

# Manly E. MacDonald Fall Update 2009

Welcome to the beginning of the fall season with news about the progress of *Interpreter of Old Ontario*. In July the designing and formatting of the book was set in motion with further meetings in August. Once the design of the landscape book is chosen, the next step is a mock-up of its 192 pages. The formatting will enable us to see the entire picture, as it were, and help determine the text to photo ratio. From here we can begin the photo shoots of paintings in the public galleries. Once these numbers are known, a list of paintings to be considered from private collections can be established and owners of Manlys contacted. These photo shoots will take place over this fall and winter.

In July, Duncan and Barbara MacDonald were guests of ours for lunch at our Watercombe cottage on the Long Reach. This is only a short distance from Manly MacDonald's summer home, and one that Duncan inherited after his father's death. Their visits are always a pleasure and Duncan and Barbara bring additional information to the project each time.

In early August I wrote to Queen Elizabeth II concerning the Manly MacDonald painting she was given in 1959. MacDonald had been commissioned to paint the Toronto Waterfront as a gift to her from the city. Writing such a letter to Her Majesty requires following strict protocol and a hand addressed envelope. One must sign the letter either Your Faithful Servant or Subject. There was also quite a story at the post office when the "handle with care" letter was being mailed. The postal clerk wanted to plant an insignificant hockey stamp on it. When he realized where it was going and to whom, he was able to find four stamps of hydrangeas, which served the situation much better. He also made certain the letter was carefully posted. We await a reply...

Also in August, my wife and I made appointments with Upper Canada Village in Morrisburg, The National Gallery and the National War Museum, both in Ottawa to view Manly MacDonald paintings. At UCV, Peter Cazaly showed us six large framed canvases of the seven mill landscapes owned by the the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. MacDonald was commissioned by the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority to paint these mills in 1947, prior to the flooding and widening of the St. Lawrence River. These include *Bedford, Chrysler, Dalhousie, Lyndhurst, Oxford and Spencerville*. *Delta Mill* was in use elsewhere. Chrysler is the only one no longer in existence. Smaller ones of these mills and others are in private collections.

Sharon Odell at the National Gallery showed us MacDonald's *Fishermen on Lake Ontario* that was being restored and invited us to view the restoration rooms while there - an unusual event. Additionally, the NGC owns *Barn in Winter* and *Chrisholm's Mill*. We also discussed book sales with staff at the National Gallery Bookstore.

Helen Holt met us at the new National War Museum at 1 Vimy Place. The twenty-eight studies and canvases done by MacDonald in 1919 in the Quinte region were in storage, but we were able to view eleven of them. Interestingly enough, these paintings along with other war paintings had been at the National Gallery until 1971. The Beaverbrook Collection, as it is called, was moved because the thinking at the NGC at the time was that war art was not "real" art. In the administration headquarters, MacDonald's *Land Girls Hoeing* hangs beside large canvases by Fred Varley and A.Y. Jackson.

Any of these important paintings mentioned here can be included in the book for a fee and some of them will most certainly be included.

Through continued correspondence, I hope to share with you the stages of development of the book. I trust this update also finds you well and looking forward to the book's publication in June and the launch a year from now in September of 2010.

Regards,

Charles



Manly E. MacDonald painting "en plein air". MacDonald summer home on the Long Reach

(From the Cunningham/Arnold files, and by permission of John

Munroe, Napanee)