

Louis Hémon. The book is described as illustrated with woodcuts by Thoreau Macdonald. I do not know whether the first edition was illustrated at all, but Macdonald's illustrations did not appear until the 1938 edition, after 22 printings of the text.

For interest's sake, I would add that I have a copy with a note in Thoreau Macdonald's handwriting and signed by him with his initials. The note states:

These drawings & the layout of the book were first made for a competition of the Limited Editions Club of New York. They aroused no interest in the judges & after long complications & expense were returned. Some time after A. Y. Jackson spoke of them to the late Mr Eayrs of Macmillans & it was decided to use them in a new edition of the book. Macmillans were feeling prosperous just then owing to the success of *Gone with the Wind*. They paid me \$150* for the drawings & for looking after the entire production of the book which was carried out by Rous & Mann under the supervision of the late A. H. Robson. TM

* Owing to the Depression Macmillans asked me to take royalties instead of the \$150 cash which turned out well for me as I still receive them (1975).

This error does not at all detract from Panofsky's important point that this was a significant publishing event. Here we have a Canadian literary text that Macmillan kept in print for over 50 years and which for the majority of those years displayed the artistry of a significant Canadian illustrator.

Up to now, except for John Morgan Gray's *Fun Tomorrow: Learning to Be a Publisher & Much Else*, published in 1978, life at Macmillan and Company has played only a cameo role in the autobiographies and biographies of writers who were published by Macmillan. Panofsky was fortunate in the amount of primary material available to her. There are extensive Macmillan archives in England and New York as well as at McMaster University in Canada. This book demonstrates the excellent use that Panofsky has made of her resources. She has traced the threads of the

stories from Toronto to London and New York and back again, and as a result the reader is provided with a coherent and enlightening picture of Macmillan and Company in Canada.

It must be noted that this is a book that focuses on the literary history of Macmillan and, as Panofsky points out in her introduction, there were other books that might have been written, including an analysis of Macmillan's book design and illustration.

This book is well-researched, well-written and a fine addition to the University of Toronto Press series Studies in Book and Print Culture. In times when some people speculate about the future of the book and the future of Canadian culture in a world awash with cultural products, Panofsky's work reminds us that things have never been easy for either books or culture through the years, and that despite difficulties there have been individuals and business organizations that have championed both. Macmillan Company of Canada and its presidents were in the forefront. My regret is that both the company and its leaders have disappeared.

~ REVIEWED BY CHESTER GRYSKI

J.E.H. MacDonald: Graphic Designer

NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
MAY 9 TO AUGUST 31, 2012

IF YOU ARE an average visitor to the National Gallery in Ottawa, you have possibly missed the fact that the gallery has, in its public areas, a library and archives. If you are in this category, you have probably also missed the small gallery that is part of the Library and Archives. This summer's exhibition at the gallery was J.E.H. MacDonald: Graphic Designer.

Most people no doubt think about MacDonald's artistic output in terms of his painting and his membership in the Group of Seven. But this exhibition's stated goal was

to “highlight MacDonald’s versatility and skill in graphic design through a selection of books and bookplates, advertising brochures, exhibition catalogues, magazines and posters.”

This small and exquisite exhibition featured only 32 items, including the promised bookplates, advertising brochures, exhibition catalogues, magazines and posters. The exhibition lived up to its goal, but more important, it whet the visitor’s appetite for a larger exhibition of MacDonald’s graphic design work. I hope we do not have to wait a long time for such an exhibition, either by the National Gallery or some other institution.

The items exhibited ranged in date from 1903 to 1928. The one exception was a 1945 booklet by Ryerson Press containing a reproduction of “A Word to Us All: Being a Message for Canadians.” The original is an example of MacDonald’s calligraphy done in 1900. Its current whereabouts are unknown.

I must admit to some familiarity with J.E.H. MacDonald’s graphic design work because I own a copy of *J.E.H. MacDonald: Designer*, by Robert Stacey and Hunter Bishop, published in 1996 by Archives of Canadian Art, an imprint of Carleton University Press. But it is one thing to look at a reproduction in a monograph or catalogue and an extraordinarily different experience to see an actual copy of the item. Aside from the fact that most reproductions are reduced in size, they inevitably lose the details of the illustration and/or the typeface chosen, the real colour of the images or the character of the paper. The emotional response is also different. I experienced a real thrill to see the actual items on display in the cases. My only disappointment was that I could not handle the items. I don’t think my experience is unique.

The books MacDonald designed and illustrated were produced in reasonable numbers for their time, but today they’re rarely encountered by a book hunter. It was a pleasure to see them exhibited here. Other items on display—most of the ephemera, for example—are encountered even less frequently. These included commercial brochures advertising Lawrence Park Estates, “A Formal & Artistic Grouping of Ideal Homes”; Canadian Northern Steamships; and Place Viger Hotel, Montreal. Also on show were exhibition

catalogues for the British Empire Exhibition in 1924 and for Exposition d’art canadien in Paris in 1927. A bookplate, being such a personal thing, is also rarely seen by anyone outside of the friends and family of the person who commissioned it. Five bookplates were shown plus the original art for one prepared for Dr. James MacCallum.

J.E.H. MacDonald was an active member of the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto, and some of his graphic design work was produced for the club. Philip Dombowsky, the assistant archivist who curated this exhibition, borrowed from the club some unique items, such as an executive list, copies of *The LAMPS* (the club publication), and a broadside for *The Beggar’s Opera*, a theatre production at the club. In addition, the exhibition featured two books honouring club members and illuminated by MacDonald, *On Account of Defries* and *In Memoriam to R.F. Gagen* (both from 1926), now in the National Gallery Collection.

A full-colour brochure written by Dombowsky accompanied the exhibition. The brochure is a single sheet folded to create 10 pages. Its cover featured a reproduction of a portion of “Canada and the Call,” a poster whose glorious colours have resisted the passing years. Dombowsky provides a brief overview of MacDonald’s graphic design career and relates the items chosen for the exhibition to the artist’s career. The brochure was distributed for free at the exhibition.

The National Gallery and its library and archives should be commended for undertaking this important exhibition, but it should be regarded as just a start. We should encourage the National Gallery to give Canadian graphic design its due. When it comes to exhibition space and resources, graphic design should not be regarded as a lesser activity than fine art.

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