

*Belleville on the Moira, 1935, Winter, 12" x 16", oil on canvasboard, signed lower right, original frame, private collection.*



At that auction, I also met a man who had been MacDonald's family friend and owned 20 or so of his works and said he would sell me one. A short time later, I owned three more. And so it went.

Manly E. MacDonald is often confused with J.E.H. MacDonald of the Group of Seven, and although he shared studio space with some of them in Toronto and was invited to join them, the taciturn Scot preferred working on his own "en plein air". His surviving son, Duncan, says his father was one of a very few landscape painters who painted outdoor scenes outdoors, and in all kinds of weather.

For many years, his pieces didn't sell well; in fact, he often gave them away, or donated them to some worthy cause. They languished in basements and under-sold at auction houses, but little by little his importance to the area's past grew, and his style more enjoyed by collectors.



*Schooner in Harbour, Winter, 12" x 16", oil on canvasboard, signed lower right.*

was able to find 800 of the 2,000 known works of art. Arnold died in 2006 before he could complete a biography and catalogue of the same.

Through acquaintances and the MacDonald family, this writer now has the copyright for the Manly E. MacDonald research and illustrations, and yet again, this project is in play. A childhood happenstance brings this collector's dream full circle.



*Old bridge at Kingsford, near Lonsdale, Ontario, 12 x 16" oil on canvasboard, signed lower left, private collection.*

# Interpreter of Old Ontario

Manly MacDonalds can be found in national galleries, including Ottawa, and the new War Museum, and in countless galleries across the country.

In the early 1980s Jack and Bernice Parrott, originally neighbours of the MacDonalds started buying Manlys. Eventually they donated some 40 pieces to the new Parrott Gallery attached to the new library complex in Belleville. Loyalist College of A.A.T., also in Belleville, has over 100 of his paintings, sketches, etchings and portraits.

Initial sales recorded in the 1920s show 12" x 16" canvasses selling for between \$150-\$300. By the 1960s, and in his prime, his works were fetching in the range of \$1,500-\$2,500, and then again by the 1980s prices had jumped to between \$3,500-\$5,000. Two of his most stunning oils, *The Shannonville Store*, sold a few years ago for \$16,500, and The Uno Langmann Galleries in Vancouver has *Eagle's Nest, Bancroft* listed at \$11,400 among others.

But of course there is another angle to this story as well. In the 1970s Clark Cunningham, a former student of MacDonald at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto, began cataloguing his life's work, and by the 1990s, before he died, had searched and identified about three hundred. A new collector of Manlys, Hollis Arnold of Port Hope, again started the cataloguing process in the mid-1990s, and

And this is where you, the reader, may come in...

The book I am writing is in the planning stage, and provenance is being checked on all known works. However, I am aware that some of the best ones are still out there, and the many untitled rivers, streams, mills, and homesteads need a name. The plan is to photograph the very best specimens of his work in oil, water, pastel, etching and pencil that can be found and used in the book. If there are any collectors out there, or relations who own a Manly, contact would be appreciated. I do not need you to send me photos (in fact do not send photos by email), until we determine its significance in the total works' list, but nonetheless, an email to me would assist greatly. You may contact me at [charles.beale@sympatico.ca](mailto:charles.beale@sympatico.ca), or through *The Upper Canadian* at [inquiries@theuppercanadian.com](mailto:inquiries@theuppercanadian.com)

