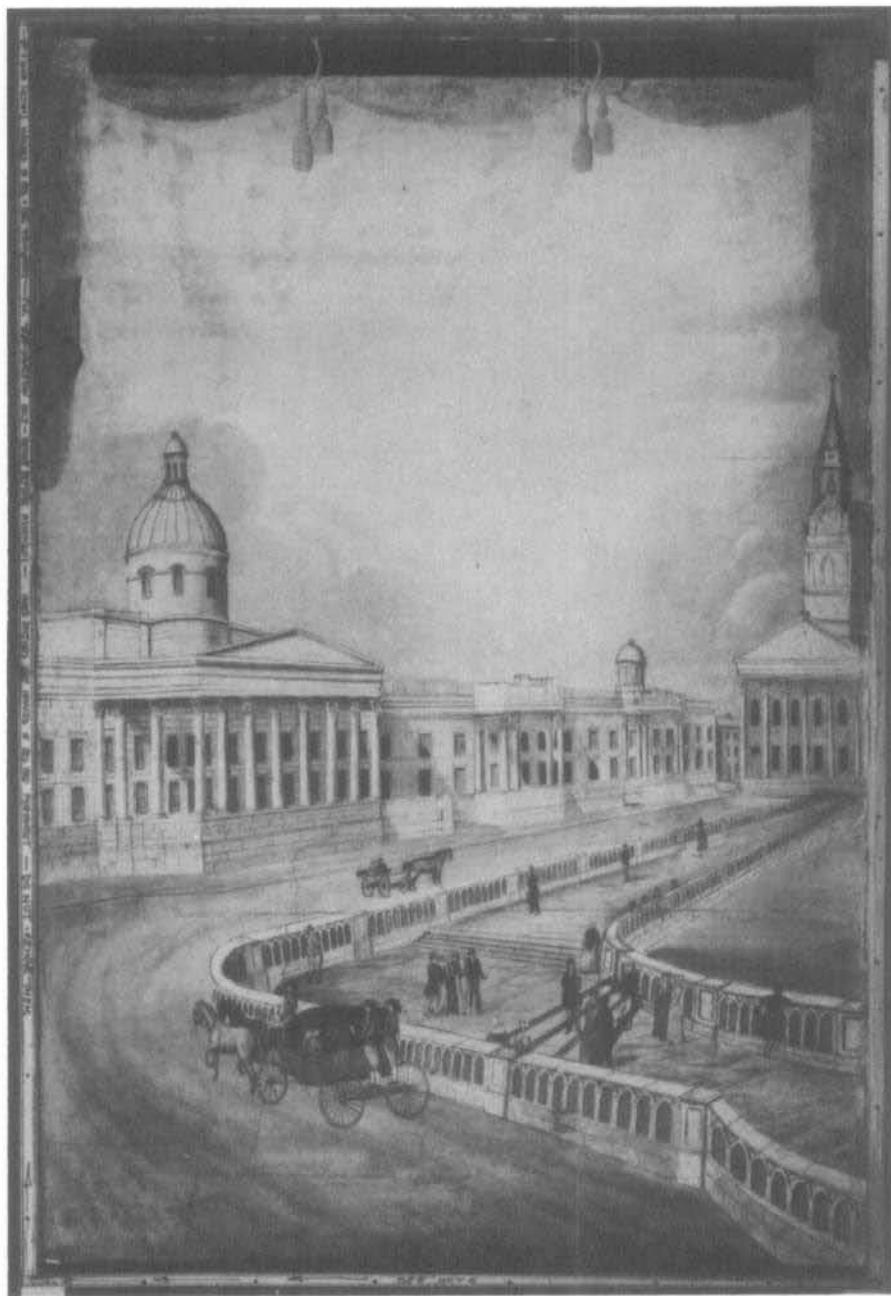
If one enters the parlour through the other door (fig. 4), that is, from the interior of the house, one perceives the room quite differently. One's gaze falls first upon those three tall murals between the windows. Instead of being drawn into a luminous distance, one is confronted by a very shallow space where everything one is meant to look at is right up front. The Micmac Indian family, the hunter and his dog and the tree framing the river and its waterfall are all scenes of local life, comforting and warm in their familiarity. To enter the room fully is to have one's eyes irresistably drawn again to Queen Victoria.

One must always bear in mind that the room was furnished and that parts of each mural must have been obscured by pieces of furniture and that the windows would have been decorously curtained, the floors painted or stencilled, perhaps covered by a rug. The tone of the room *in situ* would be taken from natural light from the windows in daytime and from the soft gentle flame of an oil lamp, candles and firelight at night.

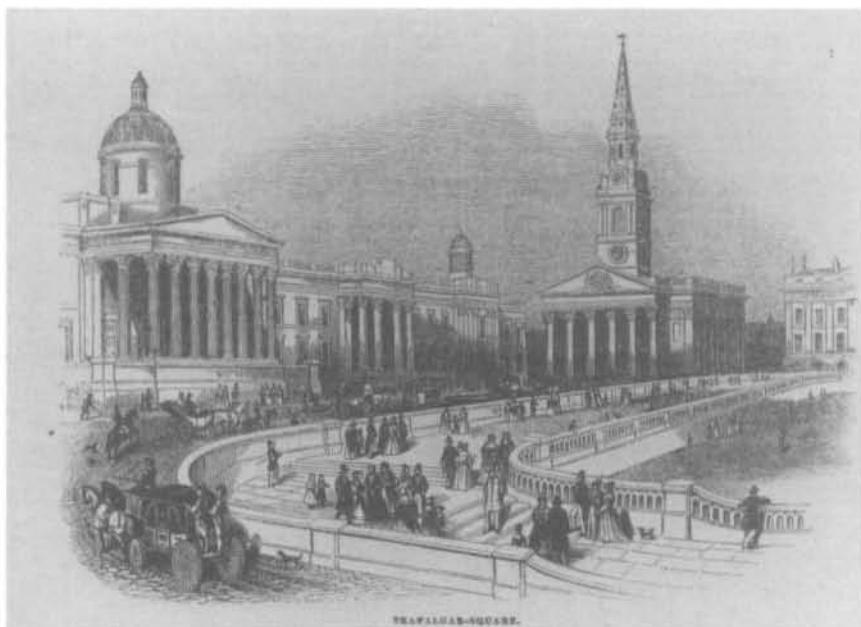
The view of London (fig. 8) showing the National Gallery with the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and the public walk around Trafalgar Square is taken from the Fine Arts section on page 284 of the September 10th, 1842 edition of the *ILN* (fig. 9). The view is quite faithfully copied and painted almost in grisaille with the exception of the pale blue sky and the small dots of colour in the figures and carriage. The scene is very pale, chalky and quite silvery. Great attention has been paid to the way light falls on the building, the shadows being carefully observed and painted. The ethereal quality of the scene seems somehow out of keeping with the richness and earthiness of all the other murals in the room; offering, however, a refreshing contrast. Although the artist may not be familiar with the actual sites, he is informed enough to know that buildings in London remained grey, whereas the architecture in St. Petersburg is brightly coloured, even to this day.

The artist was not interested in keeping the scene as bustling in the painting as it is in the wood engraving. Compared to St. Petersburg, this cityscape is almost barren of figures. All the figures are quite clumsily copied, many are left out, and none added. The stairs and the colonnade at the entrance of the National Gallery, designed by William Wilkins in 1834, are certainly not understood by the copyist and the vagueness of the detail in the wood engraving is freely translated in the painting by the addition of a precise row of windows, leaving no room for the door. The same approach applies to St. Martin-in-the-Fields except that in this case, although arched windows and a door are precisely depicted, such obvious details as the Royal Arms in bas-relief in the pediment are omitted, as are the large circular windows at the base of the tower. To make the walk more interesting, the artist has incorporated the design of the arched balustrade of the interior wall into the exterior one. The people

walking about inside the square in the print have been removed in the painting and the whole square has been filled with water. This rather extravagant gesture of turning Trafalgar Square into a large pool is understood only when one relates it to the view of St.



(8) Anonymous, *View of Trafalgar Square*, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).



(9) View of Trafalgar Square, wood engraving, ILN. (Coll. & Photo: The Metropolitan Toronto Library).

Petersburg and the body of water depicted there. This imaginary body of water in London is a link to the other mural, as is the line of the horizon that sits approximately at the same height in both views. With the deep perspective line of the composition going uninterrupted from bottom left to centre right in the painting and with the huge billowy sky occupying half the picture space, a truly noble impression of grandeur is achieved. It remains obvious that both cityscapes, although remaining quite distinct, separated by a window, are to be seen as forming one unit.

It is interesting to note also that although the artist selected this grand view of London in which the National Gallery figures so prominently, the text accompanying the illustration on page 284 of the *ILN* extols the noble beauty of the square and the buildings around it, "with the exception of the tasteless and ill-devised National Gallery." Our artist seems to have disagreed somewhat or simply ignored the remark, as the composition suited the purpose of his decorative scheme. A far grander view of London was offered weekly as part of the logo to the *ILN* (fig. 12). Rather than having the actual newspaper before him, perhaps the artist was working from a scrapbook of a selection of wood engravings cut out of the *ILN*, leaving the text behind.

The view of St. Petersburg (fig. 10) shows the Isaac bridge spanning the River Neva and leading onto the grand square with St. Isaac's Cathedral at the far end. On the right appears the Senate



(10) Anonymous, **St. Isaac's Cathedral, St. Petersburg, Russia**, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

building. This panel is copied from the front page of the August 27th, 1842 edition of the *ILN* (figs. 11, 12). The wood engraving shows the bridge and the square, containing the famous statue of Peter the Great, crammed with soldiers and onlookers during a military review which was held to celebrate the meeting of the Emperor of Russia with the King of Prussia. From the accompanying text, one learns that this meeting was kept secret, and the writer unabashedly congratulates himself on having gotten this scoop and a "vivid interpretation" of the military review for us. It was customary for the artists employed by the *ILN* to copy the background of their pictures from secondary sources. This view was probably based upon an illustration very similar to that found in Malte-Brun's *Géographie Universelle*, Vol. III (fig. 13). This exact print in this fifth edition, dated 1847, is obviously much too late to have been the very model for the 1842 issue of the *ILN*. But the close congruence between these two images leads us to suspect that a copy of this print was found in another as yet undetected published source and used by the *ILN* artist.



(11) St. Isaac's Cathedral, St. Petersburg, Russia, wood engraving, ILN, (Coll. & Photo: The Metropolitan Toronto Library).

Fascinating as such speculation undoubtedly is, it can have little relevance, however, to the reason why the Croscup artist selected this particular view. Apart from the aesthetic consideration that the perspective of the St. Petersburg engraving exactly balances and completes that of the London view, the family involvement in the lumber trade was perhaps a significant factor in determining the choice of a view of St. Petersburg and particularly as the Quai Anglais, the Russian centre of the lumber trade with England, was not far down stream.

Just as the quiet, cold, winter scene depicted in Malte-Brun was transformed into a military extravaganza by the *ILN*, our artist transformed the noisy parade into a warm, leisurely summer's day. This composition with its deep perspective line going uninterruptedly from bottom right to centre left of the painting is a perfect counter-balance for the view of London. Together they create an unusually bold recessional effect. Yet although the general composition was respected, the artist also saw fit to eliminate the colossal statue of Peter the Great, perhaps because it prevented the eye from being drawn into the picture space unimpeded as in the London view, or simply because the print did not convey enough detail for the sculpture to be sufficiently understood. The piers of the bridge were also left out, the water level raised and the lamps removed. The crosses on



(13) MALTE-BRUN, *View of St. Petersbourg*, *Géographie Universelle*, Vol. III, Paris 1847-1850, steel engraving. (Photo: Public Archives Canada/ Archives publiques Canada).

going round a corner as a *U* curved structure in the print. Details of St. Isaac's Cathedral are omitted, but the general sense of the monumental is not lost.

The whole cityscape is re-populated with active figures, conveyed in colours that are warm and earthy: light browns, salmon pinks, yellows and bright greens, all beneath a big blue sky. One should remember at this point that our artist is probably copying a black and white print.¹⁴ But, much of the stuccoed architecture of Eastern Europe and Russia is still painted in bright or soft pastel colours. For example, the Winter Palace was originally a bright red and today it wears a soft pale green.

Other interesting details to note in this composition are, first, that the harnessing of the horse is typically Canadian and not Russian.¹⁵ Secondly, the identity of the curious group of people at bottom right remains a mystery. The lady in the dark green coat with bonnet and pale blue scarf is, except for the colouring, wearing exactly the same dress and hat and is holding her scarf in the same manner as one of the ladies in the panel on the opposite wall. She also has the distinction of being the only figure that looks directly at you. Could this be a

portrait? The substitution of the figures for the soldiers in the *ILN* seems to suggest a personal message from the painter. Perhaps they are friends or acquaintances of the Croscup family? Whatever their identity, this view remains certainly an astounding one to find in a home in a small Nova Scotia village.

Opposite these two cityscapes is the hearth, whose overmantel depicts an enclosed room with figures (fig. 14). One of the main problems confronting an artist wanting to paint a definite scheme in a room is how to integrate the architectural features, here the fireplace and its mantelpiece, into that scheme. Our artist chose to isolate the wall space above the mantel from the main theme, which is one of the human figure in open, natural or man-made exterior space to the exact opposite: man in a totally enclosed interior. The artist created the transition by copying the basic structure of the mantelpiece, two columns and an entablature, beneath which he set his imaginary domestic scene. There is a strong suggestion of a proscenium arch and stage set in the overmantel picture, which is definitely not found in the *ILN* source for this image. The illusion is extended further by repeating the oval arch and columns into the receding perspective of the room and by painting the baseboard around the illusory room and the door and wall at the far end exactly the same colours as that in the actual room, also by the use of "marbleizing" on both the surface of the dark actual mantelpiece and the light illusory arches above. He then proceeded to draw the domestic scene.

In October of 1844, Louis-Philippe, accompanied by his son the Duc de Montpensier, returned the visit of Queen Victoria to France in the previous year. Both monarchs treated the visits purely as one of a private nature, and a quiet and intimate manner of entertaining her guests was adopted by Victoria. One of the illustrations reflecting this homey and familial touch is a view of the Crimson Drawing Room at Windsor Castle showing Victoria seated with Louis-Philippe on a sofa, while Prince Albert stands before him with his three children, Victoria, Albert, and Alice, who are being presented. This illustration is taken from page 233 of the October 12th, 1844 edition of the *ILN* (fig. 15). It was selected by the artist of the Croscup room to figure prominently over the mantelpiece (fig. 14), and how appropriate it is that a Loyalist family in Nova Scotia should select a picture of the Royal Family, the epitome of domestic bliss, as the principal image in their parlour. Enshrined above the mantelpiece, the scene becomes an icon of the joys of family life under the British Crown, a theme repeated in the mother and child and the Micmac family elsewhere in the room. The *ILN* regularly published articles and illustrations of the Queen's drawing rooms from the different royal residences. For example, page 5 of the July 5th, 1844 edition has an article with a splendid half page illustration of the Queen's "Yellow Drawing Room" at Buckingham Palace, and page 268 of the April 27th, 1844

edition illustrates the “Tapestry Chamber” used to register guests on their way to the “Queen’s Birthday Drawing Room” at St. James’s Palace. The figures in the wood engraving selected for the overmantel are copied quite faithfully. But the wood engraving shows a



(14) Anonymous, **Victoria and Albert Presenting the Royal Children to Louis-Philippe of France**, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).



(15) Victoria and Albert Presenting the Royal Children to Louis-Philippe of France, wood engraving, ILN. Coll.: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada. (Photo: Public Archives Canada/Archives publiques Canada).

close-up of the domestic scene taking place in a very large room, while only suggesting others in attendance in the background amongst a few vaguely sketched-in architectural and decorative details. So, with the use of two other illustrations to the article on the visit, our artist invented a drawing room. The coffered ceiling, windows and draperies are inspired by the Grand Corridor at Windsor Castle, illustrated at the bottom of page 233 (figs. 16, 17). The carpet, back wall, pillars and oval arches are apparently an invention. The Royal insignia, the crown and lion, decorating the "proscenium" arch, were lifted from the decorative border around the print on page 232 (fig. 16), showing Queen Victoria inviting Louis-Philippe to mount the Grand Staircase at Windsor. The crown sits in the centre of the arch and a lion decorates each end; the one of the left being reversed to achieve a certain balance. Both rather benign beasts bear quasi-human features. Again, as in the other views, all the colour is fanciful since the prints being copied were probably the black and white of the original publication.

There are a few peculiar details about the painting that strike one as odd. The *ILN* clearly states that we are in the "Crimson Drawing Room" and one would assume that the colour red would dominate the wall coverings, draperies, upholstery, etc. The only crimson colour in the overmantel, however, is in the foot stools and the one arm rest, while the remainder of the sofa is curiously painted in a dull dark grey. The room is dominated by golden yellows, soft pinks, bright greens and pale blue. Again, is the artist consciously changing the colour of the room or is this a case of his copying the print not from the newspaper with the article before him, but from a scrapbook image without the verbal accompaniment?

Victoria's dress has been drastically altered. The bodice and neckline are changed, as are the sleeves and the fabric of her dress. In point of fact, the artist has changed the dress from a formal gown with an open, low neckline and bare arms to a day dress by adding under sleeves and raising the neckline. In the wood engraving (fig. 15) one feels that she is wearing a very pale coloured dress, a pale silk perhaps. The artist transformed this to a quite heavy and dark purple colour with a sheen to it, a dark satin with white eyelet trim and flounces (fig. 14). This combination of colours and textures with light and dark tones is incongruous with the tastes of the time for one normally would see a heavier dark trim on such a dark, rich fabric. In the print the sleeves are gathered well above the elbow and she wears a bracelet on each wrist; Victoria is often portrayed wearing pearl bracelets with attached miniature portraits of Albert and her children. In the painting the artist has eliminated the bracelets and has extended the sleeves to the wrists with trimmed cuffs. It is interesting to note that Albert, whose waistcoat is given a pale grey floral pattern in the painting, is wearing ceremonial dress with hose, while Louis-

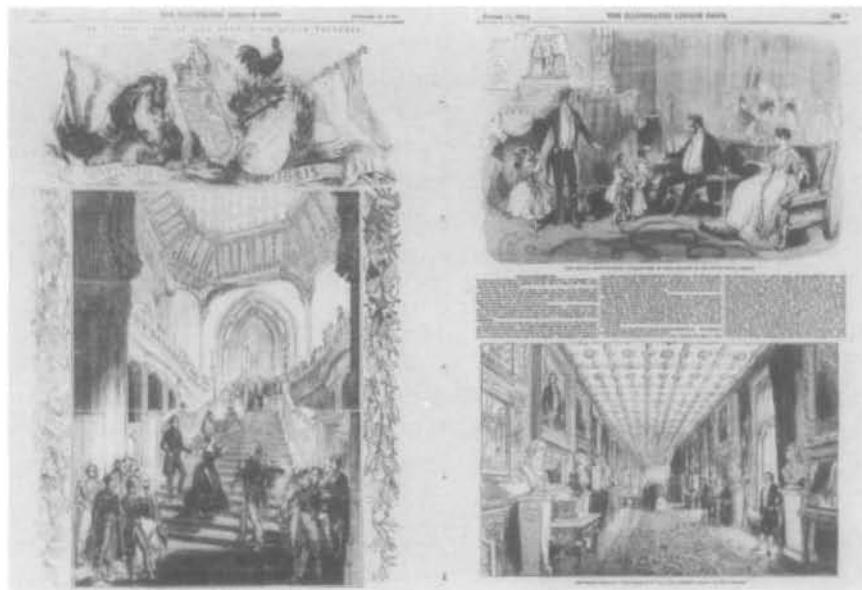
Philippe wears dark trousers. The court in attendance are only vaguely sketched in the background of the print and in the painting they are placed in the impossibly confined space between the sofa and the windows. In the painting the ladies have been given identical formal necklines, the gentlemen blue coats with white facing and gold lace. The figure on the far right in the print and the mural has a more elaborate and ornate gold braiding on his coat and also wears a distinguishing pink sash across his chest. Is he meant to portray the young prince, the Duc de Montpensier, who accompanied his father on this journey to England? The nosegay on the table before Victoria in the wood engraving is notably omitted in the painting.

This recreated drawing room, when compared to the prints, certainly does not give one a sense of the grandeur of a royal residence. Quite the contrary, it is as though the scene was taking place in the confines of a ship or on a stage. The figures are not in proportion to the space the artist conceived for them. But nevertheless it certainly must have been suitably more grand than any of the architecture in the neighbourhood at the time.

A small plate of Staffordshire bone china of 1842 was recently found in Nova Scotia and generously given by the Nova Scotia Museum to the National Gallery of Canada. The centre of that plate shows a quite similar view to the overmantle (fig. 18). The image, a transfer print in purple on white, shows Victoria, crowned, feet propped up on a footstool, left hand holding a nosegay resting on a small table near her, seated with Albert and the royal children, Victoria and Albert standing before them. Above this central image, a vignette in the border of the plate shows little Prince Albert suitably attired, flying a kite, and in the distance the scalloped silhouette of Windsor Castle is visible. In the vignette below, a very young Princess Victoria pushes her toy horse on the patio at Windsor enclosed by a balustrade. The border of the plate is deep blue with hand painted decorations in red and gold. As easily transported to Nova Scotia as an issue of the *ILN*, the plate illustrates how similar images of Royal domestic felicity had entered the iconography of the decorative arts and had been diffused throughout the British Empire.

The three murals discussed so far describe different parts of the great world outside Nova Scotia; now we come to the remaining six murals which depict familiar scenes, most probably those of the Annapolis Valley. On the east wall (fig. 19) we see a vividly drawn ship-launching scene. This, the largest of all the panels has a luminous vitality and vibrates with a great release of energy. This painting is in direct contrast to the confined and constricted cityscapes and the interior view of Windsor Castle, although like the latter, it is an adaptation of three separate prints from the *ILN*. The horses racing along the shore are taken from a wood engraving on page 289 of the May 13th, 1844 edition (fig. 20). The ship being launched and the

steamer in the foreground are taken from page 232 of the April 13th, 1844 edition (fig. 21). The paddle-steamer towing out a full-rigged ship is taken from page 299 of the same issue (fig. 22).



(16) ILN, pp. 232, 233, October 12, 1844, wood engravings. Coll.: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada. (Photo: Public Archives Canada/Archives publiques Canada).



(17) **The Grand Corridor, Windsor Castle**, wood engraving, ILN. Coll.: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada. (Photo: Public Archives Canada/Archives publiques Canada).



(18) **Staffordshire Bone China-ware**, 1842, showing vignettes of the Royal Family.
(Coll. & Photo: National Gallery Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

The landscape in which all of these activities take place was possibly inspired by a view of Digby, Nova Scotia from *The Youth Instructor and Guardian*, published in London (fig. 23). This small pamphlet was filled with stories and poems for the instruction and moral education of the young and carried a print of a distant land in each issue. Recently a copy of a small steel engraving, etched in London and published by J. Mason for *The Youth Instructor and Guardian*, was acquired by the Picture Division of the P.A.C. We have not, as yet, been successful in locating the exact issue from which this print was pulled. This small etching was undoubtedly copied from the volume: *No. 1, Views of British-America drawn from nature and on stone by Mrs. Mary G. Hall of whom very little is known.*¹⁶

The wall on the left, separated from the launching scene by a doorway, shows part of a wooden house standing by a road leading off into the distant forest and mountains (fig. 5). The whole is framed by a tall tree in the foreground. These two views are linked only by

the small sky section above the doorway. This tall, thin panel seems to be a decorative filler, based on the principles outlined by Rufus Porter, rather than being taken from a specific print. It is, however, freely invented in keeping with the nature theme of the other murals.

The four separate prints are quite cleverly combined to create an effect of simultaneity. The cohesion of the whole is impressive. The primary idea of the mural is the ship-launching amidst the hustle and bustle of the harbour. A paddle-steamer called "Flirt" in the painting is just moving in, loaded with passengers who want a good view of the event. Other details which were taken from this same print include the row of tops of masts behind the buildings, the crib in front of the vessel being launched and the first boat sailing out to sea just beyond the towing scene. At first glance, it does seem odd to see the two jockeys, whips in hand, go racing along the shore. But such racing was quite common then and interestingly enough, page 234 of the June 29th, 1844 edition illustrates (fig. 24) and describes just such a race as this, called "shore-racing." There is in this composition a great sensitivity to the way light falls into the space and onto the surfaces of shapes. For example, note the large warehouse to the left and how very delicate indeed is the painted surface, the windows in partial shadow and the delicate touch in the green shutters and the open door, as well as the light and dark tones on the beams supporting the whole structure.

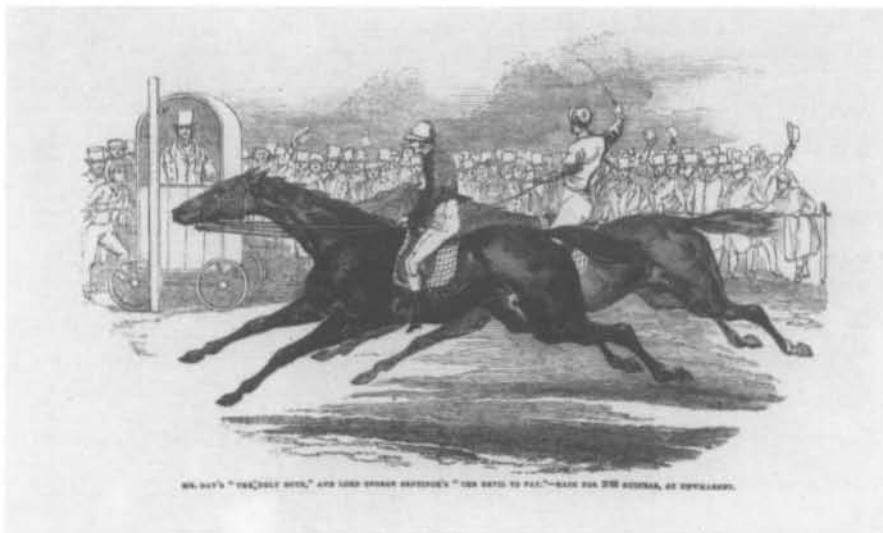
In the wood engraving the towing scene relates to a story about immigration to Sydney, Australia, and the article accompanying the print mentions Canada and the sadness of leaving home. The ship's name is not mentioned in the *ILN*, but the painter named her "Juno" in the mural which is followed by the name "London," indicating that she was built in Granville Ferry¹⁷ possibly for a "London" company. A small but telling detail to note when comparing the prints to the painting is the flags. The artist has observed that they fly in different directions in the separate prints, but once combined in one image they naturally should all unfurl and fly in the breeze in the same direction. The artist, however, forgot to align the flag atop Signal Hill.

The illusion of vast and deep space achieved through a strong use of diagonals throughout the composition is very convincing. The artist uses a fine gradation of hues and tones from the dark and substantial foreground to a hazy and luminous horizon dissolving in the distance. To command such space so proficiently is evidence enough to lead us to believe that the hand of a practised amateur or a professional artist was at work here. The inspiration for this panel may well have come from the shipbuilding interests of the Croscup family.

Although there is no attempt to link the composition of this wall with the adjacent mural of St. Petersburg, an effort has been made to

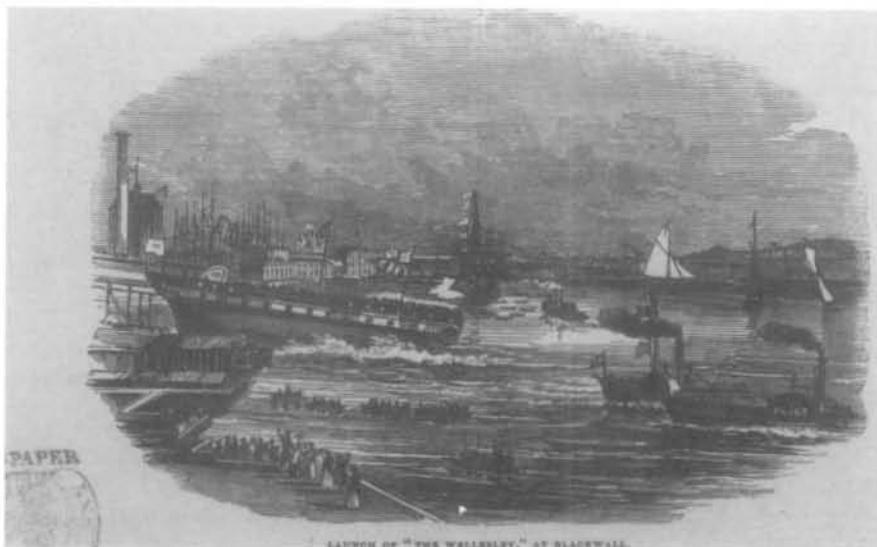


(19) Anonymous, **Ship-Lauching**, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

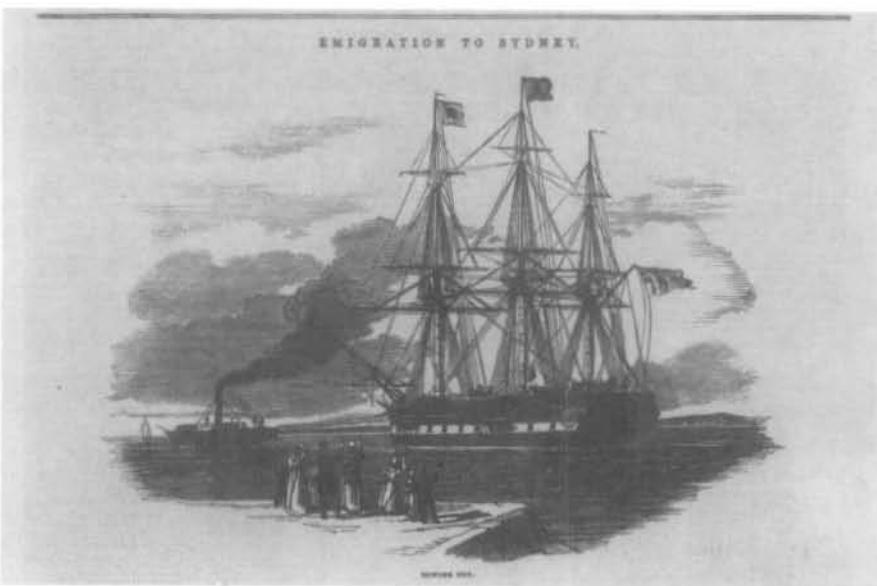


(20) **Shore-Racing**, wood engraving, ILN. Coll.: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada. (Photo: Public Archives Canada/Archives publiques Canada).

link this scene somewhat awkwardly to the adjacent mural depicting a woman holding a child in her arms (fig. 25). Unfortunately we have not been successful in finding a print from which the mother and child were taken. It is probable that one does not exist, the whole



(21) Launch of "The Wellesley" at Blackwall, wood engraving, ILN. Coll.: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada. (Photo: Public Archives Canada/Archives publiques Canada).



(22) Towing Out, wood engraving, ILN. Coll.: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada. (Photo: Public Archives Canada/Archives publiques Canada).



DIGBY, NOVA SCOTIA

Published by E. Mavor, 9 City Island & 61, Liverpool St., 1850.



(24) Freistone Shore-Racing, wood engraving, ILN. Coll.: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada. (Photo: Public Archives Canada/Archives publiques Canada).

being taken directly from nature or possibly copied from an oil portrait. Although the salmon-pink road of the ship launching scene ends abruptly at the corner of the room, the trees and bushes and sky do cross over and link up. So, if one stands facing this corner from the opposite end of the room, one would perceive the strong illusion that both these separate murals were executed on one flat plane. The panel sits to the left of the fireplace and of all the full standing figures painted in the room this one is the largest (fig. 25). It is difficult to see clearly from anywhere in the room except when one stands directly in line with it. At certain angles, the mantelpiece actually obscures the faces completely. No real individual characterization of the figures was even remotely attempted by the artist.

The mother is wearing a simple blue day dress, certainly not the stuff of fashion plates which tended to show the extremes in current fashion with highly elaborate trimmings. The dress has a full skirt, a simple bodice, a high neckline, a wide, white collar and full gigot sleeves. The woman's head is encircled by a halo of fine ruffles from a simple house cap whose ties fall loosely over the front of the shoulders. On her feet, the black shoes she wears seem more substantial than the typically emaciated, pinched slippers in a fashion plate. The child is dressed in exactly the same manner except that its dress is cream-coloured with a yellow waist band and front panel over the bodice. Given the structure of the dress, one can safely date it as being typically worn c. 1832. The stray ringlet slipping onto the mother's forehead gives this figure a more human quality, as opposed to the perfect line of hair on a poised mannequin in a fashion plate.

Both the theme of the family and that of the mother and child is echoed three times in the room. The mother and child we have just considered, whose father is perhaps meant to be represented by the hunter in the panel on the other wall, Victoria and Albert with the royal children in the overmantel and the Micmac Indian family by the shoreline. The room depicts approximately 150 human figures, ranging from a faintly sketched shadow vanishing in the distance of a cityscape to the elaborately described lady in white standing behind the piper. These facts make the room quite unique. Most of the decorative schemes used in rooms on the Eastern seaboard of America used highly stylized patterns and reduced natural scenes to this stylized mode. The *Croscup Room* certainly reflects a more ambitious scheme.

The mural to the right of the fireplace has proven to be the most mysterious of all (fig. 26). In the foreground, seated on a small wooden bench, sits a piper, dressed in the revived Highland dress of the early Victorian era. In the middle ground and in front of a large colonnaded house stand three fashionably dressed ladies. Beside them is a large rose bush. Far into the background, beyond a field,

one can see a house near a wood. The identity of the figures and the meaning of this panel are indecipherable.

Highland dress in its revived forms, with strong military influences, was avidly sought after as a result of Queen Victoria's visit to Scotland in September 1844. The *ILN* covered her journey with great enthusiasm and eventually announced that it would publish Part IV of the journal containing the whole of the Queen's visit to Scotland presented in a beautiful tartan wrapper. One can imagine the impact this would have in Nova Scotia. The figure of the Scotsman was taken from the upper right corner of page 265 of the September 3rd, 1842 edition of the *ILN* (fig. 27). Oddly enough, the painter sat the standing figure of the piper down upon a bench. Although the artist copied the costume in the engraving more or less faithfully, he still does not seem to clearly understand actual Highland dress. The sporran supposedly hanging at the front of the kilt has been strangely expanded to become what for all intents and purposes is a hair skirt! All the tartans are reduced to a general stripe pattern of no particular clan.¹⁸ The coat is red, the plaid (a long piece of cloth worn over the shoul-



(25) Croscup Room, Corner where the East Wall meets the South Wall, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

der) is green, the hose are bright yellow tied with bright red garters. The piper's blue Balmoral cap has a spray of black feathers in its diced band and he wears the standard buckled black shoe. A piper never sits to play his pipes and the bag should be carried right under the arm. The section of the bass drone that appears over his head in the print has been omitted in the painting. The more scraggly, square features of the head on the figure in the print have been transformed to those of a plump, round and rosy cheeked young man with long auburn sideburns. Who is he meant to represent? Why is he playing the pipes before these ladies? On the same page in the *ILN* (fig. 27), one should note the interesting scene depicted in the roundel, beside which the piper stands playing. It is somewhat similar in theme to the painted panel being discussed; certainly all the elements of the subject matter are present. Could it have possibly inspired the subject for this mural?

What seems more mysterious than anything else in this mural is the central focus of this composition, the lady elegantly and meticulously dressed in white standing before two equally fashionable lady companions. The possible source for these figures is *Townsend's Monthly Selection of Parisian Costume*, October 1833, No. 106, plates 521, 523 and 524, published at the Parisian Costume Office at No. 16, Great Windmill St., Haymarket, London.¹⁹ The beginning of the nineteenth century witnessed the explosion of the fashion plate industry onto the world stage. The 1820's in particular, were prolific years for the appearance of new fashion magazines.²⁰ Vyvyan Holland lists, for this decade alone, at least thirty different fashion magazines which contain only hand-coloured plates, however, there were many more with only black and white plates. The early issues of *Townsend's* were published in a small format, a page was the size of the hand, with one, at most two, figures per plate and the printmaking was very fine indeed. In the 1830's the format expanded to four times that size and the plates such as those which were copied by the Croscup artist face each other and when opened, create a long frieze of six, sometimes seven, elegant ladies standing across the bottom of the pages. In a note to advertisers, Mr. Townsend claims that monthly sales of his magazine exceeded 5000, with a circulation constantly growing. Hence, it is not at all improbable that this issue of *Townsend's* found its way to Granville Ferry probably via Saint John or Halifax.

One naturally assumes the centre figure dressed in white in the mural to be a blushing bride (fig. 26). In fact this figure is copied from the lower compartment of Plate 523 (fig. 28) and the accompanying description for this plate states: "Center-Figure.-Bridal dress of India Muslin. The Mantelet, veil, Volans and Chemisette of imitation Brussels lace." The top centre figure in the upper compartment of this same plate shows a back view of the bridal head dress. The mantle in

the print has a ruffle of lace all around as does the veil, with two tiers of the same lace on the sleeves and skirt. In the painting, the portion of mantle above the waist is totally separated from the two pendant ends below the waist. In the mural the ruffles of the upper part of the mantle seems to be part of the sleeve while the two separate pendants below the waist are joined to form a black apron and although this is what the painting is telling us, upon closer examination one can clearly see that the underdrawing in pencil faithfully copies the print.

In the print,²¹ which is a line and stipple etching, the dress is all in white while such details as her earrings, prayer book and fan are touched in golden yellow. The flowers in her head dress are pink, the leaves are green, her hair a light shade of brown. The cheeks and lips of her finely stippled face are accentuated with a blush of pink. She wears long white gloves, white shoes and the bow at her waist is snow white just as a bride would be expected to wear. In the painting, all is the same except that a section of the flounce at the bottom of the skirt, just above the dog's head, was omitted, as was part of the veil on the left, and the gloves. The shoes are turned to black, the bow to bright pink, the gold details on the book and fan are missing and the lower parts of the mantle were drastically changed to a black apron. The blush on the face was copied faithfully. And there she stands with a ravishing air of self-assurance.

Why was the wedding dress altered? Certainly one cannot entertain the idea that a bride would ever wear a black apron and a large pink bow at her wedding. However, aprons, particularly black ones, were worn as part of Summer morning dress in the fashions of 1832-34, as were small veils. Townsend states in the notes "Modes de Paris" in this same 1833 issue of his magazine that "Black is predominant for every description of Toilette this Winter." The pattern in the Brussels lace in the print is slightly altered from a light spray of leaves and tendrils with a flower to just a plain straight branch with leaves, in the painting, in a manner one usually identifies with eyelet work.

Her unknown companion to the right was copied from the figure on the right in the lower compartment of plate 523 (fig. 28). The accompanying description states: "Right-hand Figure.-A sewed Straw Hat. A silk Muslin Pelisse with the sleeves and front ornamented with ribbons." An original hand-coloured plate examined in New York shows the pelisse to be in a soft cream-yellow. The painter changed this to a deep golden tone, stripped the dress of all its bows but replaced those holding the gathered sleeves with large pink buttons. Both the sash at her waist and the long scarf have been simplified and coloured pink. The top cape is also edged in pink. She now wears a pale blue hat instead of the bright green in the print with the same spray of pink flowers and leaves and knots of pale blue ribbons adorning the crown and falling to the back. Her mauve gloves and handkerchief were also omitted in the painting.

Her equally unknown companion to the left is copied from the left-hand figure in the lower compartment of plate 524 (fig. 29) and the accompanying description states: "Left-hand figure.-A Cap formed of three rows of black blond with lappets. A silk Pelisse trimmed with black tulle and silk bows covered with black net." In the painting this figure is placed behind and to the left of the central figure so that the skirt of her dress and gigot sleeve of her left arm are completely hidden and only the upper part of the torso and the right arm remain visible while all traces of black vanish. Her black cap is removed and she looks out over the central figure's shoulder, wearing her hair in a classic example of a double looped Apollo knot which was *de rigueur* in the 1830's. The head dress in the painting was taken from the left figure in the lower compartment of plate 521 of the same issue (fig. 30). The flowers are removed and delicate strands of gold chain or beads are intertwined through the hair and across her forehead. The small gold earring was also borrowed from this figure. The green colour of the dress is completely changed to its complementary, a dusty-mauve, and the black trim is transformed to white. The brooch is left out.

A print worth noting because it became the subject matter for one of the earliest prints ever made in Canada is the fashion plate engraved by W. Hopwood showing "The Queen of the Belgians in her wedding dress" in the October 1832 edition of the *Court Magazine* published in London. The similarity in parts such as the head dress, the flounce, the ruffles, and general shape of the dress is quite striking. This print was copied and lithographed by Adolphus Bourne in Montréal for the January 1833 edition of the *Ladies Museum*.²² (fig. 31)

We know William Croscup acquired his land in 1845 with or without the house built on it. The room cannot have been painted prior to 1842, when the *ILN* was first issued, since we know the images derive from it. What, therefore, are these three figures dressed in the immediately identifiable height of fashion of the early 1830's doing in a room painted probably around 1846, perhaps as late as 1850? There is a discrepancy of almost fifteen years. By the mid 1840's, fashion had drastically changed. Fashion plates from the '30's are highly stylized without backgrounds. In the 1840's fashion plates sported a new look, as the figures were set in elaborate settings and backgrounds.²³ Our mural seems to present a strange concoction: the stylized figures of the early 1830's displaying their toilettes in an elaborate setting of the mid 1840's. Again, was the artist perhaps selecting his images from prints laid down in a scrapbook and was simply taken by the charm of particular plates pulled from magazines?

These three figures are the only known elements in the compositions in the room to have been copied from coloured models. All the

others come from black and white wood engravings. Yet the painter was not a slave to his model as the artist freely adapted figures and colours to suit a personal preference and taste. Did the artist wish to portray members of the family who occupied the house or was it all done on a whim? The rose bush is the only flower to be seen in the entire scheme of the room apart from the head dress of the ladies.



(26) Anonymous, *Piper and Three Elegant Ladies*, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

Again, in another corner of the *ILN*, is a column devoted to floriculture. A different flower is discussed every week. The same 1842 edition featured the rose on pages 292-93 and one line in particular is very appropriate. The writer says about the common wild rose:

Blooming in the sterile waste, this lonely flower is seen unfolding its fair leaves where there is no beauty to reflect its own and thus calling back the heart of the weary traveller to thoughts of peace and joy; reminding him that the wilderness of human life, though rugged and barren to the discontented beholder, has also its sweet flowers; not the less welcome for being unlooked for, nor the less lonely for being cherished by a hand unseen.



(27) **Piper and Vignette of Dalkeith**, wood engraving, ILN. Coll.: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada.(Photo: Public Archives Canada/Archives publiques Canada).

The grand house in the background seems freely invented and is perhaps modelled on Martock, a house near Windsor, Nova Scotia.²⁴ This remarkable house was the centre of great social activity at the time. It was built by John Butler and his son, Colonel Edward Butler, transformed the place into a palatial residence containing all the requisites for entertainment and grandeur that were fashionable at the time. This was when the house received its Ionic portico during the wave of Greek revivalism that swept the U.S. about 1830-40.

How cleverly all of the elements of this composition have been orchestrated to form a harmonious whole whose sources we have finally discovered but whose meaning still eludes us completely. It is interesting to think that perhaps there is a stratum of symbolism underlying the meaning of this enchanting mural.

The last wall to be examined has three individual murals separated by two windows (fig. 7). The panel on the left depicts a Micmac Indian family, the one in the centre a hunter and the mural on the right shows a landscape with a waterfall. Next to the mural of the piper and his three "Graces" is a door leading out into the front hall. Between the door and the corner of the room is a narrow panel approximately thirty-five centimetres wide. The image depicted in this mural is a landscape showing a thick wood near the shore, as seen from the water. The water, shoreline and forest flow past the corner onto the next wall depicting the Micmac family, linking both



(28) Fashion Plate No. 523 from **Townsend's**, steel engraving. (Coll. & Photo: Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).



(29) Fashion Plate No. 524 from **Townsend's**, steel engraving. (Coll. & Photo: Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).



(30) Fashion Plate No. 521 from **Townsend's**, steel engraving. (Coll. & Photo: Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).



(31) The Queen of the Belgians in her Wedding Dress, lithograph, **Ladies Museum** January 1833. (Coll. & Photo: The Metropolitan Toronto Library).

compositions, just as the artist painted the other corner where the ship-launching scene merges with the panel of the mother and child (fig. 7). A source has not been found for the Micmac family in the foreground (fig. 32).²⁵ The mother is sitting on a large rock; she wears leggings under a deep blue skirt/dress with surprisingly little decoration. Over her shoulders she has a decorated cream-coloured blanket tied at the front. On her head is the traditional peaked cap trimmed in red and she wears light coloured moccasins. Behind her, stands a small child holding a tiny splint basket or quill box in her right hand.



(32) Anonymous, **Micmac Indian Family**, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

To the right stands the tall figure of the father, arms folded. He is dressed in his traditional navy blue leggings and long coat, with red piping at the shoulders, tied around the waist with a pale coloured belt. A silver medal hangs around his neck and he sports a hat with his clay pipe tucked into the hatband. Near the shore in the water, sits a typical Micmac canoe, in fact, half a birch-bark canoe as it would be unacceptable to have painted the other half around the corner onto the merging wall. Behind are three wigwams, the flat, rather regular square pattern deriving from the pieces of birch-bark used to build them. No outer logs show and the doors are unrealistic; a child sits in the entrance of the first one.

In the case of the Micmac Indians the artist has broken with the stylizing approach to the faces of the other figures in the room; an attempt at realism has been made. The structure of the head has been carefully observed: slanted eyes, the broad and prominent cheekbones, the dark hair and skin tone, all attempt to portray a racial type, yet not a specific individual. The drawing of the woman is rather awkward; the disproportion of the hands, feet and head as they relate to the body is obvious. The man seems to have a gentle smile on his face. He stands squarely in an attitude and stance perfectly in keeping with Alicia Anne Jeffery's woodcut of a Micmac man, cut and printed around 1835-37. Could this be the source of the figure in the mural?

The central panel represents a young gentleman out hunting with his dog (fig. 33). The source of this image comes from page 296 of the September 3rd, 1842 edition of the *ILN* (fig. 34). This wood engraving is of none other than his Royal Highness Prince Albert gone "Buck shooting in the Highlands." He stands in the foreground transformed into a rather pale, moustacheless, rosy-cheeked, dreamy-eyed young man. He sports a blue cravat round a high collar of a white shirt, a pale green waistcoat and green tartan trousers. In the print, the trousers are strapped beneath his boots, while in the mural they sit above. His Glengarry cap in the print is transformed in the painting into a nondescript, featherless cap that sits jauntily over a head of long gently curling hair. He carries a powder horn slung over his shoulder and holds his remarkably attenuated rifle before him, butt end down. His left foot is lightly raised onto a mound.

The final panel is of a simple landscape (fig. 35). Such picturesque views appeared quite regularly in the *ILN*, often as a vignette for a column on fishing, such as the one on page 272 of the September 3rd, 1842 edition (fig. 36). In all three panels, although the compositions are basically the same, the trees dominate each with its own character. Another interesting detail is that for every deciduous tree in the foreground there sits behind it a quite distinguished conifer, in perfect balance throughout. The initial reaction to this scheme was that the painter was simply indulging his delight in pattern and

proportion, however, the actual landscape of the region displays a similar mix of trees.

The method used to create the murals consists of a simple coat of lime-plaster keyed onto the lath and well trowelled to a smooth



(33) Anonymous, **Hunter and His Dog**, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).



(34) Buck Shooting in the Highlands, wood engraving, ILN. Coll.: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada. (Photo: Public Archives Canada/Archives publiques Canada).

finish.²⁶ The plaster was found to be of poor quality, badly mixed, even containing large stones, twigs and other organic matter such as tufts of cowhair. Pieces of old wallpaper about five centimetres wide were then pasted along the cracks between the wall and door architraves. The plaster surface appears to have been primed. The design was drawn in graphite, then executed with reasonably good quality oil paint. The whole was varnished several times.

Throughout the room, the drawing and brushwork are consistently irregular and uneven. This is particularly noticeable in the figures of the two cityscapes. The whole seems to have been executed very quickly, the paint laid down quite simply, without hesitation and with only just enough care as to the application. All forms are reduced to their simplest structural features. No area seems particularly reworked or polished, yet some details have received a little more attention than others. Oddly enough, certain details (i.e., outlines of bricks, boards and shingles in the buildings) have been reinforced in graphite over the paint layer. All of this opens up the possibility that perhaps more than one hand was involved. The room, however, has such cohesion that it would seem plausible to conclude that one mind conceived and guided the work with possible assistance in the execution.

All the woodwork in the room is hand-painted in imitation of stained wood grain. The windows and lower panels, the doors and frames are painted to imitate a light blond wood, and the graining is done in a slightly darker tone. The baseboard is stained a darker



(36) Anonymous, **Salmon Fishing**, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

◀ (35) Anonymous, **Landscape with Waterfall**, oil on plaster. (Coll. & Photo: National Gallery of Canada/Galerie nationale du Canada).

brown with even deeper brown-red graining. The mantelpiece, in imitation of Egyptian marble, has a black ground and the clouding is formed with various lighter colours.

The whole painted scheme attempts to burst through the confining, solid walls of the room into the world outside. The two features that continually remind one of the illusion are the painted woodwork of the doors and windows and also the baseboard around the bottom of the room. Also at the top, the *trompe l'oeil* painting of the now faded swags of red curtain, with bows of gold cord and tassles tied to a black rod, decorated with small, almost invisible, gold flowers.

Speculation as to the identity of artist(s) is the only method one has for arriving at any conclusion in this enquiry, for no documentary evidence as to the identity of the artist(s) is extant. The oral tradition of the family describes the artist as a runaway sailor,²⁷ but almost all painted rooms where the creator is unknown are described as having been painted either by itinerant sailors, or by prisoners of the War of 1812 or by the local drunkard!²⁸ The authors suggest that it might in

fact have been a local inhabitant and possibly even a woman who painted the walls of the *Croscup Room*.

Recent research has uncovered many artistic activities engaged in by women without much art training in nineteenth-century North America.²⁹ These activities ranged from needlework pictures, quilts and other forms of home decoration, to drawing and water-colour paintings. These women had often received some education in art from ladies' academies or local art schools, but on the whole they worked outside the academic fine arts tradition, yet produced a formidable body of work, largely within the area of the decorative arts. Because their production did not attempt to transcend their domestic role but rather served to reinforce it, they were able to work undisturbed by many of the problems which plagued professional women artists in this period. One of the forms of activity engaged in by amateur women artists was the painting of floors and walls. Ruth Henshaw Bascombe, for example, recorded in her *Journal*, the stages she went through in painting her parlour floor to imitate a carpet.³⁰ Other women are on record as having painted rooms in their houses in early nineteenth-century New England.³¹ A woman who lived in the Croscup house may well have painted the room, given that art education was available to women of the class to which the Croscup family belonged in Nova Scotia at this time.³²

It is necessary at this point to recount a little of the history of the Croscup and Shaffner families.³³ William Croscup, who bought the lot on which the house still stands in 1845, came from a Loyalist family, who had settled in Granville Ferry in the early 1780's. He was a farmer but was also involved in shipbuilding. William married Hannah Amelia Shaffner on August 15th, 1844, when she was 24 years old. The Shaffner (also spelt "Shafner") family had originally come from the Rhine Palatinate in 1751, as sponsored Protestant immigrants. The Croscup and Shaffner families were already interrelated by many marriage and business alliances before the union of William and Hannah Amelia in 1844.

There are other stylistic reasons for believing that the room could have been painted by a member of the Croscup family. The fact that the room was obviously completed within a short period of time, however, is a cogent argument for the theory that it was painted by an itinerant who never returned to polish his work. The theory that we consider most plausible at present is that a family member aided this person in painting the room, as this explains the marked discrepancies in style and skill which we have discovered between the different murals.

The final argument for the production of the Croscup mural by a family member is the discovery in 1980 of another painted room in a house belonging to the same family. The farmhouse originally built by John Shaffner, a relation to Hannah Amelia, now belonging to Mr.

and Mrs. George Parker, has a room painted by a hand much less skilled than the Croscup artist, yet also based upon engravings in the 1842 and 1844 volumes of the *ILN*. Another wall painting came to light, literally, as this article was being written, in yet another house belonging to the Croscup/Shaffner family in Bear River. Only a small section in an alcove of a room was uncovered to reveal a landscape with a road leading up to a mansion surrounded by large trees, and in the foreground a few animals lingering. This view was copied from a wood engraving entitled "Claremont," Queen Victoria's original country residence, on page 540 of the December 31, 1842 edition of the *ILN*. We are all anxious to see what other images lie beneath the wallpaper of the remaining untouched walls of the room in this house and many more houses in Nova Scotia.

Although we have not had the opportunity to examine any other painted rooms in person, we have looked at photographs of a large section of them, and we feel we can say that the iconographic content of the *Croscup Room* is unique. Other rooms were painted as a substitute for wallpaper and are purely decorative. The *Croscup Room* is a treasure house of iconographic significance. As to the Parker/Shaffner house in South Williamstown and the house in Bear River, we look forward to unravelling their mystery.

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Notes:

- 1 The authors wish to acknowledge their debt to Cora Greenaway, who first discovered the room in 1963, and to J. Russell Harper, who drew public attention to it in *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada* (Ottawa: 1973) Cat. No 113- p. 120.
We would also like to thank our colleagues James Burant, Françoise Bouvier, Theresa Rowat, Denys Séguin and Lucie Dorais for the information they have generously shared with us. We are grateful to Douglas Schoenherr, Lydia Foy, Theresa Rowat and J. Burant for reading and correcting the text. Their lucid suggestions were welcomed. For the expert advice on costume we are grateful to Pam Blackstock of Parcs Canada who visited the room with us many times and assisted with the costume descriptions, also to J. Beaudoin-Ross of the McCord Museum and M. Holford of the Royal Ontario Museum.
- 2 *Canadian Antiques and Art Review*, Feb. 1981, describes the discovery and installation of the room.
- 3 Jean LIPMAN and Alice WINCHESTER, *The Flowering of American Folk Art* (N.Y.: 1974), p. 9.
- 4 Hereafter referred to as the *ILN*.
- 5 Cora GREENAWAY, Unpublished manuscript, 1977, section on Croscup Family History, p. 12. This article is cited with the permission of the author and the National Gallery of Canada.
- 6 Mark GIROUARD, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (Princeton, N.J.: 1978), pp. 233-39.
- 7 Cora Greenaway is compiling a catalogue of these murals.
- 8 Mural painting of this kind is studied in the following volumes: Edward B. ALLEN, *Early American Wall Paintings, 1710-1850* (New Haven: 1926); Jean LIPMAN, *American Folk Decoration* (N.Y.: 1951), chapter 5.; LIPMAN and WINCHESTER, *op. cit.*; Nina Fletcher LITTLE, *American Decorative Wall Painting* (N.Y.: 1972); Robert L. MCGRATH, *Early Vermont Wall Paintings, 1790-1850* (Hanover, N.H.: 1972).
- 9 Porter's extraordinary career has been documented by Jean LIPMAN, *Rufus Porter: Yankee Pioneer* (N.Y.: 1968).
- 10 Leonard de VRIES, *Panorama 1842-1865: The World of the Early Victorians as seen through the Eyes of the Illustrated London News* (London: 1967).
- 11 *ibid.*
- 12 *Illustrated London News* Preface to the first bound volume, 1843, p. iii.
- 13 It is probably for this reason that so many copies have been preserved in North America.
- 14 It is possible the prints were hand coloured, but until the originals used by the artist are found we shall never know.
- 15 Mr. J. Gaspard from the Archives Library pointed out that Russian harnessing included the use of a "duga," a kind of prominent loop-shaped yoke placed over the back of the horse's neck. This is omitted in the painting.
- 16 Hall was an amateur who arrived in Canada from England in 1831 and by 1833 had several views of Niagara Falls and the Hudson River lithographed by Pendleton's in Boston. In 1834 she operated a Drawing Academy in Saint John, N.B.
- 17 Glen Wright of Federal Archives discovered in the Ships Register that a brigantine named *Juno* was built in 1839 in Granville Ferry probably by Croscup. It was registered at Saint John, N.B. and later transferred to Belfast.
- 18 *The Scottish Clans and their Tartans*, 37th edition (Edinburgh and London: 1954).
- 19 We are indebted to Madeleine Ginsburg, Assistant Keeper, Dept. of Textiles and Dress, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and author of *An Introduction to Fashion Illustration* (London: 1980) for discovering this possible source for this part of the mural for us in the fashion plate collections of the V&A.
Similar fashion plates depicting wedding and morning dress, also dated October 1833, and only slightly different from Townsend's plates, were subsequently discovered by Pam Blackstock in England.
- 20 Vyvyan HOLLAND, *Hand Coloured Fashion Plates, 1771-1899* (London: 1955), ch. 4.
- 21 Original plates in the 1833 issue were examined in the Thomas J. Watson Library at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- 22 Mary ALLODI, *Printmaking in Canada, The Earliest Views and Portraits* (Toronto: 1980), pp. 94-95.
- 23 HOLLAND, pp. 97-110.
- 24 Arthur W. WALLACE, *An Album of Drawings of Early Buildings in Nova Scotia* (Halifax: 1976), pl. 64.
- 25 Ruth Whitehead of the Nova Scotia Museum, whose advice about the Micmac Indian dress proved invaluable, strongly suggests that this panel might also be original, possibly executed from memory by the artist.
- 26 Ian HODKINSON, "Conservation and Transfer of an Early 19th Century Painted Room," paper given in May, 1979. Professor Hodkinson and the students from the Queen's University Conservation Programme were responsible for the removal, conservation and installation of the room for The National Gallery of Canada.
- 27 GREENAWAY, p. 2.
- 28 MCGRATH, p. 80; LIPMAN, *Rufus Porter*, p. 93.
- 29 C. DEWHURST, B. MACDONNELL and M. MACDONNELL, *Artists in Aprons: Folk Art by American Women* (N.Y.: 1979).

- 30 *ibid.*
- 31 LIPMAN, *American Folk Decoration*, p. 96
- 32 Jim BURANT, "The Development of the Visual Arts in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from 1815 to 1867 as an Expression of Cultural Awakening," M.A. Thesis, Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1979, gives an account of several art schools run by and for women in this period.
- 33 Material for this paragraph is drawn from Cora Greenaway's unpublished research.

Perception très personnelle de l'origine de l'iconographie des murales du salon Croscup

Entre 1844 et 1850, un salon d'une demeure respectable de la Nouvelle-Écosse a été peint du plancher au plafond par une série exceptionnelle de murales. Des vues de Londres et de Saint-Pétersbourg, d'Indiens Mic-Mac et de dames élégamment vêtues se mélangent avec des paysages fantaisistes, le tout surplombé d'un panneau représentant la reine Victoria et le prince Albert dans un petit salon du château de Windsor. Cette étonnante production est présentée occasionnellement au public à la Galerie nationale du Canada.

Les sources des représentations figurées ont d'abord éveillé notre intérêt pour ce salon. Nous avons appris avec bonheur que soixantequinze pour cent des images étaient copiées de *l'Illustrated London News*. Toutefois, ces renseignements nous ont révélé qu'il ne s'agissait pas simplement d'une copie, mais d'un soigneux agencement de divers éléments.

Une fois connue l'origine de cette iconographie, nous avons cherché à en savoir davantage sur cette forme de décoration d'intérieur au dix-neuvième siècle. C'est ainsi que nous avons appris qu'il y avait de nombreux salons peints de cette manière, durant cette période, en Nouvelle-Écosse et dans l'est des États-Unis et que des guides et directives étaient fort répandues sur cette discipline. Nos recherches nous révèlent qu'il est possible que le peintre du salon Croscup ait suivi les directives que le peintre itinérant Rufus Porter a exposé dans son ouvrage *The Scientific American*.

Par ailleurs, les descendants de la famille Croscup prétendent que le peintre du salon était un marin fugitif. Un examen attentif de l'iconographie et du style soulèvent d'autres possibilités: il aurait pu s'agir d'un peintre semi-professionnel itinérant, amateur ou professionnel dont la vision particulière s'est imposée. En conclusion, l'article traite de l'identité possible de l'artiste sans toutefois fournir aucune preuve documentaire.

L'article s'accompagne de trente illustrations en noir et blanc.

Gilbert L. Gignac
Jeanne L. L'Espérance

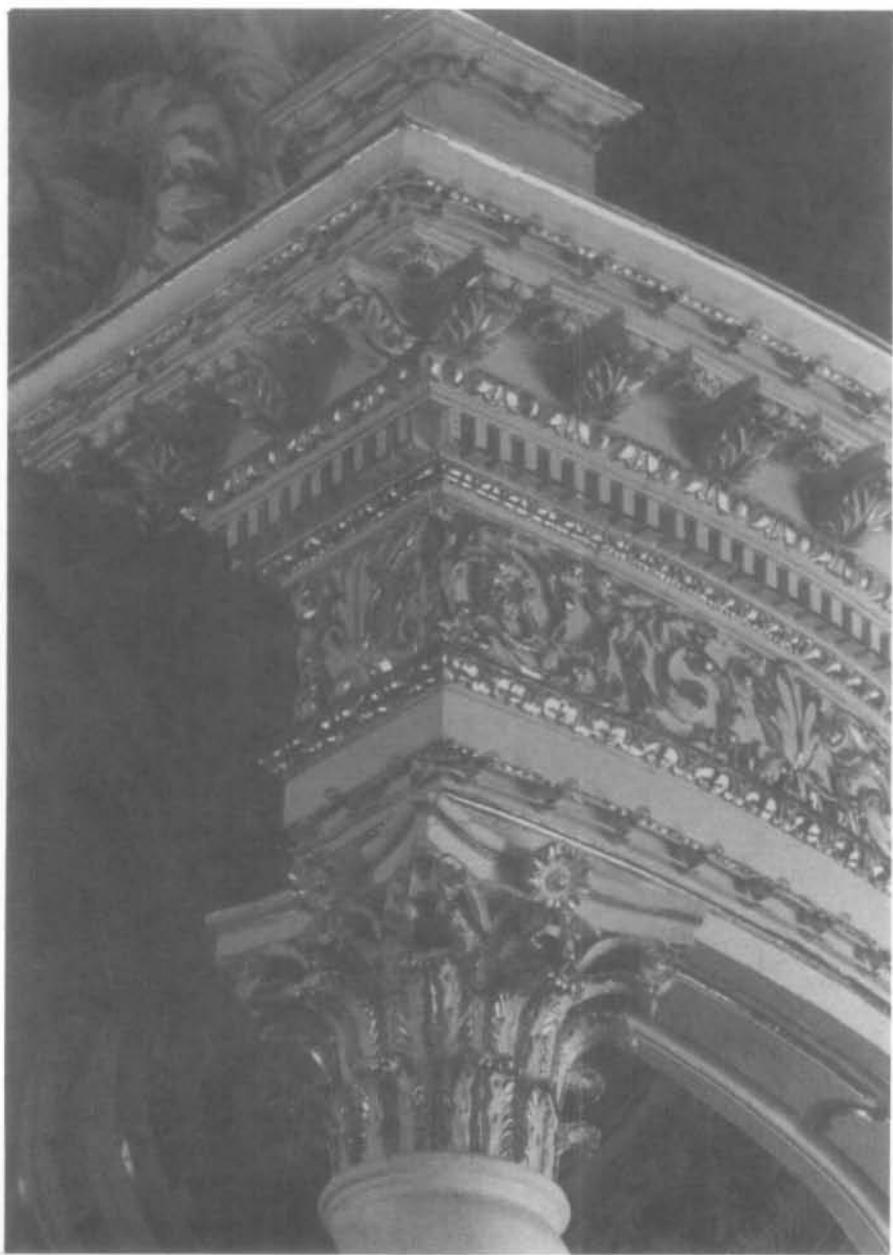
L'ancien baldaquin de la chapelle du premier palais épiscopal de Québec, à Neuville*

Le village de Neuville est situé sur la rive nord du Saint-Laurent, à une trentaine de kilomètres en amont de Québec. Encore souvent désigné sous l'appellation parallèle de Pointe-aux-Trembles, ce village possède une église qui est réputée pour les trésors artistiques qu'elle recèle¹. On y trouve entre autres une vingtaine de tableaux peints par Antoine Plamondon (1804-1895) dans la dernière tranche de sa longue carrière. En sculpture, l'élément le plus remarquable est sans contredit le majestueux baldaquin qui se dresse dans le chœur, au-dessus du maître-autel² (fig. 1).



(1) Chœur de l'église de Neuville (comté de Portneuf) après sa restauration à l'automne de 1954: baldaquin exécuté vers 1695 et provenant de la chapelle du premier palais épiscopal de Québec; maître-autel de François Baillaigé, 1802-1803; voûte, corniche et boiseries des murs du chœur par François Normand, François Lafontaine et François Routier, 1827-1828. (Photo tirée du "Fonds Gérard Morisset" de l'Inventaire des biens culturels du Québec — dorénavant Photo Fonds G. Morisset).

Le baldaquin de l'église Saint-François-de-Sales de Neuville est fait de noyer peint et doré. Il possède six colonnes torses reposant sur des socles surélevés et ornés de panneaux rectangulaires ouvragés. Coiffées de chapiteaux corinthiens, les colonnes supportent un riche entablement elliptique s'interrompant du côté de la nef afin de mieux mettre en évidence le maître-autel (fig. 2). De l'entablement s'élèvent six branches ayant la forme de gracieuses volutes élancées, couvertes de feuillages (fig. 3). Ces branches se rejoignent au centre



(2) Le baldaquin de Neuville: détail du côté droit de l'entablement. (Photo: John R. Porter).

du baldaquin autour d'un gros cul-de-lampe servant de base à une grande croix. Deux anneaux de bois sculpté complètent la structure du dais ainsi formé. L'anneau principal est constitué d'une grosse couronne ou guirlande de roses traversant la base des volutes. De format beaucoup plus modeste et de facture sensiblement différente, le second anneau répond au premier et il enserre la partie supérieure

des volutes autour du cul-de-lampe. L'ornementation de ce bel ensemble est complétée par deux statuettes en pied reposant sur des socles situés sur l'entablement, dans l'axe des colonnes avant du baldaquin. On trouve également des socles dans le prolongement des colonnes médianes mais ils sont aujourd'hui dépourvus de statues.

À cause de ses qualités intrinsèques, le baldaquin de Neuville a retenu l'attention de plusieurs historiens et historiens de l'art depuis une soixantaine d'années. Intrigués par la présence d'un ensemble aussi remarquable dans une modeste église de campagne, ils ont tout



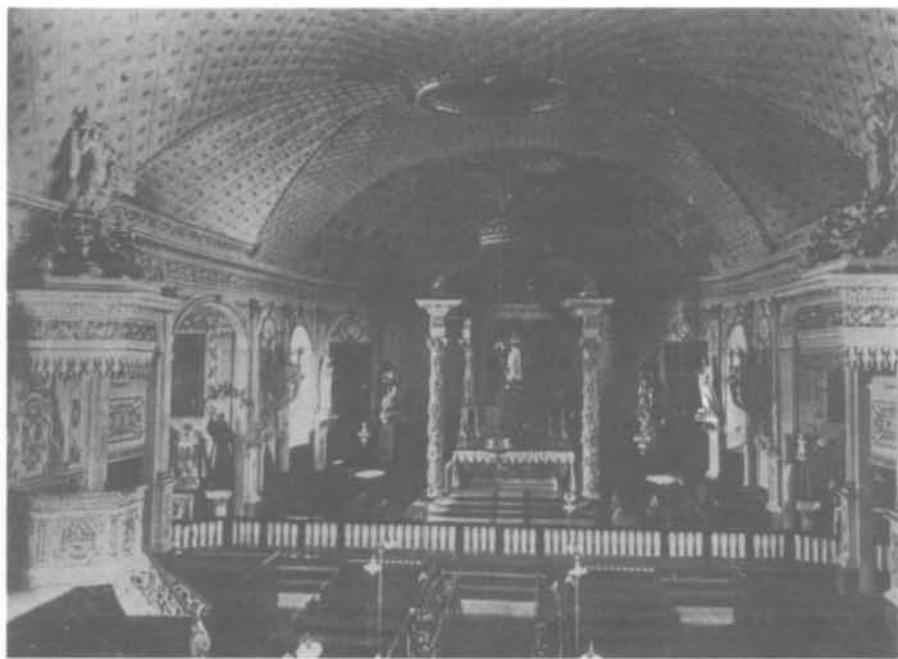
(3) Couronnement du baldaquin de Neuville en 1939, d'après un cliché de Jules Bazin. (Photo: Fonds G. Morisset).

naturellement cherché une explication du côté des archives paroissiales, mais ils ont dû déchanter en constatant que les livres de comptes et de délibérations de Neuville étaient muets quant à l'origine de l'ouvrage. Dès lors, certains se sont enhardis à formuler des hypothèses ou suggestions quant à l'attribution et à la datation du baldaquin.

La première hypothèse fut mise de l'avant par l'abbé Jean-Thomas Nadeau dans un article publié en 1921³. Il y affirma que le baldaquin avait été réalisé à l'époque où Charles-François Bailly de Messein (1740-1794) était curé de la paroisse, soit entre 1777 et 1794. On sait que Bailly de Messein fut non seulement un homme de noble extraction, instruit, riche et aimant le faste, mais qu'il fut par surcroît sacré évêque coadjuteur de Québec au mois de juillet 1789⁴. Dans l'esprit de l'abbé Nadeau, tout ceci devait sans doute expliquer la présence d'un somptueux baldaquin dans le choeur de la petite église paroissiale de Pointe-aux-Trembles. Quoi qu'il en soit, son avancé fut repris en 1925 dans *Les vieilles églises de la province de Québec 1647-1800*, un ouvrage signé par Pierre-Georges Roy⁵.

Vingt ans après Nadeau, l'historien de l'art Gérard Morisset suggéra prudemment une deuxième hypothèse relative au baldaquin de Neuville. Dans *Coup d'oeil sur les arts en Nouvelle-France*, il écrivit que celui-ci avait probablement été commencé par le sculpteur Gilles Bolvin (1710-1766) en 1765 et terminé avant 1778 par Levasseur⁶. Cette opinion devait reposer essentiellement sur trois postulats: primo, "la présence (de Bolvin) à Neuville en 1766" (sic); secundo, Bolvin — le protégé du récollet Augustin Quintal (1683-1776) — était l'auteur présumé du baldaquin de l'ancienne église de Trois-Rivières aux alentours de 1730⁷ (fig. 4); tertio, le baldaquin avait dû être achevé par "les Levasseur" — principaux sculpteurs actifs dans la région de Québec dans les années suivant la Conquête — puisque Bolvin était mort en 1766. Dans un article consacré à Bolvin en 1952, Morisset maintint grossso modo son hypothèse quant à la paternité du baldaquin mais il corrigea l'erreur de datation qu'il avait commise onze ans plus tôt. Il précisa en effet que Bolvin avait manifesté sa présence à Neuville non pas en 1766 mais bien le 26 octobre 1761 à l'occasion de son troisième mariage⁸. De toutes les opinions se rapportant au baldaquin de Pointe-aux-Trembles, c'est celle de Morisset qui devait le plus marquer l'historiographie. En effet, son hypothèse initiale fut bientôt considérée plus ou moins comme un fait acquis que différents auteurs s'empressèrent de reprendre à leur compte.

En 1951, Alan Gowans publia un article intitulé *The Great Baldacchin of St. Peter's in Rome, and the Little Baldacchin in Neuville, P.Q.* S'appuyant sur Morisset (1941), il écrivit notamment que le baldaquin de Neuville avait été dessiné par le père Quintal, commencé par Bolvin vers 1766 et terminé après la mort de celui-ci par un autre



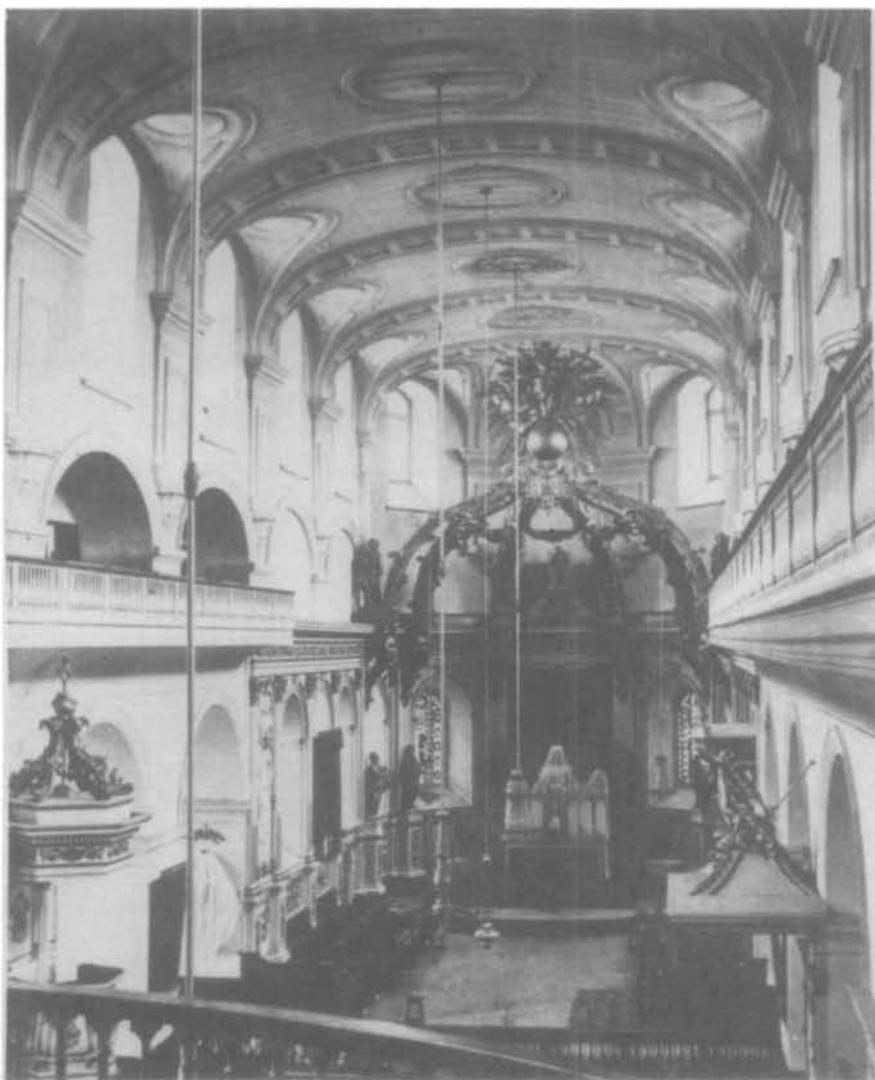
(4) Intérieur de l'église de l'Immaculée-Conception de Trois-Rivières avant l'incendie de 1908. (Photo: Fonds G. Morisset).

sculpteur⁹. À son avis, notre baldaquin avait été exécuté dans le sillage de celui de Trois-Rivières¹⁰. Gowans devait reprendre les mêmes avancés en 1955 dans *Church Architecture in New France*¹¹ et en 1966 dans *Building Canada. An Architectural History of Canadian Life*¹². Deux ans plus tard, Gérard Lavallée publia le premier essai de synthèse sur la sculpture traditionnelle au Québec: *Anciens ornemanistes et imagiers du Canada français*. Utilisant le conditionnel, il avança prudemment que le baldaquin de Neuville "aurait été commencé par Bolvin et terminé par l'un des Levasseur"¹³. On ne trouve pas la même réserve dans *Notre-Dame de Québec. Son architecture et son rayonnement (1647-1922)*, un livre de Luc Noppen paru en 1974. Celui-ci y affirme que le baldaquin qui nous occupe était une oeuvre conjointe des "sculpteurs" (sic) Quintal et Boivin réalisée vers 1766¹⁴. Signalons enfin une sixième mention tributaire de Morisset, soit celle de Marie-Thérèse Thibault, qui, il y a quatre ans, écrivait ce qui suit dans *Monuments et sites historiques du Quebec*: "Le baldaquin, en bois sculpté, commencé en 1762, sera terminé vers 1778 par François-Noël Levasseur..."¹⁵.

Il existe une troisième et dernière hypothèse relative au mystérieux ouvrage du choeur de Neuville. Elle fut mise de l'avant par Ramsay Traquair en 1947 dans *The Old Architecture of Quebec*. S'appuyant sur Pierre-Georges Roy quant à la période d'exécution de notre baldaquin (entre 1777 et 1794) et lui ayant trouvé certains traits

de ressemblance avec celui de la cathédrale de Québec (1787-1795) (fig. 5), l'auteur se demanda s'il ne pouvait pas être, lui aussi, une oeuvre de François Baillairgé (1759-1830)¹⁶. Cette suggestion fut retenue par Luc Noppen qui chercha à l'étayer dans un livre paru en 1977. Voyons comment l'auteur de *Les églises du Québec (1600-1850)* en vint à affirmer que le baldaquin de Neuville était une oeuvre de Baillairgé datant du début du XIX^e siècle:

En 1801, écrit-il, on reprit ces travaux (travaux d'ornementation intérieure de l'église de Neuville) et, cette fois, on s'adressa à François Baillairgé pour sculpter deux autels



(5 Intérieur de la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Québec en 1871, d'après un cliché de L.-Prudent Vallée. (Photo: Fonds G. Morisset).

latéraux qui se trouvent aujourd’hui dans les chapelles. Finalement, en 1802, la fabrique entreprit le décor du sanctuaire par l’installation du maître-autel. L’entreprise était cependant d’une envergure telle qu’il s’est agi vraisemblablement, non seulement du maître-autel, c’est-à-dire du tombeau et du tabernacle, mais encore de son couronnement: le baldaquin. Comment expliquer autrement que le notaire Larue ait été nommé “syndic du maître-autel” et qu’on ait procédé pendant deux années à une souscription? Selon cette hypothèse, ce serait donc François Baillaigé, architecte et sculpteur de Québec, qui aurait entrepris le baldaquin, puisque c’est lui qui a sculpté le maître-autel. Cela n’étonne pas si on considère que François Baillaigé venait de mettre la dernière main au baldaquin de la cathédrale de Québec, lorsqu’il se présenta à Neuville¹⁷.

Au coeur de l’argumentation de mon collègue Noppen, il y a la question du “syndic du maître-autel”. Nous convenons bien volontiers qu’il était peu courant voire exceptionnel que des paroissiens nomment un syndic pour veiller à la construction d’un maître-autel. Normalement, une telle nomination est liée à des travaux de plus grande envergure. Ainsi, à Neuville même, on nomma *des syndics* pour la réparation du presbytère en 1798¹⁸. Néanmoins, la nomination du notaire François-Xavier Larue comme *unique* syndic du maître-autel en 1802 n’a rien d’anormal si l’on considère qu’un an plus tôt, on avait chargé le même Larue, marguillier en charge, de faire exécuter des autels pour les chapelles latérales¹⁹ et que celui-ci avait alors pris la peine de signer un marché avec François Baillaigé devant le notaire Joseph Planté de Québec²⁰. Une telle démarche était extrêmement rare dans le cas d’un ouvrage d’une aussi petite envergure. Dès lors, l’exception de 1801 appelant celle de 1802, il est clair que la nomination d’un syndic pour le maître-autel de Neuville ne saurait justifier l’hypothèse avancée par Luc Noppen.

En fait, le baldaquin de Neuville est bien antérieur à François Baillaigé et il suffit pour s’en convaincre de lire cet extrait des archives paroissiales daté du 15 juin 1806:

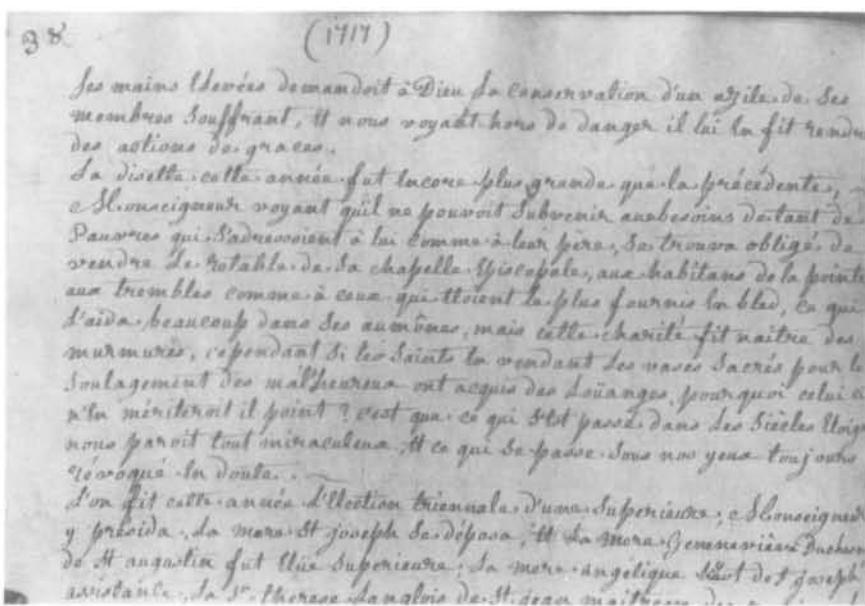
Et le même jour les dits marguilliers ayant pris communication *d’un acte de délibération des Marguilliers de cette paroisse en date du vingt Juillet mil sept cent soixante et dix huit Concernant l’embellissement du Baldaquin de l’Église de cette Paroisse*, les dits marguilliers ont dit et Déclaré qu’ils approuvent la dite délibération autant qu’elle concerne L’embellissement dudit Baldaquin, pour être exécutée présentement suivant sa forme et teneur²¹.

De ce texte on peut dégager que le baldaquin était en place dans l’église de Neuville en 1778 et qu’il y était depuis un certain temps puisque l’on songeait alors à l’embellir.

Reste à clarifier la mystérieuse origine de l'ouvrage. Contre toute attente, c'est dans les archives des Augustines de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec que se trouve la clef de l'éénigme. Qu'on en juge à la lecture du passage suivant tiré des *Annales* de 1717 (fig. 6):

La disette cette année fut Encore plus grande que la précédente, Monseigneur voyant qu'il ne pouvoit Subvenir aux besoins de tant de Pauvres qui S'adressoient à lui comme à leur père, Se trouva obligé de vendre Le retable de Sa chapelle Épiscopale, aux habitans de la pointe aux trembles comme à ceux qui Étoient le plus fournis En bled, ce qui L'aida beaucoup dans Ses aumônes, mais cette charité fit naître des murmures, cependant Si les Saints En vendant Les vases Sacrés pour le Soulagement des malheureux ont acquis des Louanges, pourquoi celui ci n'En mériteroit il point? c'est que ce qui S'est passé dans Les Siècles Éloignés nous paroit tout miraculeux, Et ce qui Se passe Sous nos yeux toujours révoqué En doute²².

Grâce à ce texte, nous savons désormais qu'en 1717, une année de grande disette, Monseigneur Jean-Baptiste de La Croix de Chevrières de Saint-Vallier (1653-1727), alors retiré à l'Hôpital-Général de Québec, consentit, malgré certaines protestations, à céder "Le retable de Sa chapelle Épiscopale" à la paroisse de Pointe-aux-Trembles en retour d'une bonne quantité de blé qu'il destinait aux pauvres de Québec et des environs. Pour lever toute ambiguïté, précisons que,



(6) "Annales" de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec en 1717: détail de la page 38.
(Photo: John R. Porter).

dans le passage cité, il est bel et bien question du village de Pointe-aux-Trembles situé près de Québec et non pas de la paroisse du même nom qui se trouve sur l'Île de Montréal. À preuve, ces deux lignes extraites du premier livre de comptes de Neuville en 1717-1718 et qui coïncident parfaitement avec ce que nous apprennent les *Anales* de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec:

p^r travaux faits tant en voyage le retable que p^r frais fait à l'Église SSS²³.

C'est donc bel et bien dans la première église de pierre de Neuville, un édifice construit entre 1778 et 1788, que fut installé l'ancien "retable" de la chapelle du premier palais épiscopal de Québec²⁴.

Quelle apparence avait cet ancien "retable"? Fort heureusement, nous en possédons une bonne description grâce à la plume d'un excellent observateur, l'historien Claude-Charles Le Roy dit Bacqueville de la Potherie (1663-1736), qui visita la chapelle du palais épiscopal durant son séjour en Nouvelle-France, soit entre 1698 et 1701²⁵.

La Chapelle est de soixante pieds de longueur, son Portail est de l'ordre composite, bâti de belle pierre de taille, qui est une espèce de Marbre brute. Ses Dedans seront magnifiques par son retable d'Autel, dont les Ornemens sont un raccourci de celui du Val de Grâce²⁶.

Bien que l'on fasse, ici encore, mention d'un "retable", il ne fait pas de doute que la chapelle épiscopale possédait à proprement parler un baldaquin. À cet égard, le rapprochement que fait Le Roy entre le "retable" de la chapelle du palais épiscopal et "celui du Val de Grâce" est on ne peut plus éclairant. Au Val-de-Grâce, à Paris, on trouve en effet non pas un retable mais bien un baldaquin dont les plans furent commandés au Bernin (1598-1680) à la fin de juin 1665²⁷ (fig. 7). À comparer le baldaquin de Neuville et celui du Val-de-Grâce, on comprend bien l'expression "raccourci"²⁸ utilisée par Le Roy. Par-delà une bonne série de parentés — six colonnes torses, gros anneau continu dans la partie basse du couronnement, statues montées sur des socles et placées dans l'axe des colonnes les plus avancées, etc. —, il est clair que l'ancien baldaquin de la chapelle épiscopale constitue effectivement un ouvrage moins imposant dans ses dimensions et moins baroque dans son ornementation, bref un raccourci.

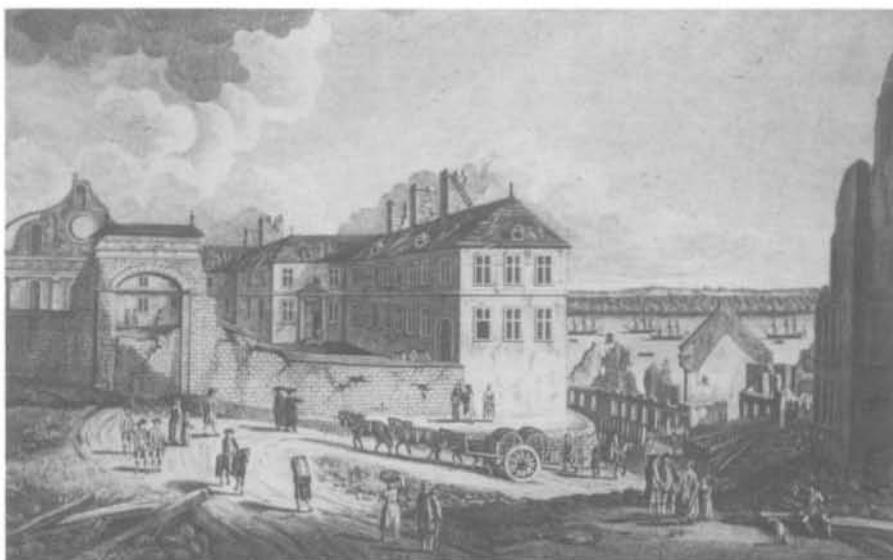
Bien que l'on ne possède aucun document nous informant de façon précise sur la date d'exécution de l'actuel baldaquin de Neuville, il est facile de situer celle-ci dans la dernière décennie du XVII^e siècle. Rappelons à ce propos un certain nombre de faits. Nouvel évêque du diocèse de Québec, Mgr de Saint-Vallier débarque à Québec le 31 juillet 1688²⁹. La même année, il acquiert l'ancienne maison de Jean Talon sise près de la côte de la Montagne, sur l'emplacement actuel du Parc Montmorency, dans le Vieux-Québec³⁰. Comme il souhaite voir ériger à cet endroit un grand palais épiscopal, il va



(7) Le Bernin, *Le baldaquin de la chapelle du Val-de-Grâce à Paris*, 1665. (Photo: Giraudon).

signer à cette fin une série de marchés de construction entre 1690 et 1697³¹ (fig. 8). Aucun de ces marchés ne fait expressément mention de la chapelle. Malgré l'étude publiée en 1896 par Mgr Henri Tétu³² et les articles de John Bland³³ et Luc Noppen³⁴ parus il y a quelques années, l'origine précise de l'édifice demeure aujourd'hui encore mystérieuse. Nul ne sait si la chapelle fut entreprise dès la fin de l'été de 1688 comme Bland est enclin à le croire ou bien plutôt à compter de 1693 comme le pense Noppen³⁵. Même si l'on retenait la première hypothèse, on voit mal comment, compte tenu de l'ampleur des travaux d'architecture à réaliser, on aurait pu commencer à travailler au décor intérieur de la chapelle avant 1690. À l'opposé, il est certain que la chapelle et son baldaquin existaient bel et bien une dizaine d'années plus tard puisqu'ils furent alors examinés par Le Roy. Il est par conséquent légitime d'affirmer que la réalisation du baldaquin de Mgr de Saint-Vallier se situe entre 1690 et 1700 ou, si l'on préfère, aux environs de 1695.

Aujourd'hui, notre baldaquin porte encore l'empreinte de son commanditaire, Mgr de Saint-Vallier. Avant la découverte du document-clef conservé à l'Hôpital-Général de Québec, nous avions toujours été intrigué par l'iconographie des deux statuettes en bois doré se dressant sur le baldaquin de l'église de Neuville: un saint Jean-Baptiste du côté gauche et un saint Jean l'Évangéliste du côté droit (fig. 9). Autant il nous apparaissait normal de voir ces deux saints se

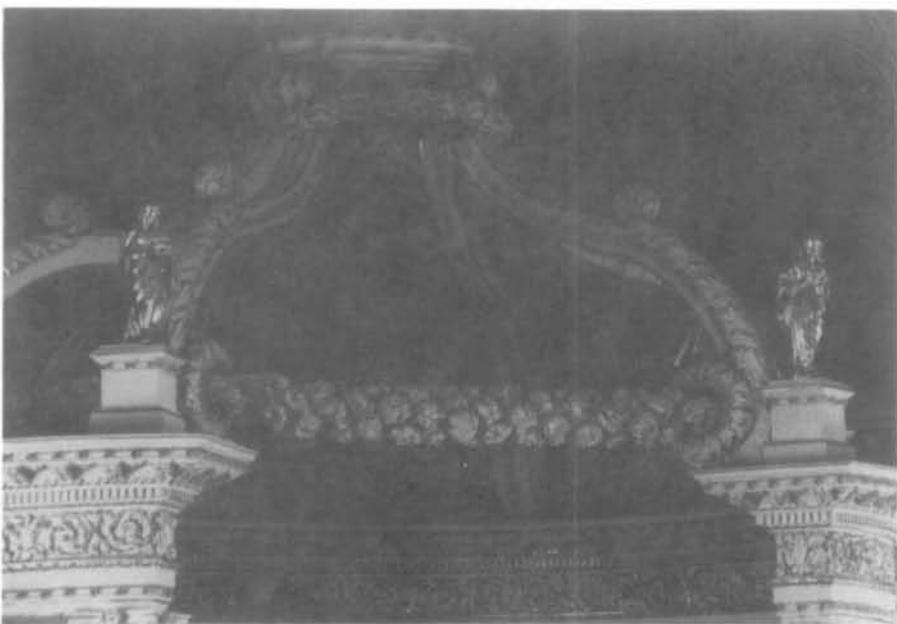


(8) Vue du Palais Episcopal et de ses Ruines ainsi qu'elles paroissent en descendant à la Basse Ville, gravure au burin de J. Fougeron d'après un dessin de Richard Short exécuté en 1759, 36,4 × 52,9 cm, Musée du Québec, Québec. (Photo: Musée du Québec).

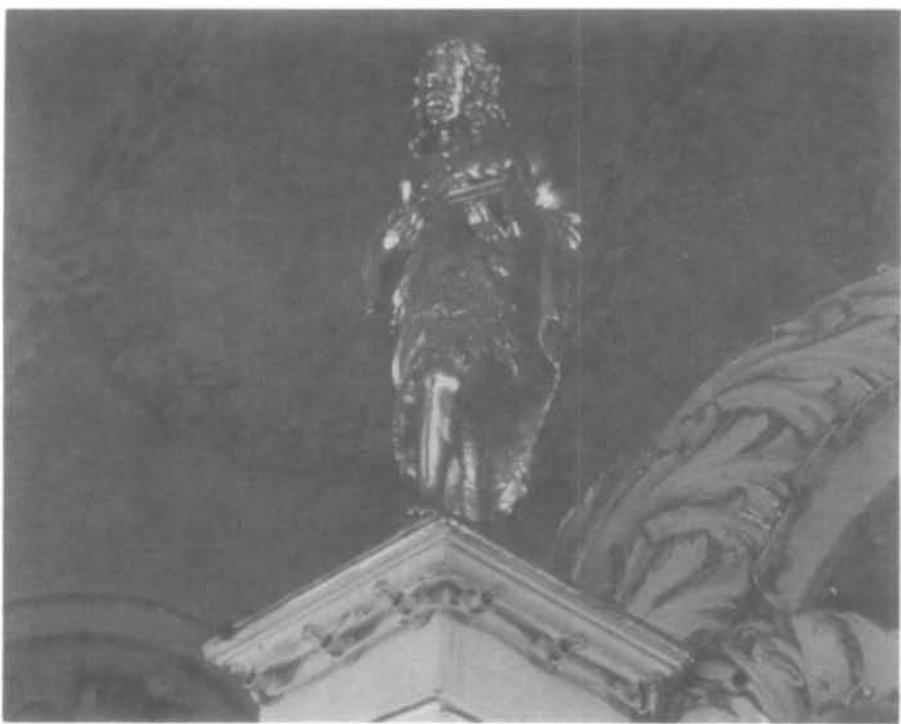
faire pendant³⁶, autant nous nous expliquions mal leur mise en évidence dans une église placée sous le vocable de Saint François de Sales. Maintenant que nous savons que le baldaquin de Neuville fut à l'origine commandé par un évêque prénommé Jean-Baptiste, tout s'explique³⁷.

Saint Jean-Baptiste est représenté vêtu d'une peau d'animal et d'un long manteau frangé laissant voir la nudité de son épaule gauche et de ses jambes (fig. 10 et 11). La longue courbe que décrit le drapé du manteau met en évidence de grandes mains et une forte musculature. Cette impression de puissance est toutefois quelque peu atténuée par l'élégance du mouvement de la jambe gauche vers l'avant. De la main droite, le personnage ramène contre sa poitrine une extrémité de son manteau tandis qu'il tient de l'autre un livre sur lequel est allongé un agneau symbolisant le Christ. Légèrement inclinée vers l'agneau dans un geste d'humilité, la tête du Précurseur possède indéniablement un air de noblesse, avec ses traits délicats, sa fine moustache, sa petite barbiche et sa longue chevelure torsadée aux allures de perruque. Pour peu on se croirait devant le chef d'un membre de la cour de Louis XIV (fig. 12). Par ailleurs, au plan iconographique, ce type de représentation individuelle de Jean-Baptiste est exceptionnel dans la sculpture ancienne au Québec car on a plutôt tendance à le représenter tenant une croix de roseau avec un agneau à ses pieds.

Le saint Jean l'Évangéliste n'est pas moins intéressant que son homonyme (fig. 13 et 14). Entièrement enveloppé d'un grand man-



(9) Le baldaquin de Neuville: partie supérieure avec les statuettes de saint Jean-Baptiste et de saint Jean l'Évangéliste. (Photo: John R. Porter).



(10) Anonyme, Saint Jean-Baptiste, vers 1695, statuette en bois doré placée dans la partie supérieure gauche du baldaquin de Neuville, H. 68,5 cm. (Photo: John R. Porter).



(11) Le saint Jean-Baptiste de Neuville d'après un cliché antérieur à la restauration de 1954, bois peint. (Photo: Fonds G. Morisset).



(12) Détail de la fig. 11. (Photo: Fonds G. Morisset).



(13) Anonyme, Saint Jean l'Évangéliste, vers 1695, statuette en bois doré placée dans la partie supérieure droite du baldaquin de Neuville, H. 73,5 cm. (Photo: John R. Porter).



(14) Le saint Jean l'Évangéliste de Neuville d'après un cliché antérieur à la restauration de 1954, bois peint. (Photo: Fonds G. Morisset).

teau frangé au drapé mouvant, il penche un peu le corps vers l'avant. Fait à signaler, le volume de la ronde-bosse est nettement plus faible dans la partie inférieure, la sculpture ayant selon toute vraisemblance été faite pour être vue d'en bas³⁸. De la main gauche, saint Jean tient contre lui un calice. Le bras droit plié, il amorce de la main un geste de bénédiction à proximité de la coupe. Ce geste est rendu avec un certain maniérisme comme en fait foi la contraction de l'auriculaire.

L'abondante chevelure du personnage tombe gracieusement sur ses épaules pour mettre en évidence un visage imberbe au regard interrogateur. Tout comme dans le cas du saint Jean-Baptiste, la représentation du disciple préféré du Christ sort tout à fait de l'ordinaire. Le calice fait allusion à un épisode de sa vie au cours duquel il fut obligé de boire une coupe empoisonnée qui avait précédemment foudroyé deux malfaiteurs. Saint Jean fit le signe de la croix et en absorba le contenu sans être incommodé. Dans les représentations du XVII^e siècle en Europe, on donna souvent la forme d'un calice à la coupe du poison³⁹. Au Québec, on ne connaît que deux autres représentations sculptées qui partagent l'iconographie de la statuette de Neuville. Ce sont des œuvres anonymes aux provenances précises inconnues. D'une exécution très fine, la première aurait d'abord appartenu aux Jésuites de Québec, sous le Régime français. Elle est aujourd'hui conservée dans la chapelle de la fondation de l'Hôtel-Dieu du Sacré-Coeur, à Québec. La seconde fait partie des collections du Musée historique de Vaudreuil⁴⁰ (fig. 15). Bien que d'une facture plus fruste, elle présente beaucoup d'affinités avec la composition de Neuville dont elle pourrait fort bien être une copie.

La qualité des deux petites statues de Neuville nous confirme la maîtrise du ou des auteurs du baldaquin de Mgr de Saint-Vallier. Mais qui sont-ils? Il est bien malaisé de le dire tant à cause de la pauvreté des informations disponibles sur les sculpteurs de l'époque qu'à cause du très faible pourcentage d'œuvre des environs de 1700 à nous être parvenu. Pourrait-il s'agir des séminaristes de Québec que signala avec enthousiasme l'historien Le Roy dans sa description de



(15) Anonyme, *Saint Jean l'Évangéliste*, XIX^e siècle (?), statuette en bois peint. H. 51 cm, Musée de Vaudreuil. (Photo: Jean Trudel).

la chapelle du Séminaire de Québec⁴¹. Ou encore de Denis Mallet (mort en 1704), un menuisier et maître sculpteur originaire de Notre-Dame d'Alençon arrivé dans la colonie aux environs de 1688 et qui travailla notamment pour les Récollets et les Jésuites de Québec⁴². Voir du fameux Jacques Leblond de Latour (1671-1715) qui débarqua à Québec au printemps de 1690 et à qui on a attribué certains ouvrages réalisés pour les églises paroissiales de l'Ange-Gardien et de Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré⁴³. Fils d'un membre-fondateur de l'Académie de peinture et de sculpture de Bordeaux, Leblond avait eu d'excellentes possibilités de faire son apprentissage de l'art de la sculpture dans sa ville natale avant son départ pour la Nouvelle-France⁴⁴. Qu'il ait ou non pris part à la réalisation des décors intérieurs de certaines églises de la Côte de Beaupré, il reste qu'il existe des parentés certaines entre des fragments de ces décors et des parties du baldaquin de Neuville. Ainsi, il est facile de rapprocher les motifs floraux de l'anneau principal du baldaquin de Mgr de Saint-Vallier des guirlandes ornant le fût des colonnes des anciens retables de Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré et de l'Ange-Gardien — au Musée du Québec. Plus frappant encore est le rapprochement que l'on peut faire entre les chapiteaux corinthiens de Neuville et ceux de l'Ange-Gardien: ils sont de facture et de proportions absolument identiques.

Mgr de Saint-Vallier n'eut pas le loisir de profiter longtemps du riche baldaquin qu'il avait fait ériger dans sa chapelle épiscopale. Après deux voyages dans la métropole en 1691-1692 et entre décembre 1694 et l'été 1697, il s'embarqua à nouveau pour la France au mois d'octobre 1700. Il n'allait revenir dans son diocèse que treize ans plus tard après diverses péripéties. Faisant alors face à une sérieuse baisse de ses revenus et à de lourdes dettes, il dut renoncer à habiter son palais épiscopal. À la fin du mois d'août 1713, quelques jours à peine après son retour d'Europe, il établissait ses quartiers dans un appartement de l'Hôpital-Général, une institution qu'il avait fondée en 1692 et dont il devait encore financer l'onéreuse construction⁴⁵. En quête de blé pour ses pauvres, il allait consentir quatre ans plus tard à vendre aux habitants de Pointe-aux-Trembles un baldaquin qui lui était désormais inutile⁴⁶.

Depuis son installation dans sa seconde demeure en 1717-1718, le baldaquin de Mgr de Saint-Vallier a connu quelques réparations ou transformations d'importance variable. Dans une première phase, les interventions subies furent tout à fait mineures. Ainsi, certaines parties de l'ouvrage furent vraisemblablement dorées par les Ursulines de Québec en 1721⁴⁷. Quarante ans plus tard, on refit à neuf le rond-point de l'église mais sans que cette opération n'affecte, semble-t-il, le baldaquin⁴⁸. En 1778, alors que les Américains menaçaient à nouveau d'envahir la colonie, les marguilliers de la paroisse décidèrent qu'il était préférable d'attendre que le calme revienne avant de repeindre le "retable"⁴⁹. Dix ans plus tard, on effectua des travaux importants à l'église dont la "réparation du sanctuaire"⁵⁰, mais le

baldaquin ne fut pas touché⁵⁰ si ce n'est, peut-être, par la surélévation des socles⁵¹. Enfin, le 22 juin 1806, on donna suite à la résolution adoptée par les marguilliers de 1778 en procédant à "l'embellissement du baldaquin" par l'application de peinture⁵². On allait par la suite attendre une vingtaine d'années avant de poser des gestes qui affecteraient de façon plus sensible l'apparence du baldaquin.

Le 27 décembre 1826, les syndics de la paroisse de Pointe-aux-Trembles signèrent un marché avec trois sculpteurs de Trois-Rivières, soit François Normand (1779-1854), François Lafontaine et François Routier. Ceux-ci s'engagèrent alors à défaire la vieille voûte de l'église en à en exécuter une nouvelle tant dans la nef que dans les chapelles et le chœur. Ils devaient compléter leur travail en posant une corniche au bas de la voûte des chapelles et du chœur⁵³. Quelques mois plus tard, nos trois sculpteurs ayant rencontré les attentes des syndics, on décida de retenir à nouveau leurs services, cette fois pour compléter la décoration du chœur. Le 3 novembre 1827, les parties signèrent un second marché par lequel les trois François s'engageaient d'une part à boiser et à sculpter tous les murs du sanctuaire, d'autre part à donner un nouveau souffle à un baldaquin qui présentait des signes de vieillissement:

(...) les dits Sieurs François Normand, François Fontaine et François Routier, se sont obligés solidairement sous les renonciations requises et de Droit, defaire et parfaire bien et duement, dans le cours des mois Juin ou Juillet Prochain, toutes les réparations nécessaires au Baldaquin Dans la dite Église, qui se trouve a y faire, remplacer tous les morceaux de sculptures qui y manquent, le Peinturer et y donner autant de couches quil sera Jugé nécessaires alors et Detelles couleurs que lesdits Syndics trouveront dans le tems de l'ouvrage le plus convenable refaire en sculptures les Pieds d'Estaux dudit Baldaquin de maniere que letout soit à l'avenant du reste du corps d'icelui, (...)⁵⁴

En somme, nos sculpteurs procédèrent à une intervention plutôt douce: nouvelle ornementation "à l'avenant" de six socles ("Pieds d'Estaux") du baldaquin, remplacement ponctuel des pièces sculptées manquantes et raffraîchissement de l'ensemble par des applications de peinture.

Plus drastique fut l'intervention de 1854 alors que l'on décida "de substituer, à la statue qui couronn(ait) le Baldaquin, une Croix dorée"⁵⁵. Un ancien curé de la paroisse, l'abbé Louis-Édouard Parent a relaté l'événement dans ses "Notes et faits divers", un manuscrit conservé au presbytère de Neuville:

Aujourd'hui, 24 octobre 1854, a été posée la Croix qui couronne le Baldaquin. Cette croix remplace une Statue, qui représentait le Sauveur, montant au ciel. Elle était si mal

faite, qu'elle portait plutôt à rire, qu'elle portait à la piété, surtout les étrangers, car la plupart des gens de la paroisse trouvaient cela beau, accoutumés à voir cela des leur enfance, ils y étaient attachés. J'ai bien eu de la peine à la faire disparaître, il y a eu bien des murmures. Mais enfin elle est disparue et brûlée. À présent ils trouvent la Croix plus belle⁵⁶.

La *Résurrection* ou l'*Ascencion* du baldaquin de Neuville était-elle à ce point risible? Sortait-elle du même ciseau que les statuettes des deux saints Jean? Sans doute n'en saurons-nous jamais rien. Quant à la croix, elle est vraisemblablement plus grande que ne l'était la statue brûlée en 1854 puisqu'elle est en soi quelque peu disproportionnée par rapport au reste de l'ouvrage. Faute de données précises, on ne peut guère en dire davantage. Signalons toutefois que, depuis 1854, le baldaquin de Mgr de Saint-Vallier n'a plus subi de nouvelles transformations si ce n'est qu'on l'a, de temps à autres, peinturé et doré de diverses façons, la dernière fois au cours de l'hiver 1980-1981⁵⁷. Seule véritable "ombre" au tableau: la présence — depuis une soixantaine d'années — d'un disgracieux chapelet d'ampoules électriques disposées tout au long de l'entablement et des composantes du couronnement.

Le baldaquin de Neuville a donc livré son secret. Commandé vers 1695 par Mgr de Saint-Vallier pour la chapelle de son palais épiscopal, c'est de façon tout à fait inopinée qu'il se retrouva dès 1717 dans la petite église d'un prospère village agricole des environs de Québec. N'eut été de sa cession aux habitants de Pointe-aux-Trembles, il aurait très certainement été détruit lors des bombardements de Québec en 1759. Connaissant au contraire un sort enviable, il a été conservé et entretenu depuis plus de deux siècles et demi, ne subissant au total que des modifications relativement mineures. Aujourd'hui, il constitue à plusieurs égards un témoin de premier ordre de notre passé artistique. Plus ancien ensemble concerté du Régime français à nous être parvenu, le grand dais sculpté du choeur de Neuville est en effet antérieur aux retables de la chapelle des Ursulines de Québec et aux ensembles fragmentaires ou composites de l'Ange-Gardien, de Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, de Saint-Grégoire de Nicolet et de Saint-Augustin de Portneuf⁵⁸. Il est par surcroît le seul de tous les anciens baldaquins du Québec à avoir été conservé. Tour à tour ont disparu les baldaquins de Notre-Dame de Montréal, de l'église de l'Immaculée-Conception de Trois-Rivières, de la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Québec, de Saint-Eustache et de Saint-Jérôme des Mille-Îles⁵⁹. Réalisé une trentaine d'années après celui du Bernin au Val-de-Grâce, l'ancien baldaquin de Mgr de Saint-Vallier représente enfin un admirable écho dans la capitale coloniale de la Nouvelle-France d'une oeuvre majeure de la capitale de la métropole française. Le "raccourci" de la chapelle du premier palais épiscopal

de Québec est un exemple de plus de l'existence de liens étroits rattachant nos premières réalisations sculpturales à certains grands modèles européens.

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Notes

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- 1 Ne pas confondre ce village avec la paroisse de Pointe-aux-Trembles située sur l'île de Montréal. Voir Pierre-Georges ROY, "St-François de Sales de la Pointe-aux-Trembles", *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, III, 1897, p. 130; J.T.N. (abbé Jean Thomas NADEAU), "La Pointe-aux-Trembles", *Almanach de l'action sociale catholique*, V, 1921, p. 69.
- 2 Le choeur de l'église de Neuville a été classé monument historique le 6 octobre 1965.
- 3 Jean Thomas NADEAU, *op. cit.*, p. 71: "Mgr Bailly fit faire certains travaux à l'église et au presbytère. C'est à lui qu'on doit le beau baldaquin de noyer noir, malheureusement peinturé, que l'on admire encore à l'église".
- 4 Claude GALARNEAU, "Charles-François Bailly de Messein", *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada* (dorénavant DBC) IV, (1771-1800), 1980, pp. 45-48.
- 5 Ls-A. PROULX, Québec, p. 66: "Le baldaquin, au-dessus du maître-autel, que les connaisseurs admirent avec raison, date du temps de Mgr Bailly de Messein". À son tour Rodolphe Fournier emboîta le pas à P.-G. Roy dans un ouvrage intitulé *Lieux et monuments historiques de Québec et environs* publié aux Éditions Garneau de Québec en 1976. En page 102, il écrit que "C'est le curé, Mgr Charles-François Bailly de Messein (1777-1794) qui fit faire le magnifique baldaquin (de Neuville)".
- 6 Publié à compte d'auteur, Québec, 1941, p. 31: "La présence de ce sculpteur (Bolvin) à Neuville en 1766 porte à croire que c'est lui qui en a commencé le *baldaquin*. Il est mort la même année, à l'âge de cinquante-cinq ans". Voir également la légende de la sixième illustration de l'ouvrage: "Baldaquin en noyer tendre, à l'église de Neuville (Portneuf). Probablement commencé par Gilles Bolvin en 1765 et terminé avant 1778 par les Levasseur".
- 7 En fait, on ignore quand et par qui fut exécuté le baldaquin de Trois-Rivières. On l'a attribué à Bolvin en se basant sur le fait qu'il avait réalisé la chaire et le banc d'œuvre de l'église entre 1734 et 1738. Voir Raymonde GAUTHIER, *Trois-Rivières disparue ou presque*, Éditeur officiel du Québec/Fides, Montréal, 1978, pp. 184-85. Par ailleurs, il est faux de prétendre, comme l'ont fait plusieurs auteurs, que le baldaquin de Trois-Rivières est semblable à celui de Neuville. Voir par exemple Louise VOYER, *Eglises disparues*, Libre expression, Montréal, 1981, p. 162.
- 8 Gerald MORISSET, "Le sculpteur Gilles Bolvin", *Technique*, 27, 9, novembre 1952, pp. 611-12: "L'année suivante (1761), il (Bolvin) est à la Pointe-aux-Trembles (Neuville). Sans doute travaille-t-il à quelque meuble de l'église — par exemple, le somptueux baldaquin en noyer tendre, sur la construction duquel les renseignements sont si rares. Quoi qu'il en soit, c'est à Neuville qu'il rencontre celle qui sera sa troisième femme, Angélique Bélard; il l'épouse le 26 octobre 1761, dans l'église de Neuville".
- 9 Alan GOWANS, "The Great Baldacchin...", *Culture*, XII, 2, juin 1951, pp. 132-133: "The baldacchino at Neuville was thus made around 1776. It represents the last work of an outstanding pair of artists active in the middle years of the eighteenth century in New France — Father Augustin Quintal of the Récollet order, an architectural designer, and Gilles Bolvin, the sculptor who executed his designs". "(...) it was barely begun when Bolvin died, and was presumably finished by another man on Quintal's design".
- 10 *Idem*, p. 134: "From these, it is apparent that this interior (Trois-Rivières) was dominated by a large baldacchined altar, the prototype of the smaller work still existant at Neuville (...)" . S'appuyant sur P.-G. Roy (1925), Gowans mentionne (p. 132) que le reste du décor du choeur de Neuville daterait grosso modo de la période 1777-1794.
- 11 University of Toronto Press, Toronto, p. 75: "Begun in 1766, the year of Bolvin's death, its derivation from the Trois-Rivières altar is clear". Voir également la légende de la planche III: "Neuville, first church, apse. Built 1696, decoration mainly 1777-1794; baldachin begun 1766".

- 12 Oxford University Press, Toronto, p. 205 (ill. 30): "Neuville, Que. *Parish Church: Interior, showing baldachin begun 1766.* (...) The baldachin, however, is a major survival of Augustin Quintal, Canadian-born Récollet designer and the sculptor Gilles Bolvin (...)".
- 13 Ministère des Affaires culturelles, Québec, 1968, p. 30 et 32.
- 14 Éditions du Pélican, Québec, p. 125: "C'est à Neuville finalement qu'apparaîtra l'un des derniers baldaquins de ce type, nettement influencé par l'art du Régime Français, même s'il ne fut érigé que vers 1766. Il s'agit là de l'une des dernières œuvres d'envergure réalisées en collaboration par les mêmes sculpteurs (Joseph Quintal et Gilles Bolvin) de Trois-Rivières, et aussi de l'exemple le plus achevé qu'il nous soit donné de connaître dans ce type de décor".
- 15 Ministère des Affaires culturelles, Québec, 1978, p. 116 et 118.
- 16 Macmillan, Toronto, p. 211: "The splendid baldaquin at Neuville (Point aux Trembles) is said to date from between 1777 and 1794. (...) its resemblance to that in the cathedral (Notre-Dame de Québec) is marked. Unfortunately the sculptor is unknown, one would like to think it is the work of François Baillaigé."
- 17 Éditeur officiel du Québec/Fides, Montréal, p. 152.
- 18 Archives paroissiales de Neuville (dorénavant APN), "Livre de comptes et de délibérations II (1794-1864)", 1^{er} avril 1798. *Nota:* pour ce qui a trait aux livres de comptes et de délibérations de la paroisse de Neuville, nous nous sommes fondé dans cet article sur les transcriptions contenues dans le dossier "Neuville (Portneuf), Église" du Fonds Gérard Morisset de l'Inventaire des biens culturels du Québec (dorénavant IBC).
- 19 APN, "Livre de comptes... II", 21 juin 1801.
- 20 Archives nationales du Québec, Québec (dorénavant ANQQ), Greffe du notaire Joseph Planté, 8 juillet 1801, n° 2750: "Marché entre Sieur François Baillaigé et Sr. Frs. Larue Marguillier de la Pte Aux Trembles".
- 21 APN, "Livres de comptes... II", 15 juin 1806, folio 50. C'est nous qui soulignons.
- 22 Archives des Augustines de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec, "Suite des annales des Religieuses de La miséricorde de jesus. Établie à notre Dame des anges près Québec" (1709-1729), folio 38.
- 23 APN, "Livre de comptes et de délibérations I (1697-1794)", année 1717-1718. Un reçu signé de la main de Mgr de Saint-Vallier est d'ailleurs annexé aux comptes et délibérations de la fabrique. Il se lit comme suit: "nous avons reçu ici pour les pauvres de cet hôpital les trois cent cinquante minots portés dans le billet ci dessus pour le retable dont nous tenons quitte monsieur haseur et les habitants de neuville fait à Québec ce 19 juillet 1717 (ou 1719)".
- 24 La paroisse de Neuville avait été fondée en 1679 et érigée canoniquement le 3 novembre 1684. À l'origine, la paroisse possédait une petite chapelle de bois que viendra remplacer la première église de pierre construite à compter de 1696.
- 25 Arrivé à Québec le 28 novembre 1698, Le Roy quitta la Nouvelle-France en 1701. Voir Léon POULIOT, "Claude-Charles Le Roy dit Bacqueville de la Potherie", *BDC*, II (1701-1740), 1969, pp. 439-441.
- 26 Claude-Charles LE ROY DE BACQUEVILLE DE LA POTHERIE, *Histoire de l'Amérique septentrionale*, Jean Luc Nion, François Didot, Rouen, 1722, tome I, p. 234. Nous sommes en total désaccord avec l'interprétation abusive que Raymond Gauthier fait du texte de La Potherie dans un article intitulé "Étude sur trois tabernacles anciens de Québec" paru dans la *Revue d'ethnologie du Québec* (2, 1975) aux Éditions Leméac (p. 35). Selon elle, la custode du tabernacle principal de la chapelle de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec proviendrait de la chapelle épiscopale de Mgr de Saint-Vallier et c'est de cette custode que parlerait La Potherie! Nous avons constaté à regret que plusieurs affirmations de madame Gauthier reposaient sur des postulats erronés ou relevaient de la plus pure spéulation:
"On a pensé que la chapelle du palais épiscopal de Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier était ornée d'un baldaquin, en guise de retable, parce que la chapelle de l'abbaye du Val-de-Grâce possédait un baldaquin. Rien n'est moins certain.
"Autant que l'on sache, il n'existe pas de contrats, la décoration intérieure de cette chapelle n'a jamais été faite. (...)
"La Potherie affirme que les ornements sont un raccourci de celui du Val-de-Grâce, ce qui pourrait signifier que les ornements de l'autel (de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec) sont une réplique plus petite des ornements du Val-de-Grâce, et que la coupole surplombant le tabernacle est un rappel de la coupole du Val-de-Grâce.
"Mais la présence ou l'absence de baldaquin n'est pas un élément très important dans cette étude. L'important c'est le tabernacle qui arrive à l'Hôpital-Général à une date indéterminée, probablement 1713, moment de l'arrivée à Québec de Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier après sa captivité. Composé alors de la seule custode il est sans doute jugé trop peu imposant par les Religieuses de l'Hôpital-Général. En 1721, elles demandent à Noël Levasseur d'ajouter un gradin, des panneaux et des colonnettes décoratives à leur tabernacle..."
- 27 Le baldaquin du Val-de-Grâce est postérieur de trente-cinq ans à celui du Bernin à Saint-Pierre de Rome. Louis HAUTECOEUR, *Histoire de l'Architecture classique en France*, tome II (Le règne de Louis XIV), vol. 2, A. et J. Picard, Paris, 1948, p. 825.
- 28 Nous ne partageons pas l'interprétation que Luc Noppen donne de ce mot dans *Notre-Dame de Québec*, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125.
- 29 Alfred RAMBAUD "Jean-Baptiste de La Croix de Chevrières de Saint-Vallier", *BDC*, II (1701-1740), 1969, p. 343.

- 30 Voir Luc NOPPEN, Claude PAULETTE, Michel TREMBLAY, *Québec, trois siècles d'architecture*, Libre expression, Montréal, 1979, p. 295 (reproduction donnant une bonne idée de l'apparence que devait avoir la maison acquise par Mgr de Saint-Vallier).
- 31 Ces marchés sont énumérés et résumés dans une lettre de John Bland aux rédacteurs des *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* (dorénavant AHAC), IV, 2, 1977-78, pp. 184-185.
- 32 Mgr Henri TÊTU, *Histoire du palais épiscopal de Québec*, Pruneau et Kirouac, Québec, 1896, 304 pages.
- 33 "La chapelle du palais épiscopal de Québec", *Vie des Arts*, XIX 76, automne 1974, pp. 52-54 et 103; lettre aux rédacteurs des AHAC citée ci-haut à la note 31, pp. 183-86.
- 34 Luc NOPPEN, "Évolution de l'architecture religieuse en Nouvelle-France: le rôle des modèles architecturaux", AHAC, IV, 1, printemps 1977, pp. 45-7.
- 35 Dans l'article que nous venons de citer, Noppen conteste la position de Bland qu'il résume dans une note à la page 59. À son avis, la construction du palais épiscopal commença par la chapelle en 1693 pour s'achever avec l'aile extrême du palais en 1699. *Idem*, pp. 45-47.
- 36 "L'association des deux saints Jean est fréquente dans l'iconographie du Moyen-Âge et de la Renaissance, non seulement parce qu'ils portent le même nom, mais parce que l'on croyait que la date de la mort de l'Évangéliste coïncidait avec le jour anniversaire de la naissance du Baptiste". Louis RÉAU, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, tome III (Iconographie des saints), Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1958, vol. 2, p. 713.
- 37 Fait à signaler, le maître-autel de la chapelle de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec, dont les coûts furent assumés par Mgr de Saint-Vallier en 1722, porte toujours les armoiries de son commanditaire. Jusqu'en 1892, les mêmes armoiries apparaissaient sur l'ancienne chaire de la chapelle.
- 38 Cette caractéristique est moins frappante dans le cas de saint Jean-Baptiste du fait que celui-ci avance la jambe gauche.
- 39 Louis RÉAU, *op. cit.*, p. 709 et 712.
- 40 Voir Jean TRUDEL, *Profil de la sculpture québécoise XVII^e - XIX^e siècle*, Musée du Québec, 1969, pp. 130-31.
- 41 Claude-Charles LE ROY DE BACQUEVILLE DE LA POTHERIE, *op. cit.*, tome I, p. 235: 'La Chapelle avec la Sacristie a quarante pieds de long. La Sculpture que l'on estime dix mille écus en est très-belle; elle a été faite par des Seminaristes qui n'ont rien épargné pour mettre l'ouvrage dans sa perfection. Le maître Autel est un ouvrage d'Architecture à la Corinthienne; les murailles sont revêtues de Lambris & de Sculpture, dans lesquelles sont plusieurs grands Tableaux, les Ornemens qui les accompagnent se vont terminer sous la corniche de la voûte qui est à pans, sur lesquels sont des compartimens en Lozange, accompagniez d'ornemens de sculpture peints & dorez'. Cette chapelle fut détruite dans un incendie en 1701.
- 42 Pierre MAYRAND, "Denis Mallet", DBC, II (1701-1740), 1969, pp. 470-71.
- 43 Jean TRUDEL, "Jacques Leblond de Latour", DBC, II (1701-1740), 1969, pp. 393-394.
- 44 Mgr Henri TÊTU, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39 et Alfred RAMBAUD, *op. cit.*, p. 347.
- 45 La chapelle qui abritait originellement le baldaquin fut en bonne partie détruite lors des bombardements de 1759 (voir la fig. 8). Elle fut finalement démolie en 1830.
- 46 APN, "Livre de comptes... I", année 1721: "p^r les urselinnes p^r le retable... 75".
- 47 *Idem*, années 1761-1763: "Estat des frais pour le rond point de l'église fait en neuf depuis les fondations jusqu'à la couverture".
- 48 *Idem*, 20 juillet 1778.
- 49 *Idem*, année 1788-1789.
- 50 Deux menuisiers furent chargés de refaire le plancher du sanctuaire et de réparer au besoin les balustres et les marches de l'autel. Voir ANQQ, Greffe du notaire François-Xavier Larue, 11 août 1788: "Devis et marché entre les Marguilliers de Neuville et Pierre Stéguy et Jean-François Pageé" (transcription tirée du *Fonds Morisset* de l'IBC).
- 51 À notre avis, la surrévélation des socles n'existant pas à l'origine. En voulant donner plus d'envol au baldaquin, on a introduit une disproportion qui nuit quelque peu à l'harmonie de l'ensemble.
- 52 C'est ce qu'on peut déduire à la lecture des actes de délibération du 20 juillet 1778 et du 22 juin 1806. APN, "Livres de comptes... I et II".
- 53 ANQQ, Greffe du notaire F.-X. Larue, 27 décembre 1826: Devis et marché François Normand et Syndics de la Pointe-aux-Trembles" (transcription tirée du *Fonds Morisset* de l'IBC).
- 54 ANQQ, Greffe du notaire F.-X. Larue, 3 novembre 1827: "Marché et devis François Normand et Syndics de la Pointe-aux-Trembles" (transcription tirée du *Fonds Morisset* de l'IBC).
- 55 APN, "Livres de comptes... II", 14 août 1854.
- 56 APN, p. 26. Nous remercions M. le curé Philippe Méthot de nous avoir signalé l'existence de ce document lors de notre passage à Neuville le 27 août 1982.
- 57 Comparer les photographies conservées dans le *Fonds Gérard Morisset* de l'IBC et la photographie en couleurs qui apparaît en page 128-D de l'ouvrage de M.-T. Thibault cité plus haut. Les deux petites statues furent dorées en 1954 lors de la restauration du sanctuaire de l'église par la Commission des monuments historiques du Québec. Selon une communica-

tion d'un de nos étudiants, René Villeneuve, les travaux de l'hiver 1980-81 auraient été effectués par la maison Jean Ferland de Sainte-Marie de Beauce.

- 58 À propos de ces divers ensembles, voir les ouvrages ou articles qui suivent: Ursulines de Québec (Jean TRUDEL, *Un chef d'œuvre de l'art ancien du Québec. La chapelle des Ursulines*, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Québec, 1972); Ange-Gardien (Louise VOYER, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44); Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré (Idem, pp. 126-28); Saint-Grégoire de Nicolet (Jean BELISLE, "Le retable de Saint-Grégoire de Nicolet et le problème de la contrainte architecturale dans les ensembles sculptés québécois", *AHAC*, V, I, 1980, pp. 18-32); Saint-Augustin de Portneuf (Madeleine GOBEIL-TRUDEAU, *Bâtir une église au Québec. Saint Augustin-des-Desmaures: de la chapelle primitive à l'église actuelle*, Libre expression, Montréal, 1981).
- 59 Il y eut deux baldaquins successifs dans l'ancienne église Notre-Dame de Montréal. Datant du début du XVIII^e siècle, le premier était soutenu par quatre colonnes simples et blanchies de peinture (voir Olivier MAURAUXT, *La paroisse: histoire de l'église Notre-Dame de Montréal*, Éditions du Mercure, Montréal et New York, 1929, pp. 30-1). Le second baldaquin fut exécuté entre 1809 et 1815 sous la direction de Louis Quévillon. Lors de la démolition de l'église en 1830, on l'installa dans l'église succursale Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours. Il devait disparaître lors d'une réfection à la fin du XIX^e siècle (voir Louise VOYER, *op. cit.*, p. 103 et 104 (repr.)). Le baldaquin de Trois-Rivières qui pourrait bien dater du Régime anglais fut détruit dans une conflagration au mois de juin 1908 (voir Raymonde GAUTHIER, *Trois-Rivières...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-86). Celui de François Baillargé à Notre-Dame de Québec (1787-1795) fut réduit en cendres dans l'incendie du 22 décembre 1922 (voir Luc NOPPEN, *Notre-Dame de Québec...*, *op. cit.*, p. 238). Oeuvre de René Saint-James dit Beauvais (1785-1837), le baldaquin de Saint-Eustache (1821) disparut en 1910 lors de l'altération de l'intérieur de l'église (voir Ramsay TRAQUAIR, *op. cit.*, p. 213 et 218 (repr.)). Par ailleurs, on ignore l'identité de l'auteur de l'ancien dais du chœur de la première église de Saint-Jérôme (1837-1900). Vraisemblablement réalisé au milieu du XIX^e siècle, il disparut à la suite de l'érection d'une nouvelle église en 1900 (voir Louise VOYER, *op. cit.*, p. 149 (repr.)). Signalons enfin que, contrairement à l'opinion d'Alan Gowans, nous sommes convaincus qu'il n'y a jamais eu de baldaquin dans l'ancienne église des Jésuites de Québec. Nous partageons en cela l'interprétation que fait Luc Noppen des descriptions de Lahontan et de Charlevoix dans *Notre-Dame de Québec...* (*op. cit.*, p. 125, 26 et 39).

The Ancient Baldachin of the Chapel of the First Episcopal Palace of Québec, at Neuville.

The stately baldachin which stands in the chancel of the church at Neuville — a village located about 30 km above Québec City — has long intrigued Québec art historians.

In the absence of precise documentary information, a number of theories have been advanced: some attribute the work to Gilles Bolvin (about 1766), others to François Baillairgé (1802). A document found recently in the archives of Québec's Hôpital-Général has enabled us to establish that the baldachin dates back rather to the 1690's and that it was originally commissioned by Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier to beautify the chapel of his bishop's palace. Four years after leaving this palace to take up residence at the Hôpital-Général, Saint-Vallier had to agree to surrender his baldachin to the parishioners of Pointe-aux-Trembles (Neuville) in exchange for a substantial quantity of wheat which he offered to the poor of Québec City, stricken at that time with a severe food shortage.

In its broad outline, the Neuville baldachin matches the description given by the historian La Potherie in 1700 of the "retable" in the bishop's chapel. La Potherie rightly pointed out that the baldachin was an abridged version of the ensemble which stills stands in the Val-de-Grâce chapel in Paris. The Neuville baldachin is adorned with two wooden statuettes of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, both of whom are usually associated one with the other in Christian art. This particular choice can probably be explained by the fact that Jean-Baptiste was the Christian name of Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier who commissioned the baldachin. It is also noteworthy that both statuettes are remarkably iconographic compared to the usual Québec portrayals of these saints.

Since it was first installed in the church at Neuville in 1717-1718, the baldachin of Saint-Vallier has undergone a number of relatively important repairs and transformations. The most significant of these was made in 1854 when the statue of Christ resurrected, which crowned the baldachin, was replaced with a gilt cross. This appreciably changed the appearance of the work.

In a number of ways, the Neuville baldachin is an important testimony to our artistic past for not only is it the oldest work of the French Regime to have come down to us, it is also the only one of all old Québec baldachins to have been preserved. Created some 30 years after the Bernini baldachin in Val-de-Grâce chapel, the baldachin commissioned by Saint-Vallier brought to the colonial capital of New France an admirable echo of a major work from the capital of the mother country. It demonstrates the close ties that linked our earliest sculptures to some of the great European models.

John R. Porter

Translation Jean R. Cadorel

Thomas Seaton Scott: The Architect versus the Administrator

The career of Thomas Seaton Scott can be divided into two quite distinct facets: Scott the designer and Scott the administrator.¹ As a designer, Scott was a competent but far from outstanding architect who appeared most comfortable working in a Gothic idiom. As an administrator, Scott made his most significant contribution when, as Canada's first Chief Architect of the Department of Public Works from 1871 to 1881, he supervised the federal government's massive post-Confederation building programme. Under his direction some of Canada's finest examples of the Second Empire style were erected and these buildings provided the most influential vehicle for the dissemination of this style across the country. The works associated with Scott as Chief Architect, however, were more a product of a conscious government policy to create a "federal" style than a reflection of Scott's own tastes or talents. Throughout his career Scott's own designs maintained quite different stylistic directions. This apparent dichotomy between his private practice and his career as a public architect resulted from the nature of his role as Chief Architect.

Scott's early life in Canada is still shrouded in mystery. Born in England in 1826² he immigrated to Canada in the late 1850's.³ According to his obituary in the *Ottawa Journal* of 1895,⁴ Scott came to work on the Victoria Bridge in Montréal for the Grand Trunk Railway and maintained good connections with the company throughout his career. In 1858 Scott, along with the Québec architect, Pierre Gauvreau, was employed by the Grand Trunk Railway as a supervising architect for the construction of a number of small railway stations located between Québec and Trois Pistoles.⁵ Whether Scott or Gauvreau deserve any credit for the design of the stations is questionable for these modest one-and-a-half storey buildings of stone or brick with wide eaves supported by heavy brackets represent a standard station design that could have been found all along the Grand Trunk line in the late 1850's and early 1860's. Scott's and Gauvreau's job was probably to work out any individual construction problems as they arose and to ensure that the contractors completed their work according to specifications.

It was as a church architect that Scott appeared to have made his initial reputation. His first known commission was to supervise the completion of Christ Church Cathedral in Montréal on the death in 1857 of its designer, Frank Wills. Scott had little input into the finished product as Wills' original scheme was carried out almost to the letter.⁶ This commission did succeed however in establishing Scott's reputation with the Anglican Church as an architect proficient in the favoured Gothic Revival style.

Over the next ten years Scott designed at least four modest Anglican churches in small urban centres in Québec and Ontario.⁷ Two examples which typify his work from this period are *St. John's Anglican Church*, 1860 in Prescott, Ont. (fig. 1)⁸ and *Trinity Church* of

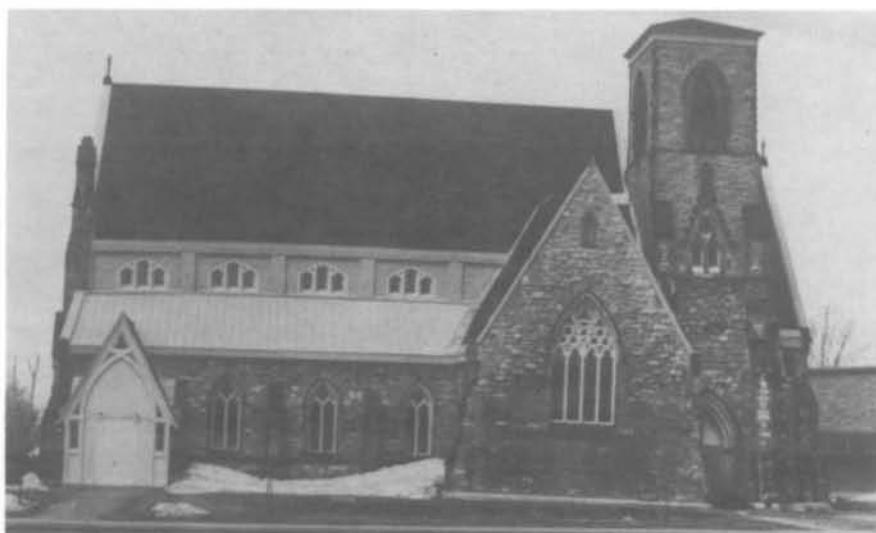
1869 in Cornwall, Ont. (fig. 2).⁹ The designs, featuring a high-pitched roof, off-centre tower, deep chancel and side entrance, were derived from thirteenth-century English parish churches. This form had been revived in Britain, most notably by Augustus Welby Pugin, and promoted by the Ecclesiastical Society in the mid-nineteenth century as the most appropriate form for the Church of England. Scott's emphasis on structural solidity, created by the heavy, sturdy quality



(1) T.S. SCOTT, St. John's Anglican Church, Prescott, Ontario, 1860. (Canadian Inventory of Historic Building, Parks Canada).

of the rough textured low stone walls, was characteristic of this period of the Gothic Revival.

These design qualities were successfully carried over into Scott's domestic work. *Ballymena*, splendidly situated on the shores of Lake Ontario near Maitland, was designed for the Reverend Richard Lewis in 1861 (fig. 3).¹⁰ Features such as the high, slightly-flared gable roof and the heavy stone walls punctuated by small windows are reminiscent of his church designs. *Ballymena* still stands today although the



(2) T.S. SCOTT, **Trinity Church**, Cornwall, Ontario, 1869. (Canadian Inventory of Historic Building, Parks Canada).



(3) T.S. SCOTT, **Plan for Ballymena**, Maitland, Ontario, 1861. (Archives of Ontario).

verandah and much of the decorative bargeboard along the eaves have been removed.

Ballymena and his church architecture represent the best of Scott's early work. While not particularly innovative, they demonstrate a competent handling of the Gothic vocabulary and massing. From what is known to date of his work, once outside this idiom Scott does not seem quite as comfortable. The *James Major House* of 1859 in Montréal is a rather eccentric design (fig. 4).¹¹ The main brick block, heavy and stolid in appearance, is completely engulfed by a verandah which features massive, roughly-detailed wooden braces that Scott had borrowed from Grand Trunk Railway designs. On



(4) T.S. SCOTT, *James Major House*, 1221 rue Guy, Montréal, Québec. (Canadian Inventory of Historic Building, Parks Canada).

the *Major House*, these forms seem entirely inappropriate and impractical. The heavy structural system provided by these braces as well as sturdy upright posts seems to far exceed the support requirements of the verandah; moreover, the low-hanging braces would have been a hazard for anyone strolling along the gallery. Of greater significance is the treatment of the roof, whose short steep pitch suggests an embryonic form of a mansard roof, the hallmark of the Second Empire style. This rather heavy-handed design is far removed from the rich variety of form, outline and detail that was to become so characteristic of Scott's federal architecture.

In May of 1871 Scott accepted the post as Architect to the Department of Public Works in Ottawa. This appointment marked a dramatic change in his importance to the Canadian architec-

tural scene. Although his private practice in Montréal appeared to be modestly successful, from what is known to date of his work, he could not have been considered a leading figure in the field. As Chief Architect he would eventually assume responsibility for the design, construction, maintenance and repair of all federal buildings across the country, a charge which represented Canada's largest and most expensive building programme.

Why Scott should have been hired for this prestigious post over one of Canada's more prominent designers is a mystery. Possibly Scott had cultivated connections in the right places (the Macdonald government was well known for its generosity to its friends).¹² According to the *Ottawa Journal* of 1895 Scott was induced to accept the position by Sir Georges-Étienne Cartier.¹³ While as yet unsubstantiated by primary documentation, an association between Scott and Cartier would have been quite possible given that both men were connected with the Grand Trunk Railway. Cartier had served as the Company's solicitor since 1853 and, as one of the most powerful men in the Macdonald cabinet, a recommendation from him to the Department of Public Works would certainly have carried considerable weight.

Patronage may provide part of the answer but a more likely explanation lies both in the degree of importance associated with Scott's initial appointment and in the qualifications demanded for the job. In 1871 the post of Chief Architect did not exist and Scott was hired for the lesser position of Architect, a function previously filled by the Assistant Chief Engineer, F.P. Rubidge. Within this hierarchy Scott would have worked under the immediate supervision of the Chief Engineer, John Page, who ultimately ran the shop. Initially there was less status and power associated with the job and it may not have been deemed prestigious enough to attract more noted architects. Furthermore the government did not appear to be particularly interested in obtaining a prominent designer. In 1871 the Minister of Public Works, Hector Langevin, recommended to the Privy Council that the government rely more on short term contracts let to outside engineers and architects for specific projects. He recognized the need for a permanent staff architect in Ottawa primarily to act as a liaison between the contractor and the government, and to supervise the maintenance and repair of existing government buildings. Design talent was not stressed; Langevin asked only that the position be held by an architect with "some draughting experience."¹⁴

Whatever the reasoning behind his appointment, Scott could not have picked a more opportune time to arrive on the scene. In the first few years after Confederation, the government initiated very few new building projects but by the early 1870's the Department of Public Works appeared to be gearing up for a massive, high-profile

building programme which, by 1881 and Scott's retirement, saw the construction of approximately twenty-seven custom houses and post offices, as well a legislative building in Winnipeg, two government residences, drill sheds, penitentiaries, marine hospitals, and military buildings.¹⁵ With such a large building programme in the works, a restructuring of the departmental hierarchy became essential. While the Engineering Branch under John Page retained control over the canal, road and railway programmes, an autonomous Architect's Branch was created in February of 1872 to be headed up by Scott in his newly designated capacity as Chief Architect.¹⁶

Scott's arrival at Public Works coincided not only with an organizational shuffle but with the creation of a whole new look to federal architecture. Prior to 1871 the buildings constructed by the Public Works Department of the Province of Canada, forerunner of the federal department, were executed in a rather staid classical or Renaissance Revival style. After 1871, federal architecture was dominated almost entirely by the Second Empire style characterized by its high mansard roof, pavilion massing and its rich sculptural detailing, usually in a classical vocabulary. Although there is no evidence of Scott having worked in this mode, beyond the faint echo of a mansard roof on the *James Major House* in Montréal, the reign of this new architectural fashion corresponded almost exactly with Scott's term of office as Chief Architect, from 1871 to 1881. For this reason it is logical to assume that the appearance of this style in federal architecture must have been a reflection of Scott's own tastes, but this was not the case.

By examining the Public Works records during the critical period of stylistic transition in 1870 and 1871, it becomes more apparent that the move to the Second Empire style occurred months before Scott's arrival. The formulation of the "federal" style was, in fact, a conscious government policy, promoted initially by officials within the Post Office Department who wanted to create a fresh and dynamic image for the new Dominion government. They found a suitable model in the post-Civil War buildings of the United States government which, under the direction of Alfred B. Mullett, supervisory architect to the Treasury Department, had promoted this lavish and expensive Second Empire mode for many of its large public buildings.¹⁷

The role of the Post Office Department and the influence of the American model in Public Works building becomes evident by examining the planning process of the department's first major project of the post-Confederation era, the *Toronto Post Office*. In March 1870 John Dewe, Postal Inspector for Toronto, submitted to the Department of Public Works a set of plans for the new building which he described as:

...chaste, elegant and in perfect taste, and highly creditable

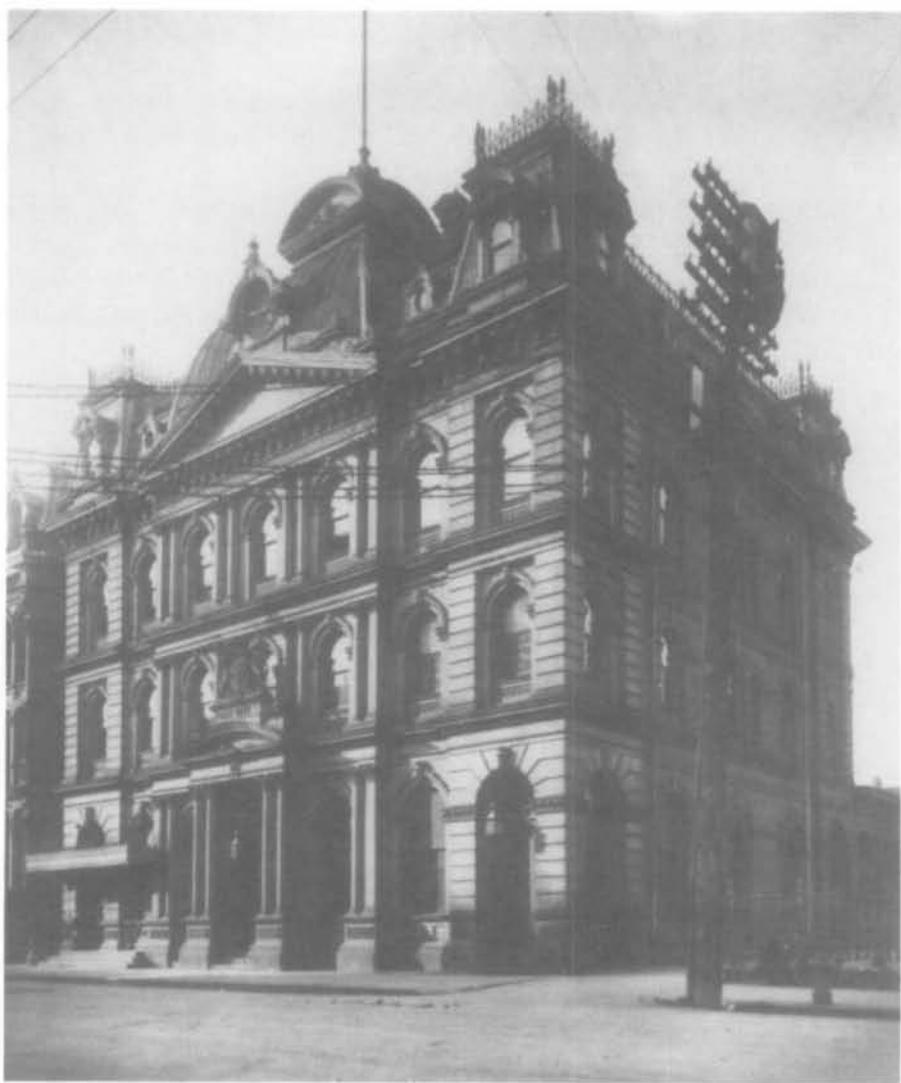
to Mr. Mullett, the architect by whom they have been drawn. The interior arrangements have been planned out with great care and after consultation with some of the best practical Post Office officials in Canada and the United States.¹⁸

It was the intention of the Post Office to promote these plans by Mullett as a model for all future postal buildings. A few weeks later William White, Secretary to the Post Office Department re-submitted these same drawings for a new Post Office in Québec City which he later describes as "a general plan applicable to all city Post Offices to be hereafter built."¹⁹

Unfortunately these plans have disappeared and, as the contract was awarded to Toronto architect Henry Langley, it is impossible to know what they looked like. It is likely, however, that much of Mullett's original conception was reflected in Langley's final design (fig. 5). Not only was Langley given a set of unspecified plans on which he was to base his design,²⁰ but the dimensions and some of the interior planning features of Langley's building closely conform to those described in Mullett's drawings.²¹ Both designs consisted of a three-storey main block and a one-storey rear addition with a skylight which was to house the mail-sorting room. Mullett's influence can be most explicitly illustrated in a comparison with the *New York Post Office and Courthouse* complex which had begun construction in 1869 (fig. 6). Despite the unusual shape and more massive scale of the New York building, common features such as the central pavilion with a convex-curved mansard roof flanked by two pavilions capped by straight-sloped mansards and the strong horizontal divisions of the facade articulated by round-headed windows, suggest a strong stylistic affiliation.

In Langley's design for the *Toronto Post Office*, the government had found a suitable model that would endure for the next ten years for all future federal buildings. By the time Scott arrived in Ottawa, five months after the Langley plans had been accepted, the transition to the Second Empire style was complete.²² When Scott assumed his post, the Department seemed intent on familiarizing him with the approved style. Within a few months of his arrival Scott was sent off on what can be best described as an indoctrination tour to the United States which included stops at New York and Boston, cities where two of Mullett's most important Second Empire buildings were under construction.²³

As Chief Architect it became Scott's job to ensure that all government buildings conformed to this "federal" image. As a result, Scott's own personality becomes obscured, for not only was the basic stylistic formula predetermined but the actual designing responsibilities had to be shared among himself, the contract architect and the client, that is, the department to be accommodated in the new building.



(5) Henry LANGLEY for the Department of Public Works, **General Post Office**, Toronto, Ontario, 1871-74; demolished 1960. (Public Archives Canada , RD 336).

Scott's role in this tripartite arrangement was primarily one of supervision and direction.

An examination of the planning and construction process of a number of building projects of the 1870's reveals Scott's basic working method.²⁴ Once a site for a building had been selected, Scott consulted with the client to work out the interior arrangements. For large scale buildings, sketch floor plans would be given to a local architect who was commissioned to produce the final working drawings. There is little evidence that the contract architect received any definite specifications for the exterior appearance beyond Scott's occasional reference to having come to "an agreement as to style."²⁵

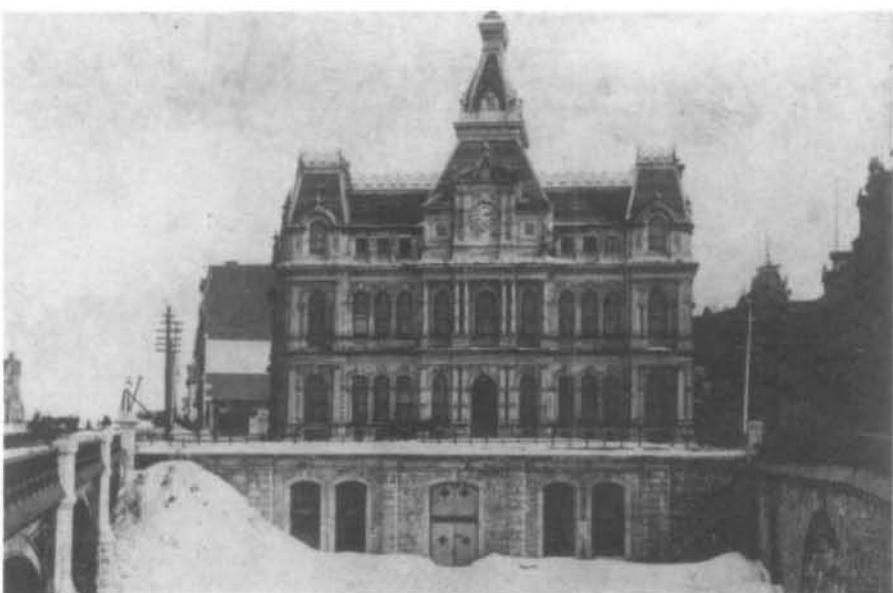


(6) Alfred B. MULLETT, Courthouse and Post Office, New York, 1869-75; demolished 1938. (Library of Congress).

But judging from the consistency of style in federal building, the architect must have clearly understood what was expected of him. Walter Chesterton's design for the *Ottawa Post Office* (fig. 7) of 1872-76 was essentially a reworked version of the *Toronto Post Office*. Although its overly fussy detail lacks the plasticity of Langley's design, the basic form with central and flanking pavilions was modelled after the Toronto building.

The contract architect was responsible for working out the design but the presence of Scott in his supervisory capacity should not be ignored. If the initial submission met Scott's approval, few changes were made, but it was not uncommon for Scott to suggest very specific and concrete alterations to the designing architect's plans. In the case of the *Saint John Custom House* (fig. 8) begun in 1877, the first plans, which were drawn by the local firm of J.T.C. McKean and F.C. Fairweather, did not meet Scott's approval. According to his instructions, mansarded endtowers and more ornamentation were added to the building thereby bringing the design in line with Scott's interpretation of the "federal" style.²⁶

The Department of Public Works did not rely entirely on the contract system and often called upon the Chief Architect's Branch to assume total responsibility for a project, particularly for public buildings of a modest scale. The reliance on "Departmental" designs



(7) Walter CHESTERTON for the Department of Public Works, **Post Office**, Ottawa, Ontario, 1872-75; demolished 1938. (Canadian Inventory of Historic Building PA 51843).



(8) J.T.C. McKEAN and G.E. FAIRWEATHER for the Department of Public Works, **Custom House**, St. John, N.B., 1877-81; demolished 1961. (Public Archives Canada, C 30871).

was most prevalent under the Liberal administration of Alexander MacKenzie, Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works from 1873 to 1878, whose policy of budgetary restraint discouraged the more expensive practice of hiring outside architects. With the return of

the Macdonald regime in 1878, the contract system once again became more widely used.

Because these departmental designs originated from a single office, they generally demonstrated a far greater consistency of design than was evident in the contracted works. The *Post Office, St Jean, Québec* (fig. 9) of 1877 and the *Fredericton Post Office* (fig. 10) of 1878 are of a very similar configuration. The characteristic mansard roof surmounts a simple brick block. A pavilion plan is suggested in the slightly projecting frontispiece accented in the roofline by a raised tower. The stamp of a departmental design can also be recognized in



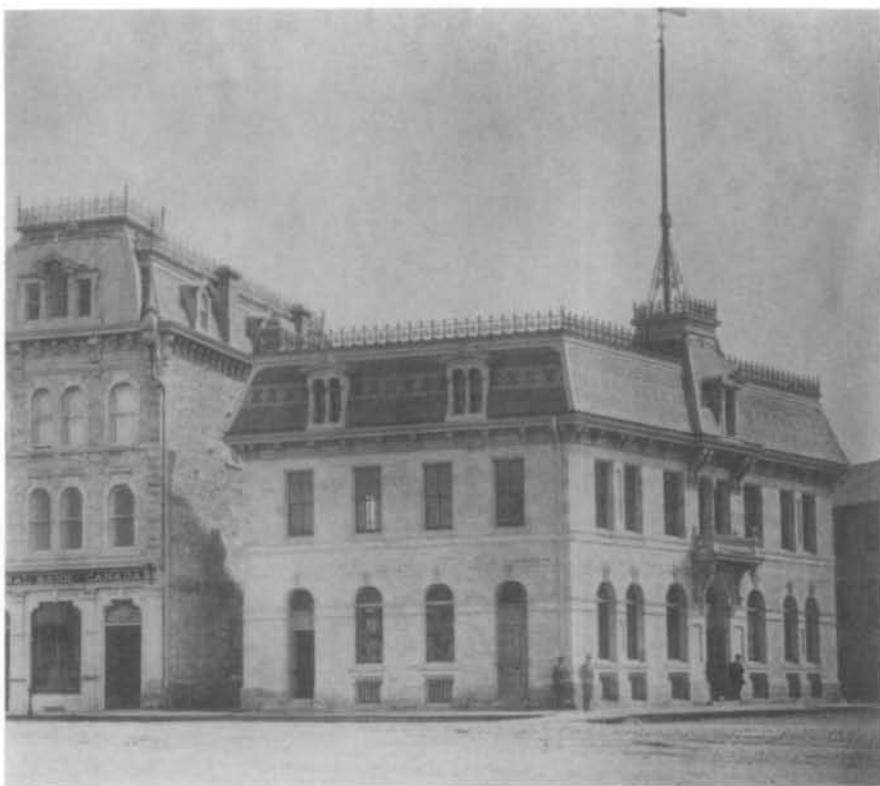
(9) Chief Architect's Branch (DPW), Plan for the Post Office, St-Jean, Québec, 1877-80; demolished. (Department of Public Works).



(10) Chief Architect's Branch (DPW), Post Office, Fredericton, N.B., 1878. (Canadian Inventory of Historic Building, Parks Canada).

the repetitious decorative elements. A small balcony over the central door, used in both these buildings, was a popular motif and appears again in the *Guelph Post Office* of 1876 (fig. 11). Although the main facade of the Guelph building is on the long end and a pavilion plan is only expressed in the roofline, its decorative vocabulary is very close to the near-contemporary St Jean building. Both feature decorative inset panels around the door, narrow string-courses which define the storeys and link the ground floor windows, and a similar cornice motif with brackets interspersed by rectangular panels.

Because these designs were produced in the Chief Architect's office and reflect a consistency of design, it has mistakenly been assumed that they must represent Scott's own work. However, the make-up of the Ottawa office reveals that the question of attribution is not such a straightforward matter. By 1875 the Chief Architect's



(11) Chief Architect's Branch, (DPW), Post Office, Guelph, Ontario, 1876-78; demolished. (Public Archives Canada, PA 46462).

office consisted of a staff of ten architectural draughtsmen, almost all of whom would later become successful architects in their own right. The most notable was David Ewart who was to succeed Thomas Fuller as Chief Architect in 1897.²⁷ In view of the high calibre of Scott's staff and the heavy volume of work produced, it is reasonable to assume that much of the designing responsibilities were delegated to his staff with Scott maintaining his supervisory role. This supposition is supported by a letter written by Frederick Alexander, one of Scott's draughtsmen, which appeared in an 1899 issue of the *Canadian Architect and Builder*. Alexander, in correcting a previous article which attributed the interior design of the Parliamentary Library to Fuller and Jones, writes:

During the tenure of office of the former Chief Architect — Mr. Thos. S. Scott — I was acting as an assistant to the Chief Architect and at his request I designed and superintended the construction of the interior fit-up of the library... So while, Mr. Scott officially was responsible for the work, actually he had nothing to do with it beyond authorizing and approving what was done.²⁸

At this early stage in the history of the Chief Architect's Branch the internal workings of the Ottawa office were never clearly defined on paper. One of the earliest descriptions of the Branch appeared in a *Report of the Royal Commissioners* of 1892 which was a general inquiry into the Civil Service. When the Deputy Minister of Public Works (Antoine Gobeil) was asked how the eight draughtsmen in the Architect's office were occupied, he replied:

The work is subdivided between them. One man would have the details of the construction of a building, and the finishing would be in the hands of another. One who was more accustomed to ornamental designs would have that work, and one who was more versed in the practical solid portion of the work would look after the walls and frame of the building. It was subdivided according to the knowledge and talent of each man.²⁹

Although this report refers to a later period, the general organization and delegation of responsibilities probably had not changed a great deal if one considers that four members of the staff in 1892 date back to the Scott era.

Does the fact that Scott was not personally responsible for each aspect of a design necessarily relegate him to a purely administrative role? One could argue that a division of labour is standard practice in any firm composed of more than one architect yet despite this, a design is usually interpreted in terms of the personal style and tastes of the firm's leading architect. The comparison between the office of the Chief Architect and a private firm, however, is not entirely applicable. In a private firm, although one may not be able to trace the hand of an individual designer in each aspect of the design, the original concept was generally his own and the work contributed by various members of his staff must conform to his ideas. Scott too was responsible for moulding the work of many different architects, either on staff or on contract, into a uniform style but in Scott's case, the design standards had been set down by government policy which he faithfully implemented.

Only once in Scott's ten year tenure at the Department of Public Works did he emerge as a designer in his own right. The design for the extension to the *West Block* of the Parliament Hill complex which was begun in 1875 has always been accredited to Scott personally (fig. 12).³⁰ The *Annual Report of the Department of Public Works for the year 1876* states the project was under the "immediate supervision of the Chief Architect."³¹ Scott also submitted the plans for the *West Block Extension* as an example of his own work for an exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy in 1882.³²

To harmonize with the existing buildings on Parliament Hill, the new wing was naturally designed in a Gothic idiom. The fact that Scott should step out of his supervisory role to assume the position of

designing architect for the only major government project of the 1870's to feature a Gothic style, supports the supposition that Scott's own stylistic preferences lay primarily in that direction. The *West Block Extension* represents Scott the designer at his best, although weaknesses in the design reaffirm the initial assessment of him as a competent but not outstanding architect. In its overall conception



(12) T.S. SCOTT and the Department of Public Works, **West Block Extension, Parliament Hill**, Ottawa, Ontario, 1875-78. (Canadian Inventory of Historic Building, Parks Canada).

Scott's design is most effective. Instead of treating the new wing simply as an extension of the original complex that revolved around the central square on Wellington Street, Scott used the new addition to create a whole new facade to Parliament Hill, which looked out across the west end of the city and up the Ottawa River. The massive tower providing the focus of the new design, is similar to the Centre Block tower by Thomas Fuller but conceived in more massive forms evident in the thick corner turrets which contrast with the light decorative scale of Fuller's design. The rest of the wing is not nearly as satisfying. The long walls on either side of the tower are broken only by light and flimsy spire-like towers which do not provide an effective counter balance to the bulk of the main tower. The result is a rather rambling and disunified composition.

In the fall of 1881 Scott was granted early retirement from the civil service at the age of fifty-five, supposedly on the grounds of ill health.³³ While he did obtain the necessary medical certificate to support his claim, one cannot help but suspect that there were other factors hastening his departure. By 1881 the appeal of the Second Empire fashion was beginning to wear thin. Only three years later this whole era of public building was being dismissed by one member of the House of Commons as that "gaudy and cheap style of architecture of which the country would be ashamed."³⁴

The Department of Public Works had not been insensitive to the changing climate of taste and a shift in stylistic direction was evident

while Scott was still on staff. The 1881 design for the Stratford Post Office, with its off-centre clock tower and irregular plan, established the beginnings of a new design standard that would be reinterpreted in a Romanesque guise by Scott's successor, Thomas Fuller.³⁵ Scott may have been partially responsible for promoting this new federal model although it would seem more likely that once again pressure for change was being exerted from outside the Chief Architect's Branch. Perhaps once more government officials were looking to the federal architecture of the United States, which in the mid-1870's had abandoned the Second Empire style in favour of medieval or Romanesque forms.³⁶ Scott's departure was probably prompted by this move to create a fresh new image. It is very characteristic of the bureaucratic process that when old policies are rejected, so are those who were most closely associated with them, even though in Scott's case he was not directly responsible for their initiation.

For the next fourteen years Scott continued to live in Ottawa but his architectural career was essentially at an end. He surfaced only once in 1889 to design the *Bonaventure Station, Montréal* for his old patron, the Grand Trunk Railway (fig. 13).³⁷ The design refers back to the now very dated Second Empire style in its use of a mansard roof and a pavilion massing, although the light intricate detailing of the cornice and roofline lacks the full sculptural quality that characterized the grand Second Empire federal buildings constructed under his supervision. The *Bonaventure Station* is obviously the work of an



(13) T.S. SCOTT, **Bonaventure Station**, Montréal, Québec, 1889; demolished. (Public Archives Canada, C70915).

architect who was very much out of touch with current architectural trends.

Had Thomas Seaton Scott remained in private practice throughout his career he would have been remembered as a competent Gothic Revival designer, but of secondary importance in the history of Canadian architecture. By accepting the post of Architect, and later Chief Architect to the Department of Public Works, he automatically assumed a much higher profile than he would have otherwise achieved. As the administrator of the federal government's post Confederation building programme, Scott played a key role in some of the most important building projects of the 1870's and in the development and dissemination of the Second Empire style throughout Canada. But as we have seen, Scott's emergence as a major figure in Canadian architecture was due to a government appointment rather than to his own talents as a designing architect.

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Notes:

- 1 This research on the career of Thomas Seaton Scott was a by-product of a larger study entitled "The Second Empire Style in Canadian Architecture" prepared for Parks Canada by Christina CAMERON and the author. It is presently available in both French and English in the Parks Canada publication, *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History*, no. 24 and in *Lieux historiques canadiens: Cahiers d'archéologie et d'histoire*. A condensed version of this paper on Thomas Seaton Scott was presented to the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada in 1978 at London, Ont.
- 2 P.A.C., RG11, Vol. 591, pp. 3-6. Memo as to increases to salaries of employees at Head Quarters, 20 January 1875. This document lists Scott's date of birth as 16 July, 1826.
- 3 The *Montreal City Directories* first list Thomas S. Scott as an architect in 1858-59.
- 4 Mr. T.S. Scott's Death," *Journal* (Ottawa), 17 June 1895, p. (1).
- 5 *La Minerve* (Québec), "Aux Contracteurs et Constructeurs," 3 août 1858, p. 3. Tenders were called for the stations at St Thomas, L'Islet, St Jean, St Roch-des-Aulnaies, Ste Anne-de-la-Pocatière, St Pascal, Ste Hélène, and Rivière-de-Loup.
- 6 Jean-Claude MARSAN, *Montréal en évolution* (Montréal: Fides, 1974), p. 216.
- 7 Scott also designed St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church in Ottawa (1868) and St. Luke's Church in Waterloo, Québec (1871). *Canadian Illustrated News* (Montréal), 17 June 1871, pp. 371-72. I thank Barbara Salomon de Friedberg (Ministère des affaires culturelles (Québec)) for bringing this building to my attention.
- 8 *Canadian Illustrated News* (Montréal), 18 May 1878, p. 315.
- 9 *Canadian Illustrated News* (Montréal), 11 Dec. 1878, p. 371.
- 10 According to the research supplied to me by Mr. Steven Otto of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation of the Province of Ontario, the Reverend Richard Lewis who was the Rector of Saint John's Parish in Prescott, commissioned the architect of his newly-built parish church, Thomas Seaton Scott, to design a private residence in August of 1861. The house, situated on the east half of Lot 28 in Augusta Township, was not begun until 1863. *Ballymena*, as completed, was a mirror image of Scott's plan, a modification which, according to Mr. Otto, was probably intended to orient the verandah to the afternoon sunlight. The plans are held in the Archives of Ontario.
- 11 ANQM, greffe J.S. Hunter, Building contract between James Major Esq. and William and Thomas Seath Wilson (Masons and Bricklayers), 1 April 1859, No. 4536. I thank Mr. Robert Lemire of Montréal for bringing this building to my attention.
- 12 The role of political patronage in the hiring practices of the Department of Public Works has been briefly examined in an unpublished history of the Department of Public Works by Douglas OWRAM. According to Owram, patronage was regarded not only as a means of rewarding the Government's friends but also as a means of creating "a friendly staff, with its own political sensibilities that could be trusted not to embarrass the government." Douglas Owram, "The History of the Department of Public Works." Manuscript on file, Department of Public Works, Ottawa, Canada, 1975, 11. 527-552.

- 13 *Journal* (Ottawa) "Mr. T.S. Scott's Death," *op. cit.* 17 June 1895, p. (1).
- 14 P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 445, Subj. 1103. Memo from Hector Langevin to Privy Council, 28 June 1871.
- 15 For a comprehensive list of the public buildings erected under T.S. Scott, see Dept. of Public Works, *General Report of the Minister of Public Works for the years 1867 to 1882* (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger, 1883), App. 1.
- 16 P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 445, Subj. 1103. p. 734. Order in Council to the Minister of Public Works, 17 Feb. 1872.
- 17 Lawrence WODEHOUSE, "Alfred B. Mullett and his French Style Government Buildings," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 31, 1 (March 1972), pp. 22-37.
- 18 P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 309, pp. 941-45, John Dewe to the Department of Public Works, Toronto, 4 March 1870.
- 19 P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 324, p. 868, William White to F. Braun, Secretary, DPW, 3 June 1870.
- 20 P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 313, pp. 62-3, F.P. RUBIDGE to Henry Langley, 7 Nov. 1870. The letter states: "Your plans however are to be based upon and conform generally with the dimensions and interior arrangements for post purposes set forth by the Plans placed in your hands by the undersigned a few days since."
- 21 Mullett's plans consisted of a three storey building measuring seventy by fifty feet with a one-storey rear addition with a skylight of seventy by sixty-four feet which was to house the mailsorting room. (P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 324, pp. 1848-52, Wm. White to Minister of Public Works, 7 March 1870). Langley's plans measured seventy-five by sixty-six feet for the three-storey main block with a one-storey rear addition with skylight measuring seventy-five by sixty-six feet.
- 22 Langley's plans for the *Toronto Post Office* were approved with slight revisions by the client (the Post Office) on 29 Dec. 1870. P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 314, Subj. 884, p. 178. Memo from F. Braun to F.P. Rubidge, 19 Dec. 1870.
- 23 On 16 Sept. 1871 Scott submitted a report of his examination of "certain public buildings in Portland, Maine, Boston and New York." Unfortunately the actual report has disappeared. P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 653, p. 2636.
- 24 This summation of the process involved in the construction of a federal building is based on the Departmental correspondence located in the P.A.C. for the following projects: Fredericton Post Office, RG 11, Vol. 564, Subj. 82; Guelph Post Office, RG 11, Vols. 549-50, Subj. 64; London Custom House, RG 11, Vol. 296, Subj. 807; Ottawa Post Office, RG 11, Vol. 291, Subj. 801; St Jean Post Office, RG 11, Vol. 584; Toronto Post Office, RG 11, Vol. 413-14, Subj. 884; Toronto Custom House, RG 11, Vol. 293, Subj. 803; Custom House Trois-Rivières, RG 11, Vol. 295; Victoria Post Office, RG 11, Vol. 364; Windsor Post Office, RG 11, Vol. 564.
- 25 P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 295, p. 34, T.S. Scott to C. Brown, regarding Custom House, Trois-Rivières, 2 May 1873.
- 26 "The Saint John Custom House," *Daily Telegraph* (Saint John, N.B.), 26 April 1881, pp. (1-2).
- 27 P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 59, pp. 3-6. Memo as to increases to salaries of employees at Head Quarters, 20 Jan. 1875. Scott's staff consisted of D. Ewart, W. Curran (appointed 1871), F.J. Alexander, W.R. Billings (appointed 1872), W. Brymer, F. Boncorps, H. James, J.B. Lamb (appointed 1873), J.W. Watts (appointed 1874), and G.A. O'Kelly (awaiting appointment).
- 28 "Letter to the editor signed Fred. J. Alexander," *Canadian Architect and Builder*, 12 (1899), p. 100.
- 29 "Report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to enquire into certain matters relating to the Civil Service of Canada," *Sessional Papers*, 1892 (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1892), No. 16C, p. 488. A study of the organization of the Chief Architect's Branch of 1881 until 1914 has been prepared by Margaret ARCHIBALD and is entitled, "Departmental Design in the Chief Architect's Branch of the Department of Public Works, 1881-1914." Manuscript of file, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1979. This study will eventually be printed in *History and Archeology: Histoire et archéologie* (Ottawa: Parks Canada).
- 30 According to the *Free Press* (Ottawa), 18 Jan. 1878, p. (4) "The General or Main design was by Thos. S. Scott... his assistants being M.H. James and staff."
- 31 P.A.C., *Annual Report of the Minister of Public Works for the year 1876* (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger, 1877, App. 17, p. 79).
- 32 These plans are now held by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
- 33 Scott submitted his resignation in September of 1881 P.A.C., RG 2, series 2, report no. 1273, 7 Sept. 1881). For some reason the resignation was later cancelled and Scott was given early retirement with a full pension. P.A.C., RG 11, Vol. 2045, AE 9616, 28 Oct. 1881).
- 34 *House of Commons Debates* (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger 1885), 2, 1884, p. 803.
- 35 Christopher THOMAS, "Architectural Image for the Dominion: Scott, Fuller and the Stratford Post Office," *The Journal of Canadian Art History*, III, 1,2 (Fall 1976), pp. 83-94.
- 36 WODEHOUSE, p. 35.
- 37 The design of the *Bonaventure Station* has always been attributed to E.P. Hannaford, Engineer to the Grand Trunk Railway; however an article written on its completion in 1889 gives "Mr. Scott of Ottawa" as the Architect (*Canada Architect and Builder*, 2 (1889), p. 9).

Résumé

Thomas Seaton Scott: architecte et gestionnaire

Si Thomas Seaton Scott a marqué l'histoire de l'architecture canadienne, ce n'est pas en tant qu'architecte talentueux et original, mais plutôt comme gestionnaire de l'un des programmes fédéraux de construction les plus ambitieux jamais entrepris au Canada. Durant ses dix années de service à titre d'architecte en chef au Ministère des Travaux publics (de 1871 à 1881), M. Scott a été responsable de la conception et de la construction de tous les édifices depuis Halifax jusqu'à Vancouver.

Né en Angleterre aux alentours de 1817, Scott a émigré au Canada vers la fin des années 1850 pour travailler comme ingénieur à la société Grand Tronc qui avait alors entrepris la construction du pont Victoria. Une fois les travaux terminés en 1859, Scott est resté au Canada et a ouvert son propre bureau d'architecte qu'il exploita jusqu'en 1871, concevant les plans de divers bâtiments privés, commerciaux et religieux au Québec et en Ontario, plans qui, s'ils n'étaient pas extraordinaires, témoignaient néanmoins d'une compétence certaine. La place de Scott dans l'architecture canadienne aurait probablement été plus modeste s'il n'avait pas été nommé, en 1871, au poste nouvellement créé d'architecte en chef du Ministère des Travaux publics.

La confédération des colonies du "British North America" créa une grande demande pour de nouveaux édifices publics qui abriteraient les divers ministères fédéraux. Non content d'utiliser les édifices existants, le gouvernement du nouveau Dominion tenait à présenter une image renouvelée et dynamique au vaste pays qui venait de naître. C'est le style second empire, à la fois extravagant et flamboyant, qui devient le style fédéral. Bien que Scott n'ait pas conçu lui-même un grand nombre des édifices les plus importants, il avait néanmoins la responsabilité en sa qualité d'architecte en chef de déterminer le style de ces édifices et de modifier les plans soumis afin d'assurer la conformité de tous les édifices du Ministère des Travaux publics à son interprétation du style fédéral. Thomas Seaton Scott n'était pas un architecte extraordinaire, mais en tant qu'architecte en chef, il a créé pour les édifices publics un modèle standard de style Second Empire, lequel a influencé l'évolution de l'architecture dans tout le pays.

Janet Wright

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- BERGEVIN, Hélène. "L'architecture des églises protestantes des Cantons de l'Est et des Bois-Francs au XIX^e siècle." Mémoire de maîtrise, Université Laval, 1980.
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- MENDEL, David. "Les crucifix du Québec: le sacré et le profane." Mémoire de maîtrise, Université Laval, 1980. (Text in English).
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The Concordia University Art Index to Nineteenth Century Canadian Periodicals.
Edited by Hardy GEORGE
Concordia University, 1981
304 pages, \$19.00

Art was not a theme that absorbed the editors of Canadian periodicals during the nineteenth century. The general view was that the conditions for a flowering of the arts had yet to be achieved, and the editors tended to share this opinion, with regret. "The taste of our colonial fellow-subjects is almost at the zero point" lamented the editor of the *Anglo-American Magazine* in 1854, although he went on to suggest that imported art magazines might help to change this. And indeed artistic activity developed a momentum throughout the last half of the century with the establishment of the first public art gallery in 1860 in Montréal, the introduction of art schools into the educational system, and the coming together of artists into lasting associations, beginning with the Royal Canadian Academy and the Ontario Society of Artists in 1881.

While magazines solely devoted to art were not a part of this activity, a lay readership for art reviews and criticism, and artistic reproductions and photographs soon existed. The general interest magazines with their occasional articles about art and regular "Art" columns were able to satisfy the need for information. The authors included artists Napoleon Bourassa, Daniel Fowler and W.A. Sherwood, and several fearless critics who hid under "noms de plume:" Jimmie Rembrandt," "Lynn C. Doyle," and "Ignoramus." More often the "Art" columns and exhibition reviews were unsigned. Engravings in imported magazines, especially in the illustrated weeklies had educated the general public to an appreciation of art and pictorial imagery. With growing national awareness, and pride in the vast Canadian landscape, domestic illustrated magazines were needed. They attracted masters of the quick sketch and photographers, in many cases drawn from their easels and studios to roam and record in the far north and west, becoming the

popularizers of a new art form, the artistic reproduction.

Professor Hardy George and his team of Canadian art history graduate students are the compilers of the *Concordia University Art Index*. By culling, extracting and analyzing articles about art, and a multitude of illustrations from thirty-one Canadian magazines, they have given us more than bleak references to nineteenth-century published writings about art. The observant browser can effortlessly step into nineteenth-century shoes, and move around in the art world that existed then. In considering the relative popularity of the best known artists, no one should be surprised that Reynolds, Gainsborough and Turner are cited 28, 15 and 22 times respectively, and Daumier and Manet only 3 times each. Perhaps 12 mentions of Monet is unexpected. Among historical figures and public personae, a few stand out as the favoured subjects of photographers and engravers. The Canadian landscape in its untamed aspects presented a particular challenge to the talents and the stamina for travel of the illustrators. The reader may in many cases learn for the first time about illustrators and photographers whose names were as familiar to their contemporaries as those artists whose signatures adorned canvases in the public art galleries, among them Eugene Haberer, Alexander Henderson, Dickson Patterson and E.J. Russell. In other cases the *Index* introduces one to an unfamiliar but extensive body of work by well-known artists as represented by their magazine illustrations.

The observations that follow are intended to serve as cautionary notes to the user of the *Index* rather than as fundamental criticisms. Student indexers come and go; some are meticulous while others are not as conscientious when submitting to the discipline of indexing. Revision after the fact is tedious, if not humanly impossible. If it had been possible to computerize the project from the beginning, with built-in codes and reminders, it would have been easier to maintain an even degree of detail and consistent adherence to editorial policy. Instead, we have a product which is "quick and dirty" in many ways, but still as delightful and unexpected as a grab-bag of goodies,

and infinitely more browsable than more reliable systematic indexes.

In the *Index* we have a new Canadian "book of lists." This reviewer was held entranced from Central Station in Montréal to disembarkation in Toronto by the innumerable lists of cross references appearing under a number of carefully chosen headings: "Art Schools," "Art Societies," "Engravings," "Illustrations," "Lithographers," "Painters," "Photographers," "Sculptors," "Sketches," each with lists of practitioners of the art. Under the names of cities are listed the buildings and monuments which have been discussed or pictorially reproduced. The lists are probably the most absorbing feature of the *Index*, and they lead one on a merry chase from reference to reference, finally winding up at the beginning again for another pursuit. "Sculptors, Canadian" is a disappointingly short list, with no new discoveries, reinforcing the general impression that plaster casts and models, monuments to the worthies, and architectural carving and reliefs were the closest approximations to sculpture with which Canadians were familiar. The comment by a *Bystander* critic in 1880 that "sculpture seems dead" was apparently apt.

Because the lists are such a prominent and delightful feature of the *Index*, it is all the more regrettable that there are significant omissions. Despite a stated policy in the introduction that "illustrations having more than one creator or medium, such as an engraving after a photograph, are listed under both artists' names, if known, media, and subject," there are almost as many examples of this policy being ignored as there are of it being carried out. Sketches by J.D. Kelly, E.W. Morrison, P. Roy and many others for illustrations in the *Illustrated War News* have not entitled these artists to inclusion in the list of names under "Sketches, Canadian." Photographers Fred Timms, the Rev. J.B. Silcox, and Brady, who are mentioned in connection with reproductions of their work are not entered under their own names nor do they appear in the lengthy lists of "Photographers." Numerous references to photographs by Notman and Fraser scattered throughout the *Index* do not necessarily re-appear under the photographers' names.

Readers accustomed to more systematic indexes will perhaps regret the lack of precision and completeness in artists' names. Many names of lesser known artists have been repeated simply as found, without verification. Riel Rebellion illustrator John David Kelly is entered simply as "Kelly," just as he signed his work. To find women artists who worked under both their maiden and married names, it is necessary to keep handy a copy of J. Russell Harper's *Early Painters and Engravers in Canada*. Both Mary Bell Eastlake and Maria Morris Miller appear in connection with their early work in the *Index* under their less familiar maiden names, but not under their married names. Without an authority list for place names, an indexer can easily go astray, especially if he has a precarious hold on Canadian geography. Newark, the old name for Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., is assigned to New Jersey. "Bytown, U.C." is unrecognized to be present-day Ottawa, and Toronto in its former identity as "York" stands alone without provincial or national qualification.

The choice of magazines for indexing is inevitably contentious. I myself would not quarrel with the weighting towards reproductions in the late nineteenth-century pictorials where the interest is more often documentary than artistic. Too often Canadian iconography has been summarily dismissed by those who judge it from a European aesthetic, without considering Canadian art in its social and cultural context. If another round of indexing is contemplated, I recommend further art-oriented titles for inclusion: *Arion; Canadian Journal of Art* (1880-81) and *Our Monthly; a magazine of Canadian literature, science and art* (1896). Add to these the agricultural journals and women's magazines, a mine of artists' gossip, tips on art and craft techniques, and commentary on cultural events.

Without annotations, questions are tantalizingly raised in the titles of articles which can only be answered by consulting the articles themselves. Who was "Une dame canadienne peintre" recorded by Michel Bibaud in the *Encyclopédie Canadienne* in 1842? A Madame B...t, it turns out, residing in the village of S... on the St. Lawrence River, artistic genius and portraitist extraordinary. "Notre pays, et souvent

nos campagnes, recèlent des talents qui mériteraient d'être connus plus qu'ils ne le sont généralement." Taking a cue from Bibaud, one might add that the *Concordia University Art Index to Nineteenth Century Canadian Periodicals* has taken us well along the path towards re-discovery of our artists and illustrators, and while the result may be flawed, the service to the recovery of the Canadian artistic past is welcome and overdue.

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**Royal Academy of
Arts/Académie royale des arts du
Canada
Exhibitions and members
1880-1979**
Evelyn de Rostaing McMANN
University of Toronto Press, 1981
xviii, 448 pages, \$60.00

La bibliothéconomie a poussé l'art de préparer un index à un point de raffinement où les conventions semblent obéir à une logique dont seuls quelques initiés peuvent saisir toute la subtilité et toutes les nuances. L'ouvrage de G. Norman Knight, *Indexing, The Art of, A Guide to indexing books and periodicals* (Londres, 1979) vient, souvent avec humour, mettre un peu d'ordre dans cet art dont la pratique exige des qualités toutes particulières. Il faut donc féliciter Madame McMANN d'avoir entrepris et dactylographié de façon aussi claire un tel travail que consulteront plusieurs générations de chercheurs canadiens et étrangers.

L'index des artistes membres et des exposants invités de l'Académie royale des arts du Canada (A.R.A.C.) et des œuvres qu'ils ont présentées (et non le contraire comme le titre pourrait le suggérer) aux différentes expositions organisées ou parrainnées par l'Académie, se présente comme un modèle de clarté et de simplicité ainsi que l'on en juge par la lecture des remarques techniques préliminaires (pp. xi à xiii). Les artistes sont listés par ordre alphabétique

que et pour chacun d'eux, les œuvres citées aux catalogues d'exposition sont données chronologiquement et par ordre numérique. Les informations connexes dans les catalogues sont également mentionnées: adresse de l'artiste, son statut à l'Académie, le médium employé et les dimensions de l'œuvre, et à l'occasion le prix et le nom du prêteur.

L'auteur a compilé la liste de toutes les expositions préparées par l'A.R.A.C., liste qu'elle fournie en annexe, ainsi que la liste de membres des différents conseils de l'Académie avec le poste qu'ils y ont occupé. Madame McMANN est intervenue à quelques reprises en compilant ses listes: elle a eu l'amabilité de souligner le prénom usuel de certains artistes et la ténacité de compléter les informations sur les lieux et dates de naissance et de décès de beaucoup d'artistes dont plusieurs sont aujourd'hui peu connus. De plus, elle a fourni une piste de recherche importante en rédigeant la liste des portraits d'un artiste qui furent exposés à l'A.R.A.C., ces indications iconographiques sont regroupées à la fin de la notice de l'artiste portraituré (ex. Dyonnet, p. 113).

Les autres interventions, d'un caractère non systématique, semblent moins heureuses. Ainsi on aimerait retrouver les titres des œuvres tels que cités originellement, afin de ne pas avoir à toujours vérifier le titre dans les catalogues dont peu de bibliothèques possèdent une série complète. Indépendamment de ce qui pourrait sembler une faute de frappe (Capello, 1880, 27, p. 61; Robert Harris, 1883, 35, p. 173), l'on remarque que souvent les articles au début d'un titre ont été omis, la typographie originale du titre a été changée et que même des corrections ont été apportées (ex. Paul Peel, 1883, 10, p. 321 se lit dans le catalogue: The Sardine Fishery of Cape Finisterre, France, alors qu'il est retranscrit: Sardine fishery of Cape Finistère, France). Certains titres sont même présentés avec une inversion (ex. Alfred Boisseau, 1882, 111, p. 40 se lit originellement: Portrait of Mr Barron, alors que l'index indique: Mr Barron, portrait).

L'auteur indique dans ses notes préliminaires qu'elle a corrigé puis indiqué les erreurs typographiques par l'indication *misprint*. Ce genre de correction

n'apparaît pas nécessaire dans un index qui est un outil de travail et qui ne doit pas intervenir dans l'interprétation des documents. Tout au plus il faut signaler une erreur dans l'épellation du nom de l'artiste et non pas commencer à corriger les titres, comme dans ce casci, sinon il faut corriger systématiquement et ce travail superflu pour une seule personne ou même une équipe peut facilement être accompli par l'utilisateur qui consultera l'index d'une façon ponctuelle mais qui espère y trouver des informations exactes. La plupart des erreurs non corrigées semblent concerner des noms de lieux (ex. Paul Jean Clays, 1882, 308, p. 74; Rita Mount, 1920, 184, p. 296; Percy Woodcock, 1884, 81, p. 435).

Madame McMann indique à l'occasion la localisation actuelle des œuvres tout en précisant que le changement fréquent d'un titre rend ce travail difficile. L'initiative est heureuse mais encore une fois elle semble superflue dans un index, si elle est entreprise elle doit être poussée davantage. L'inventaire national des collections entrepris sous l'égide des Musées nationaux du Canada devrait permettre de compiler ces informations de façon plus complète d'ici quelques années. Les collections publiques font ici l'objet d'omissions graves, la plus frappante est sans doute celle concernant le beau portrait du "père" de l'Académie, le Marquis de Lorne, par Millais qui se trouve à la Galerie nationale du Canada et qui fut au centre des manifestations qui marquèrent le centenaire de l'Académie.

Nonobstant ces quelques remarques, l'index qui comprend la mention de plus de 3,000 artistes, dont 885 membres de l'Académie (je n'ai pas fait le calcul, ce sont les chiffres cités par l'auteur, y en aurait-il davantage? Ainsi je n'ai pas retrouvé par exemple C. L. May qui expose en 1880 sous le numéro 114 The Valley of Champigny, Canton de Valais, Switzerland) devient un outil indispensable pour toute recherche sur l'art au Canada. La multiplicité des informations (ex. l'activité picturale des architectes), des lectures et des usages auquel cet index se prête fait rêver. L'on en vient même à souhaiter la préparation d'un index des lieux et des noms cités dans les titres des œuvres relevés dans cet index...

Laurier Lacroix

F.H. Varley: A Centennial Exhibition

Christopher VARLEY

The Edmonton Art Gallery, 1981
195 pages, 26 colour, 185 b/w
ills., \$20.00

In her controversial book, *American Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, Barbara Novak suggested that American painting is, in the main, conceptual in nature and objective in theme. This means, in essence, that American painters, having isolated a concept or idea for a painting, then based that work very firmly on concrete facts. The principal exceptions in this broad trend she felt were those romantic painters, including Whistler and Vedder, who were very strongly influenced by European styles and concerns. Novak concluded that the factors which provoked an identifiably indigenous American art, as opposed to an imported European one, persisted from the early limner portraits, through to the pop art of the 1960's and the photo realism of today. In Canada a concentration on facts seems to be equally persistent. However, north of the 49th parallel, facts were often approached intellectually, rigidly and rigorously, in a manner that denied room for many emotional flights of fancy. When a more romantic Canadian creator does emerge, a European influence is also paramount, giving rise to more intuitive and emotional creations.¹ F.H. Varley is one of those unusual romantic Canadian painters, and as such, has often been misunderstood or neglected.

Another seminal study that examines the juxtaposition of style, content and geography is Robert Rosenblum's *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition*. Here Rosenblum identifies romantic themes and approaches practiced by important modern painters in Northern Europe and the United States running the gamut from Caspar David Friedrich to Mark Rothko. This romanticism, he feels, is opposed to the formalism practiced by the Paris school of cubists and subsequent stylists. Furthermore, by ignoring the usual suggestion that romanticism as a dominant aesthetic philosophy ended by about 1850, Rosenblum challenges these time restraints and opens up the latter end of

the scale so that Van Gogh and Rothko can be comfortably included. When Novak's and Rosenblum's theories are overlaid interesting results occur. Rosenblum follows the painted manifestations of a particular philosophy and thereby identifies a geographic pattern; Novak starts with a geographic entity and isolates a dominant philosophy therein.² Starting from opposite poles, these two art historians reach mutually supporting conclusions, conclusions which help to locate Varley in a broad North American and even European context.

F.H. Varley was born in 1881 in Sheffield, England and received his early art education at the local art school. As befits such an institution, this school concentrated heavily on drawing and design, giving Varley a thorough foundation in traditional draughtsmanship, an accomplishment he used to advantage all his life. By 1900 Varley was at the Académie Royale des Beaux Arts in Antwerp and did well during his two years there, amassing a number of important prizes. Both schools provided a relatively solid and traditional grounding untainted by the momentous innovations of post-impressionism. This was not inappropriate since Varley's imagination was never really caught by Parisian formalism; his was a more romantic nature. While in Belgium he had studied Buddhism, a continuation of his early interest in the spiritual in nature and in undogmatic yet exotic beliefs. Even before leaving Sheffield, Varley preferred to conduct his own prayer meetings on the moor rather than attend the Congregational Church patronized by his religiously non-conformist family. And after moving to Canada in 1912, these interests persisted. He was involved with the activities of the Toronto Theosophical Society and later in British Columbia, renewed his interest in eastern philosophies. Like the Buddhists, he attributed specific psychological meanings to his colours. In short, Varley brought with him to Canada the guiding principles of his art: a solid base in draughtsmanship, an abiding delight in the human form, and an incessant curiosity about the spiritual and the exotic.

Unfortunately, Varley could not always give his aesthetic nature full rein in Canada. The exigencies of making a

living and supporting a family too often interfered with his creative urges. Such conflicting demands promoted confusion, insecurity and uneven work. Even his famous association with the Group of Seven underlines many of these conflicts. The Group's strength, as a group, came from its members' interest in the wilderness as a nationalist symbol but Varley never shared this interest. As an immigrant he had considerable affection for his adopted country and appreciated her vast natural wealth, but he never recognized any narrowly jingoistic purpose for his art, in either subject matter or style. In fact, until he moved to British Columbia in 1926, Varley painted only one major landscape, *Stormy Weather, Georgian Bay*, nor did he participate in any of the sketching trips to Algoma, the north shore of Lake Superior or the Rocky Mountains. Rather his preferred themes were an extension of his identified interest: figures, either as portraits or set in the landscape. Nor did Varley gain much social support and camaraderie from his association with the Group. Especially after he left Toronto, his behaviour was frowned upon. Where the Seven and Varley did meet on common ground however, is in religious questioning. Harris, MacDonald and Lismer, like Varley, explored beyond traditional Christianity, probing Theosophy and Christian Science among other spiritual manifestations. However, even in these religious pursuits, Varley was not totally sympathetic to the other Group participants, finding Harris "numbing himself with theosophy" and thereby producing "cold", intellectual painting, and considered the pronouncements of many other members superficial. Varley's eclectic themes and styles, his lack of emphasis on nationalistic goals and his disregard for social convention, all ensured that his membership in the Group of Seven remained peripheral to both the Group's pronounced concerns and his own uncertain aims. In relation to the Seven then, Varley emerges as more individual, emotional and eclectic; in short more romantic.

This romanticism became more pronounced between 1926 and 1936 when Varley lived on the West Coast. Now for the first time he was able to tackle the land as a persisting subject. It was

almost as if, by distancing himself physically from the Toronto-based Group of Seven, he had a new emotional freedom to confront the land on his own terms rather than being subsumed into a Group format, a concept which he vehemently rejected. As Chris Varley notes, "the mountains, the ocean, the mists, and the long northern twilights, all captured and awakened his imagination.³ Varley began by seeking a privileged relationship with mountains and their attendant clouds. Like Ruskin, he saw mountains partly in architectural terms, as nature's cathedrals, and partly as nature's personifier, the entry into a truer and deeper understanding of man. This bifurcation — really the traditional one between god and man — is clearly evident in Varley's work of this time. His numerous mountainscapes, hedonistic attacks of rich colours and bold forms aligned with Gothic awe because of their very strangeness, are unpopulated. His figure studies, powerfully clean and majestically conceived, pushing beyond the boundaries of his Toronto portraits, are more personal and therefore more revealing. These two themes, mountains and figures, did coincide on occasion, for despite his eclecticism and insecurity, Varley never totally abandoned his aim of painting figures in a landscape. Having been less than successful in achieving this union in earlier attempts, Varley now approached the problem covertly. The personification of nature, such as that evident in *Three Clouds and a Tree*, perhaps a throwback to the Group of Seven's inordinate fondness for single pine trees, is tentative. More obvious and more powerful is the implied presence of the viewer in his magnificent open window works. Especially in *The Open Window* of 1932, where the tilted window frame opens onto an immeasurable expanse of empty sea flowing into mountains, the links to Caspar David Friedrich are clear. *Dhārāna*, surely the culmination of Varley's attempt to integrate figures into landscape, also bespeaks Friedrich in the clear subordination of the figure to a spiritual communion with the divinity of nature. While in British Columbia, Varley most clearly identified and isolated this romantic pantheism to produce some of his very best paintings.

Upon leaving the West Coast in April 1936, Varley's ebullient and focused urge seemed to dissipate. This was not entirely unexpected. When he arrived in Ottawa, officials at the National Gallery questioned his stability and took him in hand. Unfortunately the actions seem to have exacerbated the painter's well-known rebellious tendencies. Hitherto he had found his creativity in an idiosyncratic balance between the world of objects and the world of ideas. He could avoid neurosis by painting. However, as the British psychoanalyst Edward Glover notes, neurosis triumphs when an artist can no longer achieve a sense of progression or forward movement through his art. Varley's volatile temperament needed the type of environment he had found in B.C.; a combination of landscape, people and freedom. Conditions were never as propitious for him again. Not that Varley immediately gave in to his depressing economic state and concomitant mental attitude. Late in the winter of 1937 he finished his huge canvas of Christ emerging from his tomb, a work he called *Liberation*. Varley was thrilled with the piece; subsequent commentators have not shared this attitude. However *Night Ferry, Vancouver*, rich in colour and bold in technique, and *Mirror of Thought*, packed with emotion and symbolism, recall the perception and penetration of his B.C. works. It is not accidental that the subjects of his most successful eastern canvases were drawn from his memories of Vancouver. But Varley needed more than memories; following the American traits Novak has identified, Varley also had to have facts, the physical presence. That is why a sympathetic environment was the key element in his creativity. In eastern Canada, and in 1937 in the Arctic, he found and recorded local facts. With pencil and watercolour, he produced small works on paper, little gems of colour and line but hardly major creations. The best of these portraits and landscapes have an appealing freshness and directness but they lack the emotional complexity and romantic intensity of his larger canvases which successfully integrate figures into the landscape.

Varley's work demonstrates the validity of applying Novak's analysis of

American painting to a Canadian, for Varley was not only concerned with concept and dependent on physical facts, but like those atypical American romantics, brought much of his romanticism with him from Europe, in this case England. Especially in his British Columbia painting, Varley felt free to explore a more idiosyncratic, emotional and intuitive relationship with the mountains and with his close associates. In so doing he was very much part of the northern romanticism isolated by Robert Rosenblum.

Christopher Varley's able catalogue, *F.H. Varley*, does not attempt, as I have, to place Varley in a world context. Rather, wisely, it concentrates on delineating the specifics and the intricacies of the painter's relatively unknown career. This is most necessary because, despite his membership in the Group of Seven, Varley has been sorely neglected. Unlike most other members of the Group, Varley was honoured only by one major exhibition. Neither a monograph nor a retrospective was written or organized after his death until his grandson picked up the torch — the pen. All that is now past history. In 1974 Chris Varley organized the show *Varley: The Middle Years* for the Burnaby Art Gallery; in 1978 he included Varley in the exhibition *Coasts, the Sea and Canadian Art* at The Gallery/Stratford; and in 1979 he wrote the monograph *F.H. Varley* for the *Canadian Artists Series* for the National Gallery of Canada, all work which served as a detailed preparation for the production of *F.H. Varley*, the fullest and most complex of all the documents.

This developmental process, encompassing as it has the addition of new material and providing time to consider and reconsider the painter and his work, has been of great benefit. As Chris Varley candidly admits, his early studies did not do justice to his grandfather. Over almost a decade of work, much new information has come to light. The present production, still based primarily on the documentation carefully collected by Peter Varley, has been considerably enriched by material such as the Vera Weatherbie correspondence, records of the Sheffield City Polytechnic, a letter in the FitzGerald Study Centre, and conversations with important contemporaries. As well, research enabled the author to identify

conclusively books Varley admired and used in his painting and teaching, such as A.H. Munsell's *A Colour Notation*. Time also provided Christopher Varley with a more dispassionate overview of his earlier writings. In this catalogue he has added new analysis, including a sensitive discussion of Varley's own theories on colour and an extensive re-examination of Varley's later works. Interestingly, this reappraisal did not really provoke radically new conclusions: with the exception of a few paintings, including *The Night Ferry*, some of the Arctic watercolours and a few portraits, Varley's work, after 1936, is not particularly strong. In this new book Christopher Varley has also toned down or eliminated many of his more questionable interpretations, especially the sexual ones, although "Varley" idiosyncrasies still persist: the odd "praying mantis" interpretation of *Nude on a Couch* is an example. On the whole those changes have considerably strengthened the book. Some areas of debate however remain unexplored. It would have been useful to have more analysis, not only of the works themselves, but also of Varley's philosophy, his interest in Buddhism and Theosophy, his application of unorthodox psychological interpretations, and his methods of painting. Such analyses would enable us to put Varley into the broader sphere of northern romantic art, a goal which was clearly not part of this production. These quibbles aside, *F.H. Varley* is unquestionably the most thorough and competent examination to date of this important Canadian. It will serve as a useful departure for further exploration, surely a most worthy achievement.

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Notes:

¹ For greater exploration of the differences between Canadian and American painting see Ann DAVIS, *A Distant Harmony: Comparisons in the Painting of Canada and the United States of America*, (Winnipeg:1982).

² In *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875* New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. NOVAK uses a different approach, identifying and analysing the routes of dominant American cultural traits.

³ Christopher VARLEY, *F.H. Varley*, p. 80.

Les Esthétiques Modernes au Québec de 1916 à 1946
Jean-René OSTIGUY
Musées Nationaux du Canada/Galerie Nationale du Canada, 1982
168 p., 6 hors texte couleur,
140 ill. n/b., \$19.95

Pour une société dont la devise est "Je me souviens" nous avons la mémoire singulièrement courte. En fait, il serait plus exact de dire que nous avons trop souvent laissé les mythes occulter une réalité complexe et contradictoire. Il en fut également ainsi dans le domaine de l'histoire de l'art au Québec où, trop contents de s'être enfin libérés des idéologies nationalistes et des dictats étouffants d'un académisme persistant qui contraignait l'artiste ou l'écrivain à l'illustration du terroir, on s'est empressé de faire de Borduas et de Pellon les héros d'un rattrapage culturel qui s'était fait trop attendre. S'il est vrai que les années quarante marquèrent en ce sens un tournant important, il ne faut pas oublier que des tendances "modernes" et "internationalistes" s'étaient développées ici bien avant les années quarante.

En ce sens, on ne peut que se réjouir des recherches, de plus en plus nombreuses, entreprises pour tenter de faire le point sur les années dix, vingt et trente de l'art canadien. La dernière en date fut l'imposante exposition sur *Les esthétiques modernes au Québec de 1916 à 1946*, préparée par Jean-René Ostiguy, conservateur chargé de recherche en art canadien à la Galerie Nationale du Canada¹. Monsieur Ostiguy tente de nous faire redécouvrir, à côté des Lyman, Borduas et Pellon, des artistes et des productions moins connues qui font partie de cette histoire du développement de tendances modernes en peinture, en sculpture et dans l'utilisation des arts à des fins décoratives. On pense aux œuvres de Madeleine Laliberté, Jean Soucy, Louise Gadbois, Omer Parent, Marius Plamondon, Charles Daudelin, etc. On y retrouve aussi avec plaisir les Prudence Heward, Edwin Holgate, André Biéler, Philip H. Surrey, Jori Smith et autres artistes auxquels l'exposition de Charles C. Hill sur *La Peinture canadienne des années trente* nous avait déjà sensibilisés².

À propos de l'exposition sur *Les esthétiques modernes*, il nous faut d'abord souligner que nous avons trouvé l'accrochage du Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal moins confus que celui de la Galerie Nationale. Ainsi on ne retrouvait pas dans une même salle, identifiée comme étant celle des "précurseurs" des Morrice, Cullen, Suzor-Côté et Leduc à côté des Pellon et Borduas qui étaient en fait les "aboutissants" de l'exposition. Au Musée d'Art Contemporain on a tenté, autant que faire se pouvait et compte tenu de la classification préétablie par le conservateur, de regrouper des tableaux ayant une même thématique (portraits, paysages, natures mortes) permettant ainsi au spectateur de cerner plus facilement les différences et les similarités entre les peintres. On ne retrouvait pas, comme c'était le cas à la Galerie Nationale, ces enfilades d'œuvres dont les préoccupations picturales étaient soit contradictoires soit très éloignées. Nous pensons par exemple au tableau *Hockey* de Henri Masson accroché au-dessus de la *Nature morte au pichet* de Stanley Cosgrove, elle-même à côté du *Compartiment fumoir* de Philip H. Surrey au-dessus duquel se trouvait le *Portrait de Maurice Gagnon* de Paul-Émile Borduas, le tout coincé entre *Le roman-feuilleton* de John Lyman et *Le parc Montmorency à Québec* d'Adrien Hébert. On pouvait se demander si un tel accrochage relevait du désir de provoquer le spectateur ou du manque d'espace? Le Musée d'Art Contemporain a su au contraire rendre plus accessible au public certains rapports entre des œuvres dont l'inclusion dans une classification assez stricte, basée sur les "fameuses" influences esthétiques, ne reposait pas toujours sur des rapports formels évidents ou des préoccupations similaires.

Les œuvres exposées étaient regroupées en cinq sections. Trois étaient définies selon des esthétiques qui auraient été dominantes pour les peintres réunis dans ces sections, à savoir les esthétiques post-impressionniste et nabîs pour la section II, le fauvisme et le style 1925 pour la section III, le post-cubisme et le surréalisme pour la section IV. Les deux autres sections relevaient d'une autre logique classificatoire, la première réunissant les "précurseurs" et la dernière des œuvres appartenant au domaine des

arts décoratifs. Le regroupement des œuvres sous de tels intitulés n'allait pas sans problèmes. Cette classification a en fait le défaut d'être à la fois trop vaste, imprécise et trop restrictive.

Prenons le cas de la section II. Elle regroupe des œuvres qui renvoient à de nombreuses tendances et à des courants différents. Les Adrien Hébert, Rodolphe Duguay, Marc-Aurèle Fortin, Clarence Gagnon, Paul-Émile Borduas, Albert Dumouchel, Alexandre Y. Jackson, André Biéler, etc., qu'on y trouve réunis, participent de courants qui, pour être postérieurs au développement de l'impressionnisme, n'en sont pas pour autant réductibles aux seuls courants du "post-impressionnisme" français. Il en est de même pour la section III, dont on se demande pourquoi elle est identifiée sous le signe de "L'apport du fauvisme et du style 1925", qui n'est nulle part défini quand dans le catalogue, Cézanne est plus souvent invoqué que Matisse, ou tout autre fauve, pour expliquer les procédés picturaux de Hébert, Roberts, Holgate, Newton, Surrey (ainsi que Biéler et Raymond que l'on retrouve portant dans la section I). Il est vrai que la définition qui est ici donnée de la peinture fauve (et expressionniste) comme mettant l'accent sur la sensibilité et l'imagination de la personne³, est assez large pour inclure plusieurs tendances, mais elle l'est trop pour être spécifique au seul fauvisme. En fait, seuls quelques tableaux présentés dans cette exposition peuvent, à notre avis, et bien que ce soit sous un mode assez "sage", être vraiment redatables d'un parti-pris fauviste par l'utilisation de la couleur, du cerne expressif ou du motif décoratif. On pense en particulier aux *Deux femmes assises* de Jacques de Tonnancour, au *Portrait de femme* de Jeanne Rhéaume ou encore au *Portrait de l'artiste* de John Lyman (surtout à cause du cerne et des roses et mauves sur fond orangé). Le même problème se pose pour ce qui est de la référence faite à Cézanne. Les possibilités d'interprétations picturales et de développements que propose l'ensemble de l'œuvre cézannienne sont multiples et celles qui sont retenues par nos artistes de la section III sont assez réduites. Si les portraits de Holgate, Heward, Lyman renvoient à l'effort de Cézanne pour construire par la touche

colorée des formes simplifiées et ramenées à leurs composantes géométriques (s'opposant ainsi à la dissolution impressionniste de la forme), ces artistes restent ici encore assez "sages" puisque leur traitement ne conduit pas au rabattement de l'espace au plan du tableau. Ainsi on peut comparer le traitement du vêtement et du visage du très beau *Portrait de Jean Chauvin* par Edwin Holgate avec le *Portrait d'Ambroise Vollard* (1899) de Cézanne, mais on ne retrouvera pas chez Holgate ce travail uniforme de la touche, de la couleur et de la lumière qui permet cette confusion des plans à l'origine de l'affirmation de ce nouvel espace proprement pictural que sauront exploiter les cubistes.

Enfin, la classification générale est peut-être aussi trop restrictive puisqu'elle ne renvoie qu'à un seul modèle de développement de la peinture, celui de la peinture française. Il est vrai, comme le souligne Monsieur Ostiguy, que l'on a trop souvent pensé l'histoire de l'art canadien des années vingt et trente en fonction du seul Groupe des Sept sans tenir vraiment compte du fait qu'il y eut aussi plusieurs problématiques picturales qui s'inspirèrent des développements de l'art en Europe après l'impressionnisme. Cependant il y aurait lieu, croyons-nous, de commencer aussi à interroger les rapports de certains de nos producteurs avec l'art américain des années trente puisqu'à cause de la crise économique, New-York devenait un lieu d'étude et de voyage plus accessible que Paris. D'ailleurs, à maintes reprises, le catalogue souligne les liens qu'il y a entre les œuvres de certains régionalistes américains et celles d'un peintre comme Holgate. On aurait donc pu également, au niveau de la présentation de l'exposition, mener un questionnement sur ces rapports entre le Canada et les États-Unis. Ainsi, par exemple, s'il est vrai qu'il y eut en France un développement de la murale et de l'art décoratif initié entre autres par le renouveau de l'art sacré, on pense ici au rôle de Georges Desvallières, de Maurice Denis et, plus près de nous, du père Marie-Alain Couturier, il ne faut pas par ailleurs oublier le développement important, soutenu par le Works Progress Administration's et le Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP) que connaît aux États-Unis l'art de la murale durant les

années trente et quarante. Certains artistes d'ici, comme Biéler et Surrey, sont passés par l'Art Students League et connaissaient ces programmes. Lemieux qui a travaillé avec Holgate et Maurice Raymond à des projets de décoration murale a même publié en 1938 un article où il fait l'éloge du WPA et des muralistes mexicains⁴. Faut-il aussi rappeler que Stanley Cosgrove a étudié durant quatre ans les techniques de la fresque avec le muraliste mexicain Orozco⁵.

Il semble donc que l'on puisse ainsi dessiner une nouvelle configuration d'influences et de rapports qui aurait permis de regrouper des œuvres comme *Lazare* de J.-P. Lemieux, *Le poème de la terre* de Maurice Raymond, *Les recrues* de Jean Soucy et même la *Fête Dieu à Sainte-Adèle* de Biéler. Ces œuvres et quelques autres révèlent un désir commun de s'inspirer d'événements de la vie quotidienne qui les rapproche des peintres de l'American Scene et des muralistes. Elles présentent de surcroît des similarités plastiques telles que l'on s'interroge sur leur éparpillement dans les sections II, III et IV. Ainsi on aura noté chez Raymond, Soucy, Lemieux et même dans *La veillée* de Madeleine Laliberté, une même représentation de l'espace par étagement, construction primitiviste souvent utilisée dans l'art de la murale à cette époque.

La période transitoire couverte par cette exposition est complexe par ses bouleversements et nous n'avons soulevé que certaines des questions qu'elle peut poser à un chercheur. De plus, s'y greffent des questions d'ordre épistémologique (nature des concepts utilisés, modèle de développement historique, etc.), que nous aimerions ici approfondir un peu.

Modernité et/ou modernisme, le problème de notions erratiques

Maintenant qu'il est de mise dans le champ des avant-gardes de s'interroger sur la post-modernité, force nous est de constater que les notions mêmes de modernité et de modernisme ne vont pas de soi et qu'il n'y a pas de consensus sur une définition rigoureuse de ces termes. Or, cette exposition sur *Les Esthétiques modernes au Québec* se situe au cœur même de ce problème de définition conceptuelle. Dans

le texte du catalogue qui accompagne l'exposition, les notions de modernité, de moderne ou de modernisme sont utilisées assez indifféremment. Par contre, dans l'article intitulé "Le modernisme au Québec en 1910 et 1930" c'est le concept de modernité que Jean-René Ostiguy définit comme "rejet de la tradition, doublé d'une constante échappée vers l'avenir sous forme d'autocritique"⁶. En fait, cette définition est reprise de l'ouvrage du philosophe Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction à la modernité* où celui-ci tente d'élaborer les "préludes" d'une définition plus rigoureuse des termes modernisme et modernité. Selon lui, le modernisme renvoie à:

La conscience que prirent d'elles-mêmes les époques, les périodes, les générations successives; le modernisme consiste donc en phénomènes de conscience, en images et en projection de soi, en exaltations faites de beaucoup d'illusion et d'un peu de perspicacité. Le modernisme est un fait sociologique et idéologique.⁷

Par modernité il entend au contraire "une réflexion commençante, une ébauche plus ou moins poussée de critique et d'autocritique, une tentative de connaissance"⁸. Ainsi, d'après cette définition, la modernité diffère du modernisme "comme un concept en voie de formulation dans la société diffère des phénomènes sociaux, comme une réflexion diffère des faits"⁹. Chez lui, le modernisme prend ainsi le sens d'idéologie. C'est, dira-t-il ailleurs, le culte du nouveau, une fétichisation qui apparaît clairement vers la fin du XIX^e siècle¹⁰. La modernité, par contre, sera connotée plus positivement puisqu'elle ouvre une possibilité de critique, voire de désaliénation par la réflexion possiblement autocritique qu'elle ouvre.

Jean Baudrillard, qui constitue une autre source de référence de J.-R. Ostiguy pour ce qui est de la définition de la notion de modernité¹¹, ne fait pas sienne la distinction que fait Lefebvre entre modernisme et modernité. Il ne retient que le terme de modernité et, à l'encontre de Lefebvre, définit celle-ci comme un "immense processus idéologique" occultant les structures sociales et les conditions historiques qui l'ont produit. Ainsi, ne reprenant pas la distinction de Lefebvre, assez margi-

nale il faut le dire, Baudrillard va donner au terme de "modernité" un sens qui se rapproche beaucoup de celui que Lefebvre donnait pourtant à "modernisme". Il situe l'apparition du terme "modernité" dans le vocabulaire vers les 1850 (Baudelaire, Gauthier, etc.) et, selon la définition qu'il en donne, le fait référer au culte du moderne, du nouveau, culte qui va susciter en art le phénomène de la succession des avant-gardes. "Le "peintre de la vie moderne" de Baudelaire, écrit-il, à la charnière du romantisme et de la *modernité contemporaine*, marque le départ de cette quête du nouveau, de cette dérive du *subjectif*" (souligné par nous)¹². Il semble donc que Baudrillard fasse ici une distinction entre le sens que prend la notion de modernité dans la deuxième moitié du XIX^e siècle et la "modernité contemporaine". Nous croyons qu'une telle distinction entre deux "moments", semble-t-il différents, du développement de la peinture, demande qu'on tente de redéfinir ces deux sens donnés à la "modernité". En effet, entre celui du XIX^e et le "contemporain" un changement de sens a eu lieu; il se produisit, dans l'intervalle, des transformations de la représentation de l'espace plastique qui, au-delà des phénomènes de la mode et des "avant-gardes", induisirent une transformation plus profonde et plus radicale de la représentation picturale. C'est à Clement Greenberg que nous référons ici et à la définition que ce critique formaliste a donné de la notion de modernisme. Pour lui, le modernisme c'est

(...) historiquement un phénomène assez nouveau. La civilisation occidentale n'est pas la première à faire halte et à s'interroger sur ses propres fondements, mais c'est elle qui aura poussé ce processus le plus loin. J'assimile le modernisme à l'intensification, presque à l'exacerbation de la tendance à l'auto-critique dont l'origine remonte à Kant. L'essence du modernisme à mon avis, c'est d'utiliser les méthodes spécifiques d'une discipline pour critiquer cette même discipline, pas dans un but de subversion, mais pour l'enchaîner plus profondément dans son domaine de compétence propre¹³.

Selon Greenberg, et à l'exact opposé de la définition que tentait d'en donner Lefebvre, le modernisme est un processus d'auto-critique, d'analyse et de réflexion processus qui est défini chez Lefebvre comme l'essence de la modernité. De plus, la notion même d'auto-critique, telle que la définit Greenberg, est moins vague que celle de Lefebvre et plus appropriée à une approche de l'œuvre d'art puisqu'elle s'ancre dans des pratiques définies à l'intérieur du champ de l'art. En effet, l'auto-critique moderniste est pour Greenberg historiquement datée; elle correspond à une rupture à partir de laquelle l'auto-référentialité et le travail sur les composants spécifiques au medium deviennent les bases de l'expérimentation artistique. L'entreprise auto-critique moderniste qui s'apparente en fait à une démarche épistémologique de critique et de mise à jour des fondements disciplinaires est définie comme un processus historiquement nouveau. En ce sens, nous dirions que la démarche moderniste, telle que définie par Greenberg en 1965, apparaît comme typique des transformations du champ de l'épistème moderne où chaque discipline tend à définir rigoureusement son objet et ses fondements¹⁴. La notion de modernisme nous semble donc plus adéquate pour qualifier cette "modernité contemporaine" que Baudrillard tenait à différencier de celle du XIX^e siècle et pour qualifier les œuvres qui s'inscrivent dans un nouvel espace plastique. Or, il nous semble que c'est un questionnement de cet ordre que l'on retrouve derrière une bonne partie des œuvres présentées dans la section IV de l'exposition, particulièrement chez Borduas, Pellat, Fernand Leduc, Riopelle, Gauvreau, Bellefleur, etc.

Par contre, ce qui se vit en Europe au XIX^e siècle et ici au début du XX^e siècle, sous l'étiquette de la "modernité", est plus complexe et moins facilement identifiable. Cela regroupe en fait des pratiques variées, voire contradictoires propres aux périodes de transformations. Ainsi la modernité apparaîtra chez certains comme étant vécue sous le mode de la valorisation de nouveaux sujets picturaux, ceux de la "vie moderne", et chez d'autres comme étant la valorisation, à travers l'expérience artistique, d'une subjectivité qui est perçue comme moderne puisque pour la première fois reconnue

par l'histoire. Au XIX^e siècle, n'apparaissaient pas encore très clairement ces différences qui étaient en train de s'établir à travers des expériences artistiques qui contestaient à la fois la hiérarchie des genres et l'essence même de la peinture académique, l'illusion tri-dimensionnelle. La critique elle-même n'a pas toujours perçu la nature des préoccupations formelles qui émergeaient derrière ces contestations. Ainsi, Joris-Karl Huysmans appela les artistes à témoigner de "l'imposante grandeur des belles usines". Mais, en même temps, ne dira-t-il pas de Monet que s'il a tenté de peindre les halls de chemin de fer, il n'est pas parvenu à dégager "de ses incertaines abréviations, la colossale ampleur des locomotives et des gares."¹⁵ Ce critique qui, à cette époque spécifique, se revendiquait de la modernité, pose ici la question du quoi peindre et non du comment peindre; question qui fut d'ailleurs en très grande partie la cause de la scission entre Zola et les impressionnistes. Ce dont témoigne également le discours de ce critique c'est d'une utilisation confuse du terme "moderniste" référant à la fois aux sujets nouveaux et à la peinture nouvelle. C'est pourquoi Huysmans disait que:

... toute la magnificence des machines, cela est encore à peindre et sera peint, pourvu que les *modernistes* vraiment dignes de ce nom consentent à ne pas s'amoindrir et à ne pas se momifier dans l'éternelle reproduction d'un *même sujet* (souligné par nous)¹⁶.

Il est clair ici que le terme de modernisme est associé pour Huysmans à la transformation de la nature du sujet en peinture et, bien qu'il reconnaîsse implicitement qu'il y ait des peintres "modernes" si peu préoccupés de la question du sujet qu'ils s'en tiennent toujours au même, Huysmans passe complètement à côté du fait que Monet est peut-être précisément le premier "moderniste" en peinture. Il était sans aucun doute normal qu'au XIX^e siècle ces notions soient assez peu définies alors que chez les producteurs eux-mêmes se jouaient en même temps la révolte contre les sujets et la révolte contre les procédés picturaux académiques. Il fallut quelques décades avant que n'apparaisse clairement à la

conscience la rupture profonde qui était en train de s'amorcer et que celle-ci soit complètement assumée par l'abstraction.

Au Québec et au Canada, ces ambiguïtés ont été également vécues, mais dans les premières décades du XX^e siècle. On trouve chez les artistes qui sont présentés dans les trois premières sections de l'exposition des positions contradictoires qui marquent cette transition de la modernité au modernisme (greenbergien). Elles vont de la notion de subjectivité mise de l'avant par l'oeuvre et les écrits de John Lyman, jusqu'à ces positions assez contradictoires où, bien que prétendant à une certaine "modernité" des procédés picturaux, on n'en maintient pas moins la nécessité de privilégier, le plus souvent pour des raisons d'idéologies nationalistes, un certain type de *sujets* picturaux. On aura compris que nous songeons ici au Groupe des Sept dont A.Y. Jackson, présent dans la section II de l'exposition, fut un éminent porte-parole. Mais il ne faudrait pas non plus oublier l'omniprésence de l'iconographie du terroir ou de la campagne québécoise chez des peintres comme Gagnon, Duguay, Fortin ou Suzor-Côté, également présents dans l'exposition. Adrien Hébert quant à lui cristallise peut-être le plus parfaitement cette antinomie¹⁷. Peintre de la ville moderne, un sujet qui n'était pas particulièrement prisé par le public et la critique québécoise, il devra constamment défendre son droit à peindre ce sujet. On n'a pour s'en convaincre qu'à lire les articles d'Hébert¹⁸. Mais son combat pour le droit à la modernité en reste essentiellement au niveau du sujet traité puisqu'il fustige la peinture moderne. Pour lui, ce type de peinture semble être "un refuge pour nombre d'incapables qui paraissent obéir à une réclame toute mercantile" (et si) "tous les sujets peuvent être tentés en art, c'est à condition, bien entendu, de ne pas porter atteinte au bon sens"¹⁹! Ici, la différence entre la modernité telle que vécue confusément en Europe au XIX^e siècle et le modernisme tel que le définit le développement d'une partie de la peinture contemporaine apparaît clairement. En ce sens, le tableau de Alfred Pellan, *Conciliabule*, et celui de Adrien Hébert, *Dans le port de Montréal*, qui ornaient le haut de l'escalier au Musée d'Art Contemporain introduisant ainsi

le spectateur à l'exposition, parlaient bien d'une contradiction, celle entre modernité et modernisme, contradiction qui traverse, mais sans jamais être véritablement nommée, cette exposition sur les esthétiques modernes.

Une histoire sans contradiction

Nous aimions souligner en terminant que l'exclusion de la contradiction, une opération que l'on peut assez fréquemment noter en histoire, nous semble correspondre à une vision plutôt télologique de la réalité²⁰. Ainsi, à la lecture du catalogue qui nous occupe et de l'article sur "Le modernisme au Québec...", il semblerait que seul le public ait été réfractaire au développement de tendances modernes alors que critiques et artistes semblaient s'entendre pour susciter un renouveau qui semblait être déjà inscrit, avec son commencement (l'impressionnisme) et sa fin (l'abstraction), dans un modèle tracé par les écoles françaises.

Dans les faits, cette histoire ne s'est pas faite sans heurts et des conflits existèrent entre des artistes qui figuraient côté à côté dans cette exposition. Ainsi, on ne peut pas ne pas souligner que si le critique montréalais S. Morgan Powell prône en 1913 un renouveau de la peinture, comme le souligne Jean-René Ostiguy²¹, il restreint ce renouveau à des peintres comme A.Y. Jackson, Randolph Hewton, mais encore à Arthur Rosaire, Wilkie Kilgour, Frederick Hutchison et Charles Simpson dont le moins que l'on puisse dire est qu'ils n'ont pas révolutionné le champ de l'art! De plus c'est ce même critique qui, en 1913 toujours, fera les plus violentes critiques des œuvres de John Lyman, prouvant par ses commentaires que sa compréhension du "renouveau" ne dépassait guère les années 1880! Ne dira-t-il pas à propos de Lyman:

His drawing would shame a schoolboy. His composition would disgrace an artist of the stone age, the paving-stone age. Crudity, infelicitous combinations of shades, unharmonious juxtapositions of tints, ugly distortion of line, wretched perspective, and an atrocious disregard for every known canon of sane art are here." (etc.)²²

Or, on sait que l'accueil fait à ses œuvres par la critique montréalaise ne fut pas pour peu dans la décision que prit Lyman de retourner à l'étranger et ce jusqu'en 1931!

L'appel du renouveau ne devrait jamais être pris en soi et pour soi!

En ce sens, on se rappellera également que Clarence Gagnon prononça en 1939, au Pen and Pencil Club, une conférence qui fut par la suite publiée sous le titre de "L'immense blague de l'art moderne" et où il attaque les formes d'art ultérieures à l'impressionnisme. Au-delà de l'impressionnisme, dira-t-il, c'est "le goût offensé", la "beauté châtrée", la "palette débauchée", la "forme humaine torturée", la "nature exclue de l'art", le retour au primitivisme, "fruit vénéneux d'un culte névrosé". Gagnon glisse même sur le terrain de la xénophobie et Picasso y est présenté comme "un Espagnol au teint mat, aux yeux noirs et aux cheveux noirs", les peintres de l'École de Paris sont définis comme des "rastaquouères" ou des "parisiens" peu français qui "tachent le bel écusson de leur patrie" et "servent des corbeaux de la finance". On croirait entendre Maillard accusant plus carrément les juifs et les bolchévistes²³ d'être à l'origine de cet art "international" (lire moderne) qui s'attaque aux fondements des valeurs nationales et du Beau en art. Cette beauté qui, selon Clarence Gagnon, repose sur "une règle universelle, vieille comme Phidias et Apelles, laquelle jusqu'en 1865, n'avait jamais été mise en doute"²⁴.

Comme on le voit, si certains peintres étaient prêts au début du XX^e siècle à intégrer quelques aspects du développement de la peinture moderne, développements qui ne remettaient pas encore fondamentalement en question le système perspectiviste tri-dimensionnel, il n'allait pas de soi qu'ils acceptent plus tard les recherches plus modernistes des jeunes générations. On a pu également le constater précédemment avec Adrien Hébert. Les contradictions entre certains de ces peintres qui, à leur heure, avaient pu constituer une certaine "avant-garde" dans le champ de l'art québécois par les transpositions qu'ils faisaient de certains procédés picturaux qui s'étaient développés en Europe dans les dernières décennies du

XIX^e siècle, et les nouveaux peintres qui eux commençaient à se revendiquer d'une réflexion plastique plus spécifique au XX^e siècle, ne pouvaient manquer de s'affirmer plus clairement quand ces derniers se regroupent en 1939 au sein de la Société d'art contemporain, société qui n'était pas elle-même exempte de contradictions internes. On prendra pour indice cette lettre envoyée aux membres du Conseil de l'Art Association par certains artistes qui dénoncent la "sur-représentation" de l'élément moderne à l'exposition annuelle du printemps de l'Art Association. Cette lettre envoyée par J. O'Connor Lynch, mais contresignée entre autres par Adrien et Henri Hébert, Alfred Laliberté, Marc-Aurèle Fortin et Edmond Dyonnet qui raconte la chose dans ses mémoires²⁵, proteste contre ces œuvres modernes qui violent les canons de l'art. On s'y plaint de ce que l'Art Association fasse place dans ses galeries à la propagande de cette "Cinquième Colonne du monde de l'art", insulte qui en temps de guerre devait être pire que celles d'incompétence, d'enfantillage et d'imbécilité qui suivirent. Le tout se termine par un plaidoyer pour la liberté de la démocratie, contre l'anarchie dans l'art et ces "crack-pot theorists" qui s'infiltrent dans les positions influentes au sein des galeries, des écoles d'art et des journaux du pays²⁶.

Pourtant une rapide analyse du catalogue de la 61^e exposition annuelle du printemps de l'Art Association (28 avril au 28 mai 1944) nous montre qu'à part Jean-Paul Riopelle, Anne Savage et Sam Borenstein, membres de la S.A.C., et d'André Biéler et Gordon Webber qui ne l'étaient pas, peu de peintres peuvent être soupçonnés de modernisme outrancier. Il y aurait eu plus de matière à froisser les susceptibilités dans l'exposition de 1945 puisqu'on y retrouve des œuvres de Marcel Barbeau, Léon Bellefleur, Fritz Brandtner, Louise Gadbois, Louis Muhlstock, Marian Scott, André Jasmin, Jori Smith, Philip H. Surrey et Guy Viau, qui seront tous, à un moment donné, membres de la S.A.C. Il faut cependant noter qu'au programme des expositions de l'Art Association pour l'année 1944 on trouve entre autres, du 7 octobre au 5 novembre, une exposition des dessins et peintures de Stanley

Cosgrove et, du 8 au 28 novembre, une autre sur la peinture non-objective avec des œuvres de Fritz Brandtner, Henry Eveleigh et Gordon Webber. Ces expositions sont cependant ultérieures au débat du printemps 1944.

Quoiqu'il en soit, ce qu'il faut retenir de toutes ces réactions, peut-être plus émotions qu'objectivement justifiées, c'est leur valeur symptomatique. Elles nous apprennent que le développement de tendances en art ne va pas de soi et que des individus qui se réclamaient hier de la modernité ne seront pas pour autant demain des défenseurs du modernisme. Il est vrai cependant que ces contradictions se révélaient aussi à travers les œuvres qui nous étaient présentées dans l'exposition, que les ruptures s'inscrivant dans certains tableaux donnaient à voir les oppositions qu'ils entretenaient avec d'autres. En ce sens, on ne peut que souhaiter la multiplication d'expositions sur cette période complexe si mal connue de l'art canadien et l'on ne peut que souligner le mérite qu'a Jean-René Ostiguy d'avoir entrouvert la porte à de futures recherches sur les tendances artistiques de cette période, et, ce faisant, d'avoir également laissé place à un peu plus d'histoire.

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Notes

1 L'exposition a été présentée à la Galerie Nationale du Canada, Ottawa, du 16 avril au 13 juin 1982, à l'Art Gallery of Windsor, du 1^{er} juillet au 15 août 1982 au Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montréal, du 2 septembre au 17 octobre au Rodman Hall Art Center, St. Catharines, et au Musée du Québec, à Québec, du 20 janvier au 27 février 1983. Elle est accompagnée d'un catalogue réalisé par Jean-René Ostiguy, *Les esthétiques modernes au Québec de 1916 à 1946*, Ottawa, Galerie nationale du Canada, 1982, 168 pages.

2 Voir le catalogue de l'exposition de Charles C. Hill, *Peinture canadienne des années Trente*, Ottawa, Galerie Nationale du Canada, 1975, ainsi que la critique qu'en a fait François-Marc Gagnon, "La peinture des années trente au Québec", *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*, vol. III, automne 1976, n° 1 et 2, pp. 2-20.

- 3 J.-R. OSTIGUY, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
- 4 Dans le journal *le Jour* du 16 juillet 1938. Cité par C.C. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 117. Sur cette question des rapports entre les artistes canadiens, le WPA et l'art mural mexicain, on référera au catalogue de Hill, *ibid.*, particulièrement à l'introduction et au Chapitre 6.
- 5 Voir Dennis REID, *A concise history of Canadian Painting*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 207.
- 6 J.-R. OSTIGUY, "Le modernisme au Québec en 1910 et 1930", *Vie des Arts*, vol. XXVIII, n° 107, été 1982, pp. 42-45.
- 7 Henri LEFEBVRE, *Introduction à la modernité. Préludes*, Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, 1962, p. 9.
- 8 *Id.* p. 10.
- 9 *Id.*
- 10 *Id.* p. 170.
- 11 En page 166 du catalogue *Les esthétiques modernes au Québec de 1916 à 1946*, on trouve sous la rubrique "Lecture recommandée", Baudrillard, J., "Modernité", *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, XI, 1973, pp. 139-141.
- 12 J. BAUDRILLARD, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
- 13 Clement GREENBERG, "La peinture moderniste", *Peinture, Cahiers théoriques*, n° 8/9, 1974, p. 33.
- 14 Voir Michel FOUCault, *Les mots et les choses, une archéologie des sciences humaines*, Paris, N.R.F., Éditions Gallimard, 1966.
- 15 Joris-Karl Huysmans, cité par Marc LEBOT, *Peinture et machinisme*, Paris, Éditions Klincksieck, 1973, p. 84.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 Adrien Hébert, par la marginalité de son iconographie et par les liens qu'il a entretenus avec une partie de la critique canadienne-française "d'avant-garde", assez marginale elle aussi, (on pense aux rédacteurs de la revue *Le Nigog* publiée en 1918), présente un cas à part assez intéressant. On ne peut que souhaiter la publication d'études sur ce peintre, études qui viendraient compléter celles déjà entreprises par monsieur Ostiguy. Voir son catalogué d'exposition, *Adrien Hébert, Trente ans de son oeuvre*, Ottawa, Galerie Nationale du Canada, 1971.
- 18 Adrien HÉBERT, "Existe-t-il une peinture d'interprétation spécifiquement canadienne-française?", *Culture*, vol. 3, 1942, pp. 297-303, et Adrien HÉBERT, "Un point de vue", *L'Action universitaire*, vol. I, n° 5, 1935, pp. 10-11.
- 19 Adrien HÉBERT, "Existe-t-il une peinture d'interprétation canadienne-française?", *op. cit.*, pp. 301-302.
- 20 Il faut souligner que la conception greenbergienne de l'histoire était également assez téléologique, le modernisme y étant présenté comme l'aboutissement, enfin conscient, d'une histoire qui jusqu'à là n'avait fait que "trahir" sa spécificité. Quelle ne fut donc pas la surprise de plusieurs formalistes devant l'émergence de la post-modernité. Mais cette surprise fut de courte durée car le champ des "avant-gardes" possède en général une faculté d'adaptation assez extraordinaire.
- 21 J.-R. OSTIGUY, "Le modernisme au Québec en 1910 et 1930", *op. cit.*, p. 43.
- 22 S. MORGAN POWELL, *The Star*, 23 mai 1913, cité dans le catalogue d'exposition *John Lyman*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Galerie Nationale du Canada, 1963.
- 23 Ces propos de C. Maillard sont rapportés par F.-M. GAGNON, *op. cit.*, et F. COUTURE, S. LEMERISE, "Insertion sociale de l'École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal: 1929-1969", *L'Enseignement des arts au Québec*, Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1980, pp. 1-68.
- 24 Clarence GAGNON, "L'immense blague de l'art moderne", *Amérique française* 1948-1949, pp. 60-65 et 67-71.
- 25 Edmond DYONNET, *Mémoires d'un artiste canadien*, Ottawa, Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1968. Voir les pages 89 à 91.
- 26 Cette lettre est reproduite en pages 89 et 90 des *Mémoires* de Dyonnet.

For my Master's Degree in Canadian Art History at Concordia University, I am preparing a thesis on Frederick Simpson Coburn (1871-1960) as illustrator. Coburn resided in Belgium from about 1890 until about 1916 during which time he enjoyed a prolific career in illustration. I am particularly interested in the illustrations Coburn executed for the poetry of Dr. William Henry Drummond. Through Drummond, Coburn made contact with the publishing firm of G.P. Putnam & Sons in New York and London and thereby received further commissions.

I would be most grateful to learn of the whereabouts of any original illustration work, paintings, drawings, or documents relating to Coburn's illustrations as well as information pertaining to the publishing firm of G.P. Putnam & Sons with regard to Coburn.

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Errata: VOLUME VI No. 1, 1982

- i) On page 80, note 2 reading,
"On pourra consulter sur le sujet des artistes américains à l'École des Beaux-Arts l'article de H. Barbara WEINBERT, "Nineteenth Century American Painters at the École des Beaux-Arts", *American Art Journal*, vol. 13, no. 4, autumn 1981, pp. 66-84." should have appeared on page 98, note 1.