

The Military Artist and the Documentary Art Record

by **JIM BURANT**

As a prize in the era of European expansionism, Canada has been occupied at one time or another by the armed forces of France, Britain, and on the Pacific coast, Spain, as well as by the United States of America. Military forces also acted in various non-combatant roles, such as the exploration of new territories, the surveying of lands and waterways, the planning and construction of transportation routes, the establishing of settlements, or simply the provision of garrisons to protect economic interests or to further diplomatic initiatives. Finally, there has been military activity involving travel, either for private pleasure or for purposes of espionage. All of these military experiences have resulted in the creation of both public and private records: reports, letters, diaries, and memoranda; manuscript and published maps and plans of architectural and engineering projects; and works of documentary art such as watercolours, paintings, sketches, and printed images of landscapes, cities, and genre scenes.

A portrait, a view of a city, a depiction of a battle, or a record of an artifact in some visual form, are all types of documentary art records: easily understood visual documents in which the subject matter is readily identified by the viewer, regardless of the form of the documents, or the type of subject matter. A “military artist” is a person enlisted in a nation’s army or navy who has been trained to create visual documents, either before entry into the armed forces, or through formal training in a military academy or an apprenticeship. Furthermore, the artist’s skills must be applied to military duties or assignments, or to the furtherance of the artist’s own military career. Thus, works of documentary art created by military artists depict specific military subjects, and can be separated from the many “documentary art records” in which military artists and associated civilian artists depicted views of cities, waterfalls, landscapes, or genre scenes for their own pleasure.

In Canada, most archival institutions which hold military documentary art possess this material in only three forms: watercolours, drawings, and prints, all of which are designs executed on a paper support. Few documentary art records with military connotations exist in the form of oil paintings on canvas. Oil paintings were slow to execute, difficult to transport, very expensive to create and maintain, and generally would not have yielded major career benefits to a military officer. On the other hand, a watercolour or pencil

sketch could be quickly created, and was generally small and transportable, easily preserved, and inexpensive. The artistic training of most military men, particularly in the British armed forces, consisted essentially of the use of the watercolour medium in a paper format. Because loose paper was difficult to transport, notebooks or sketchbooks, generally of a small size and wrapped in waterproof oilskins, were the standard equipment of a military artist. This ensured that most surviving "on the spot" watercolours and drawings are less than 8" × 10" (18.7 × 25.4 cm) in size, although many "finished" works, that is, works redrawn for presentation purposes, are larger, up to 20" × 24" (50.8 × 61 cm) in size. Many sketchbooks still survive in bound formats, although countless others have been broken up due to age, neglect, or the desire on the part of owners and their descendants to frame and display particular sheets from them. Original watercolours and drawings were invariably the result of a specific official requirement to record some aspect of the country for navigation, colonization, survey, construction, or purely military purposes. Prints were almost always done after an original drawing or watercolour. They were often dedicated to patrons, who could provide the artist with some tangible benefit, such as promotion or support for career aspirations. Like originals, prints sometimes had a military purpose, but more often they were executed for commercial sale. It is easier to understand the military documentary art record, and to use it for research purposes, when the intent of the creator is also understood.

Prior to the 1750s, there were few military artists in Canada. There were no European armies in which extensive art training took place, with the result that few military men were trained topographical artists. The number of military men who served in Canada during the French regime up to 1750 was very small in comparison with the following period. Finally, those works that may have been created have either not survived the centuries, or may still lie inadequately documented in public or private collections. Before 1760, few officers serving in New France had any artistic training; the best known was Étienne Verrier (died 1747), who superintended the construction of fortifications and official buildings at Louisbourg and whose drawings have been used in the massive reconstruction projects undertaken since 1960.¹

The creation of documentary art by military men began in earnest with the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, when British officers began to arrive in North America in force. British Army or Navy officers generally received some artistic training: naval officers learned how to sketch harbours and coastal profiles, while army officers drew ground sketches, or topography, including landscapes. The Woolwich Academy had a drawing master from 1744. Published records of that institution indicate that "it is intended to strictly require certificates of diligence from the Drawing Master."² At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Academy regulations noted that "the future studies of each candidate will be very materially forwarded if he has learnt to draw before he is received as a Cadet."³ Among the earliest known British officer-artists were John Hamilton (died 1777), a captain in the 40th Regiment serving in Nova Scotia in the mid-1750s, who executed topographical views of Forts Edward and Beausejour, and Thomas Davies (circa 1737-1812), a Royal Artillery officer whose first service in Canada began at Halifax in 1757. Davies, an important figure in Canadian military history, recorded unique views of the campaigns at Louisbourg and in the St. John River valley during 1758, the campaign against the French forts in the Lake Champlain and Richelieu regions in 1759, and the St. Lawrence River valley campaign against Montreal in 1760. His watercolour view of Amherst's troops descending the rapids of the St. Lawrence in the 1760 campaign (Figure 1) was widely reproduced in print form, since it formed the background to the

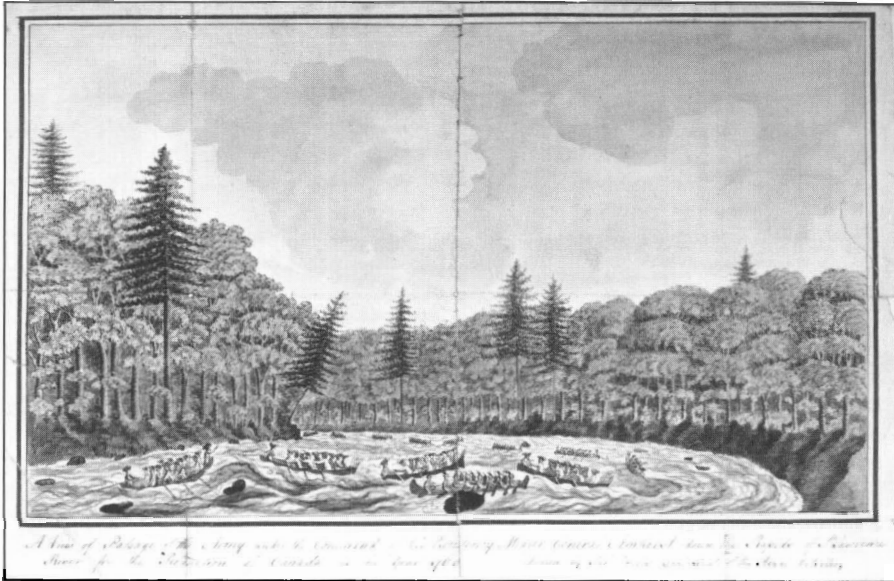


Figure 1: Thomas Davies, *A View of Passage of the Army under the Command of his Excellency Major General Amherst down the Rapids of St. Lawrence River for the Reduction of Canada in the Year 1760*. Monochrome wash: 26.6 × 38.8 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-577.

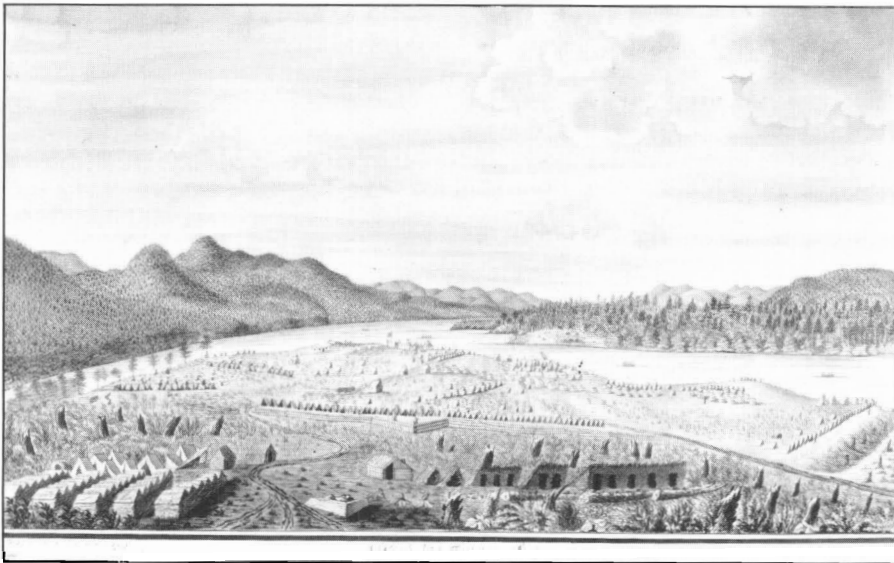


Figure 2: Thomas Davies, *A South View of Crown Point, 1759*. Monochrome wash: 30.0 × 48.0 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-13314.

famous dedicatory portrait of Jeffrey, Lord Amherst, painted by Joshua Reynolds and published in 1765. It is a moving and extraordinary rendering of the difficulties faced by Amherst during his rugged journey. Davies served in North America throughout his career, including duty in the years of the American Revolution, during which he again drew many views of battles fought against revolutionary troops. A Davies sketchbook recently acquired by the National Gallery of Canada contains superb views of British military operations around New York, as well as sketches relating to Canada.⁴ For the military historian, the most interesting of all Davies' works are sketches now held by the National Archives of Canada showing different types of military formations as well as *A South View of Crown Point* with the pitched tents of the army's camp laid out before the observer (Figure 2).⁵

Many other military artists served in Canada during the Seven Years' War, and left behind extensive records of both military operations and Canadian urban scenes. These include Richard Short (active circa 1745-1766), purser on board H.M.S. *Orange* in Admiral Saunders' fleet at Louisbourg and Quebec, whose sketches were published in a well-known series of twelve prints of Quebec and six of Halifax; Hervey Smyth (1734-1811) and George Townshend (1724-1807) on General Wolfe's staff; and other lesser-known officers who executed works which were later turned into printed views. Some original works, such as a drawing of Quebec in 1759 by Sir Guy Carleton, later Lord Dorchester (1724-1808), now in the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, are still virtually unknown and unused.⁶ Such men were more interested in recording military exploits than the landscape, but their work, much of which was published in the 1760s, became the most accurate available Canadian images yet created. Since then, their work has been put to many other uses; for example, Richard Short's prints of Halifax have been used for the study of early architectural and commercial developments in that city and methods of criminal punishment, since both a pillory and a stockade can be seen in his images.

The American Revolution brought a new flood of military officers to Canada, but few views of military interest relating to the Revolution survive. There are, for example, no contemporary views of the American siege of Quebec City. A number of Royal Engineers were sent to Canada in this period to construct fortifications on the St. Lawrence and Richelieu Rivers, including Henry Rudyerd (circa 1739-1828), who recorded many views during his period of duty from 1776 to 1785. At the same time, the British had begun to conduct military surveys of the colonies of which they retained possession. Under the direction of the Surveyor-General, Samuel Holland (circa 1728-1801), artists such as James Peachey (active 1773-1797), Louis Kotte (active 1783-1791), and James Hunter (active 1776-1792) travelled the length of the St. Lawrence River valley and into the Maritime Provinces, laying out townships, and recording such military construction activity as *A View of the Bridge over the River Maskinonge constructed on orders of General Haldimand, 1784* (Figure 3). Meanwhile, the Admiralty began to survey the Atlantic coast, an undertaking which resulted in that great publication, *The Atlantic Neptune*. Although other artists such as the Royal Artillery officer, William Pierie (active 1759-1777), were involved, much of the work was carried out by Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres (1722-1824), whose printed views of military fortifications at Annapolis Royal and Halifax are among the earliest to be circulated.⁷

Most of this survey work ended in the early 1790s, but further visual records of military activity continued to be produced by such garrison artists as Edward Walsh

(1766/67-1832), a surgeon with the 49th Regiment stationed in the Niagara Region, at Detroit, and in Montreal in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Walsh's view of the Parade Ground at Fort George, one of the earliest such depictions, which is now in the William L. Clements Library in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is a meticulously detailed record of both costumes and military formations in use at the time. Another officer in the 49th Regiment at the same time was Sempronius Stretton (1781-1842), whose watercolours of York and of Quebec City are most useful for the study of these military centres. Many other army and navy officers also recorded aspects of Canadian life in the period prior to the War of 1812, amongst them, George Bulteel Fisher (1766-1834) of the Duke of Kent's staff, and Edward Brenton (1774-1839) of the Royal Navy, who served on the Newfoundland station from the late 1790s. While many works by these artists are in Canadian collections, the British Map Library in London, England, may have hundreds more in its topographical collections, sources which have not yet been fully exploited or explored by Canadian researchers.

The War of 1812 brought large numbers of British military men to British North America, both to defend it against American invasion and later to garrison its many new settlements and fortifications. The battles of the War of 1812 were recorded by such men as Captain James Dennis (circa 1778-1855) of the 49th Regiment, whose print of the Battle of Queenston appeared in 1816, and Captains William Steele (circa 1777-1827) and John Hewitt (1788/89-circa 1868), both of whom created prints that recorded the British assaults on Fort Oswego in 1814. American officers also produced views which resulted in the production of prints associated with events of the War of 1812, including numerous scenes of the Battles of Lake Erie, Moraviantown, and Plattsburgh, but these are less often found in Canadian archival collections. A comparison of British and American prints of the War of 1812 would be an illuminating study in national interests, but has not yet been done by a military historian.⁸

The aftermath of the War of 1812, and the whole period between 1815 and 1837, resulted in renewed interest on the part of the British Foreign Office in Canadian events and the defence of British North America. A surge in British military activity took place, as new fortifications were constructed throughout the colonies; new surveys were undertaken of the uncharted territories under British control; and new transportation routes, particularly canals, were planned and built.

British military men who served in Canada in this period, and whose documentary art of military interest survives, can be divided into five main groups: the engineers and surveyors who carried out the extensive surveys of routes and sites, and completed the construction of canals, forts, martello towers, and roads; the staff and headquarters officers attached to the retinue of the colonial establishment, such as aides-de-camp and military secretaries; the itinerant and travel-minded officers who toured British North America for official and unofficial reasons not directly related to their duties; officers assigned to exploratory missions in the Arctic and to the West; and finally the troops who were despatched to the colonies to garrison the many new outposts. Although only a small minority of British officers sent to Canada in this period actually recorded in paint or watercolour their impressions of the country, enough has survived to give us a valuable record and to enable us to make some general comments on their work.

The major group of officers to figure in this period is the surveyors, engineers, sappers, and miners who were despatched to Canada to work on such projects as the construction

of the citadels at Quebec, Kingston, and Halifax, as well as at a host of smaller establishments such as Penetanguishene, Fort York, Ile Ste. Helene, and numerous minor forts and martello towers intended to provide British North America with a system of defences capable of resisting future American invasions. At the same time, these officers surveyed water and land routes from Quebec to the Maritime provinces and from Montreal to Lakes Ontario and Huron, with a view to providing more secure passages for British troops in time of war. Among the most prominent military artists were Henry Pooley (active 1812-1843), a Royal Engineer whose artistic work depicts the construction of the Rideau Canal between the Ottawa River and Kingston as well as military sites in the Maritime provinces, some of which survives in the Morse collection of the Killam Library at Dalhousie University; Thomas Burrowes (1796-1866),⁹ another Royal Engineer, whose drawings of Rideau Canal construction and of settlements in Upper Canada dated between 1826 and 1845 form a valuable part of the collection of the Archives of Ontario (Figure 4 shows a view of Perth, a military settlement on the Tay River, dated 1828); and Sir Richard Bonnycastle (1791-1847), the commander of the Royal Engineers at York from 1833, whose reputation rests less upon his surviving art work than upon his numerous books on Canada as well as upon his role in helping to establish the first artists' society and art exhibition in Toronto during 1834.¹⁰ Large numbers of important and skilled drawings and surveys by various military engineers executed in the period between 1815 and 1837 survive in a number of federal, provincial, and other public repositories in Canada. Information-filled prints depicting various projects appeared in such publications as British Parliamentary Reports, the *United Service Magazine* and *Papers on Subjects Connected with the Duties of The Corps of Royal Engineers*.¹¹

The second group, staff officers attached to the colonial establishment or serving as senior officers in British North America, includes many competent artists who often travelled on official tours or executed designs in response to the requirements of their political or military masters. For example, Charles Ramus Forrest (active 1802-1827) was aide-de-camp to the Governor-General, the Earl of Dalhousie, between 1821 and 1823. Although his work is primarily topographical rather than military, it includes views executed during Dalhousie's Upper Canadian tours. John Elliott Woolford (1778-1866) was a Royal Engineer also attached to Dalhousie's staff, both in Nova Scotia from 1816 to 1820, and for some time at Quebec from 1820 to 1828. His work includes numerous sketches executed during the tours of Upper Canada in 1821 and 1822 and during earlier tours of Nova Scotia in 1816 and 1817, as well as a beautiful view from the Courtyard of the Chateau St. Louis, Quebec, looking towards the Citadel (Figure 5).¹² Captain John Crawford Young (1788-circa 1859) another aide-de-camp to Dalhousie, who was in Canada from 1825 to 1836, was responsible for the design of the obelisk dedicated to Wolfe and Montcalm still standing in the Governor-General's Gardens in Quebec City. Lieutenant-Colonel James Pattison Cockburn (1778-1847), the commander of the 60th Regiment stationed at Quebec from 1826 to 1832, perhaps the most prolific and the best-known of all military artists stationed in Canada, created hundreds of watercolours, such as *Artillery Barracks and Gun Placement, Quebec* (Figure 6). His numerous publications included a guide book to Quebec and sets of prints of Quebec and of Niagara Falls which made his talent and ability widely known to a large number of his contemporaries.¹³

The third group active during this period were those itinerant and travel-minded officers who came to North America to observe the state of the new American republic,

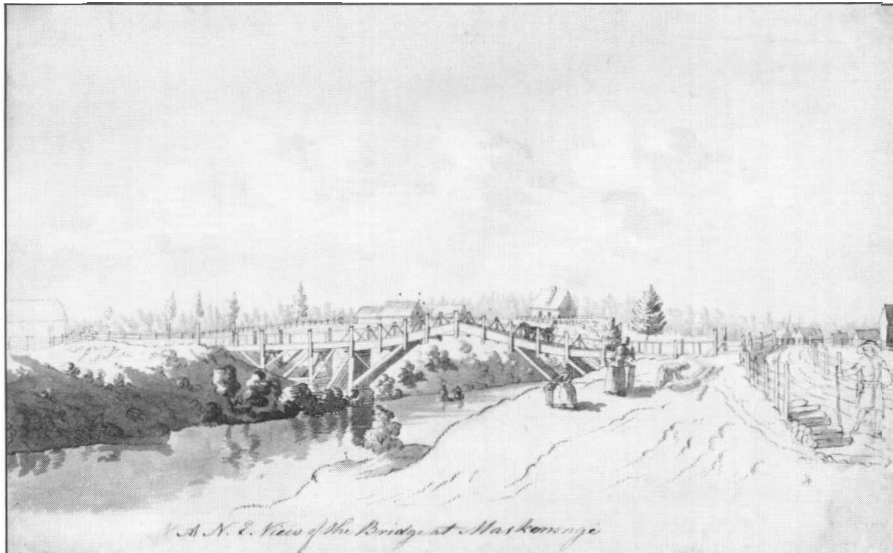


Figure 3: James Peachey, *A North-East View of the Bridge Built over the Maskinonge River by Order of General Haldimand in 1781*. Grey and blue wash over pencil: 31.7 × 51.4 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-45565.

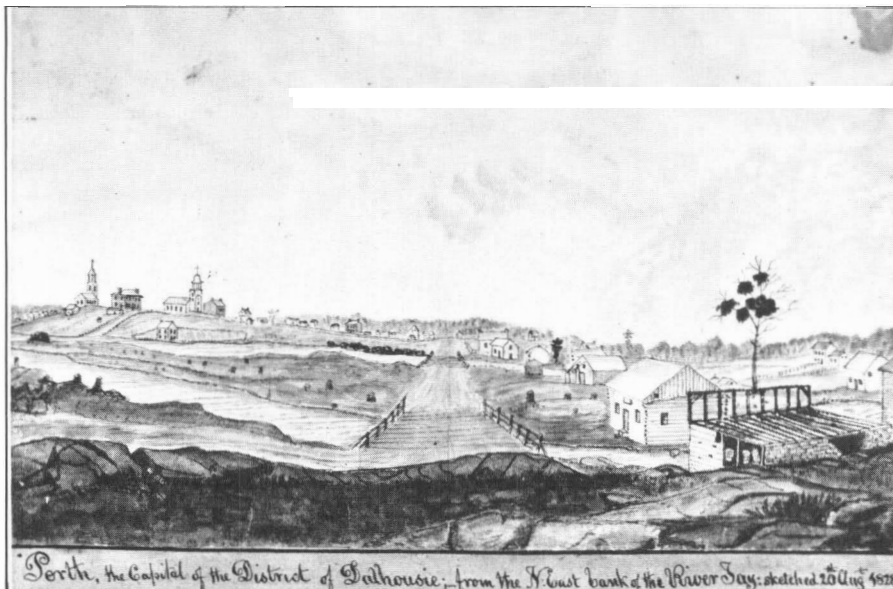


Figure 4: Thomas Burrowes, *Perth, the Capital of the District of Dalhousie; from the N. East bank of the River Tay*, August 20, 1828. Watercolour, Ontario Archives, Burrowes # 22.



Figure 5: John Elliott Woolford, *From the Courtyard of the Chateau St. Louis, Quebec, looking toward the Citadel*, ca. 1824. Grey and brown washes over pencil: 19.5 × 33.1 cm. Royal Ontario Museum, 960.273.11.

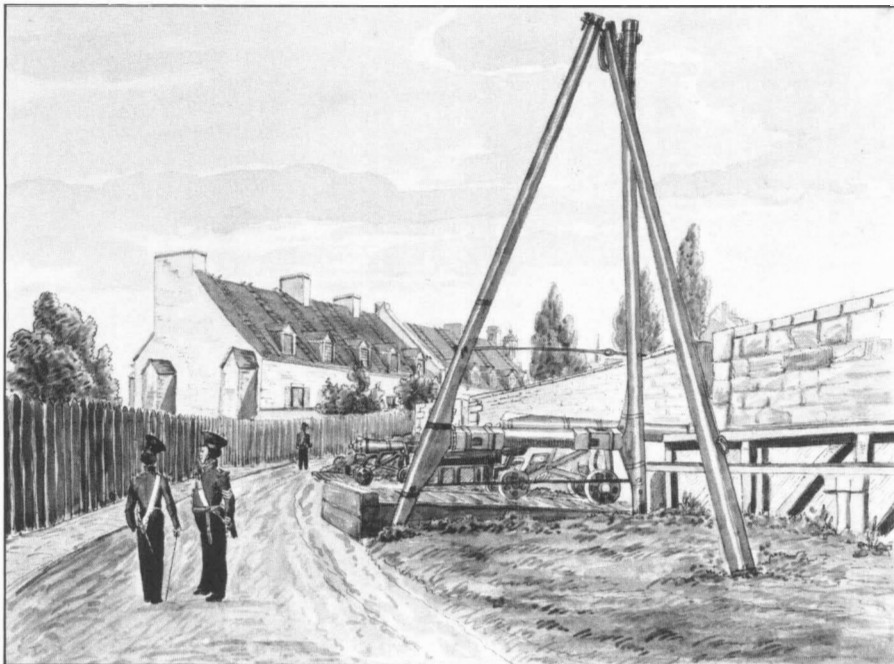


Figure 6: James Pattison Cockburn, *Artillery Barracks and Gun Placement, Quebec, Lower Canada*, ca. 1830. Watercolour and pen and ink outline over pencil: 31.7 × 42.2 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-12536.

to weigh the defensive needs of the British North American colonies, to see the potential of these colonies for settlement, and to view the sights. Most of these officers were conscious of the recent war and of the latent strength of the United States and, while not officially on duty, were aware of their responsibilities as military men in foreign lands. Among such observers can be found the naval officers Frederick De Roos (1804-1861), who toured North America in 1826, and Basil Hall (1788-1844), who followed in 1828, both of whom produced books illustrated with their own views of various locales; and Henry Byam Martin (1804-1865), who was in Canada in 1832, at which time he executed views of the naval establishment at Penetanguishene (Figure 7).¹⁴ Army officers also came, among them Francis Hall (active 1810-1830), who toured the colonies in 1816-1817, leaving behind sketches of Kingston, Niagara, and other points on the American frontier; Edward Coke (1807-1888), whose book, *A Subaltern's Furlough*, based on his experiences and including prints after his own drawings, appeared in 1832; Sir James Edward Alexander (1803-1885), whose tour in the early 1830s resulted in the publication *Transatlantic Sketches*, a book with few illustrations but replete with remarkable insights into future developments in North American affairs; and Lieutenant Edward C. Frome (1802-1890), of the Royal Engineers, who visited Canada in the early 1830s to view the construction of the Rideau Canal, and executed a number of fine pencil drawings of various sites along the canal which are now in the Royal Geographical Society's collection in London, England. The itinerant travellers who executed and published visual records of what they saw are the least trustworthy of all the British officers who came to North America. In the words of Thomas Chandler Haliburton's Sam Slick:

Ensigns and leftenants, I guess from the British marchin regiments in the Colonies, that run over five thousand miles of country in five weeks.... When they get back they are so chockfull of knowledge of the Yankees that it runs over of itself: ... wishy-washy trash they call tours, sketches, travels, letters and whatnot.¹⁵

Often their views display only superficial knowledge of Canadian society, geography, and the peculiarities of the military experience in Canada; occasionally they offer serious insights into places and events not examined elsewhere.

The military explorer is a more trustworthy observer. In the eighteenth century, the Pacific Coast was explored by men such as Captains James Cook and George Vancouver of Britain, Bodega Y Quadra and Juan de Fuca of Spain, and La Pérouse of France, all of whom carried expedition artists with them, some of whose works are now in Canadian collections.¹⁶ In the nineteenth century, the role of exploration was primarily in the hands of the British Navy, and much of the most valuable work was conducted on the icy seas of the Arctic Ocean and its various passages, straits, and inlets, by such men as Ross and Parry. The Arctic coast was also explored in 1819-21 and 1825-26 by overland expeditions commanded by Sir John Franklin. The work of Franklin's expedition artists, Robert Hood (1796-1821) and George Back (died 1878), add little to the knowledge of military history, but in a watercolour such as *Trading with the Eskimos in Hudson Strait, 1819* (Figure 8), Hood captures vividly the novelty of two very different cultures in collision.¹⁷

Finally, one can examine the work of garrison officers who served throughout the colonies between 1815 and 1837 in outposts from the banks of Lake Huron to the coast of



Figure 7: Henry Byam Martin, *Penetanguishene, Upper Canada, October 1832*. Sepia over pencil: 15.4 × 49.5 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-115046.



Figure 8: Robert Hood, *The Hudson's Bay Company Ships Prince of Wales and Eddystone Bartering with the Eskimos off the Upper Savage Islands, Hudson Straits, Northwest Territories, 1819*. Watercolour: 25.7 × 38.7 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-40364.

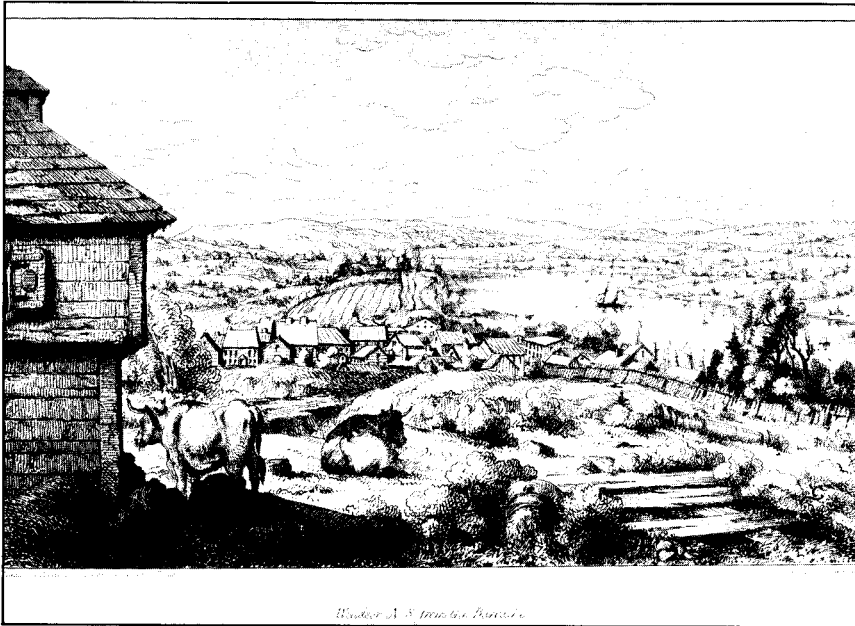


Figure 9: Robert Petley, *Windsor, N.S. from the Barracks*, 1837. Lithograph, hand-coloured, on chine-colle paper: 27.0 × 32.5 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-115414.

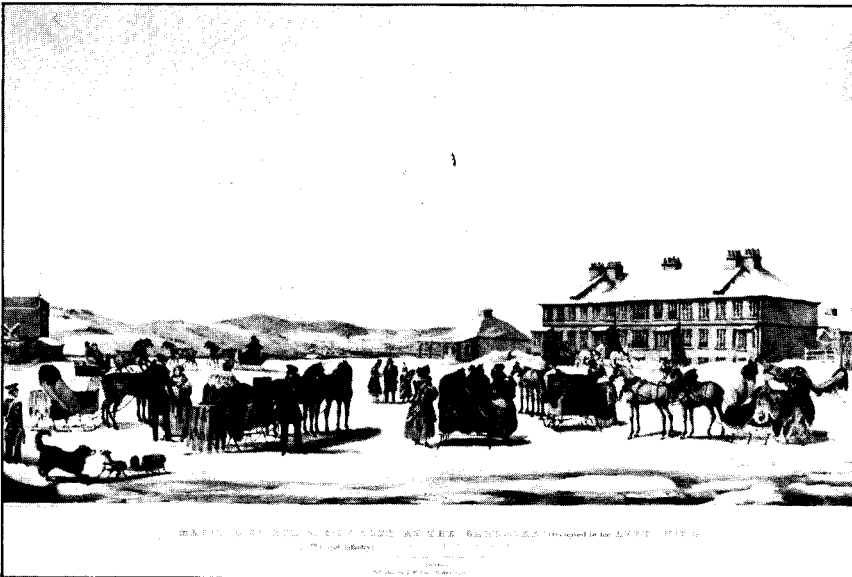


Figure 10: Robert G.A. Levinge, *Meeting of the Sleigh Club at the Barracks, St. John, New Brunswick*, 1838. Colour lithograph: 44.8 × 67.0 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-6146.

Nova Scotia. Once they had established themselves in the garrison routine and carried out their official duties, these officers often had long periods of idle time on their hands, during which they turned to sport, convivial societies such as sleigh clubs, and to sketching. They often formed groups for the purpose of sketching, and exchanged watercolours and drawings with each other for copying, or as mementoes of their tours of duty. Some travelled widely, occasionally on official business or solely for pleasure. The artillery officer and Waterloo veteran Alexander Cavalie Mercer (1783-1868), executed numerous sketches in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Canadas, including superb views of the Halifax Citadel, track boats on the Saint John River, and military installations at Charlottetown during his two tours of duty from 1822 to 1828 and 1837 to 1842. Mercer's work can be found in numerous repositories, the largest collections being in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia and the National Archives of Canada. Like Mercer, Robert Petley (1812-1869), an officer with the 50th Regiment, spent the majority of his tour of duty in the Maritime provinces, serving at Fredericton in 1831 and with the 71st Regiment in Halifax from 1832 to 1836. He recorded military sites in Nova Scotia, and later published a set of lithographs, including a view of the Old Fort at Windsor, Nova Scotia (Figure 9). William Denny (1804-1886), also of the 71st Regiment, served in Upper and Lower Canada from 1824 to 1831, and later served in other capacities in Canada through the 1850s. His collection includes a number of views at the Grenville Canal site on the Ottawa River as well as views of the canal and bridge installations on the Trent Waterway system. Richard George Augustus Levinge (1811-1884) of the 43rd Regiment is best known for his views of the unit's march overland to Quebec in December 1837 to assist in the suppression of the Rebellions, but was also responsible for more peaceful views, such as *Meeting of the Sleigh Club at the Barracks, Saint John, New Brunswick* (Figure 10), published in 1838 in London.¹⁸

Many of the garrison officers served two or more tours of duty in Canada, one prior to the Upper and Lower Canadian Rebellions of 1837-1838, and one after the Rebellions. The period from 1837 to 1842 saw the greatest number of British troops stationed in the Canadas, and with them, many officer-artists. As a result, this short span of time has produced the richest collections of visual documents. British troops had been sent to Canada in massive numbers to respond to the possibility of American invasion in support of rebellion and to subdue the civilian population until political solutions could be found to the problems revealed by the Rebellions. By the time most of these troops arrived, the military threat had dissipated. Nevertheless, regiments were dispersed to newly established garrisons throughout Upper and Lower Canada, such as Chatham, London, Niagara Falls, Fort Ingall on the Temiscouata Portage, and to St. Andrews, New Brunswick. At the same time, officers of the Royal Engineers or of various infantry regiments were ordered to carry out such diverse projects as the resolution of boundary disputes, the construction of new military roads, and tours of inspection throughout British North America.

The result of their presence, and of the great amount of leisure time produced by the lack of military threats, is a superb iconographic record of much of the country. A list of the most prominent military artists must include James Hope-Wallace (1807-1854) of the Coldstream Guards, in Quebec from 1838 to 1844, the central figure in a community of artists which included Charles Wilbraham (active 1828-1870) and John Kirkland (1820-1896) of his own regiment; Henry Barnard (1799-1857) of the Grenadier Guards; and Millicent Mary Chaplin (died 1858), the wife of another Guards officer. Hope-Wallace painted many watercolours of Quebec and vicinity and produced a

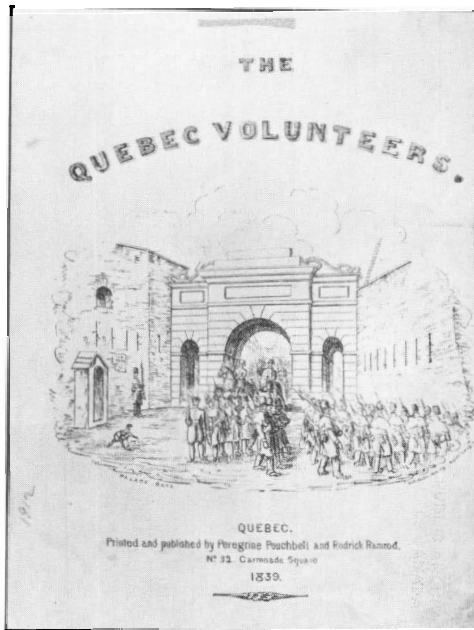


Figure 11: Sir James Hope-Wallace, *The Quebec Volunteers Title Page: Palace Gate*, 1839. Lithograph: 29.1 × 22.5 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-6170.

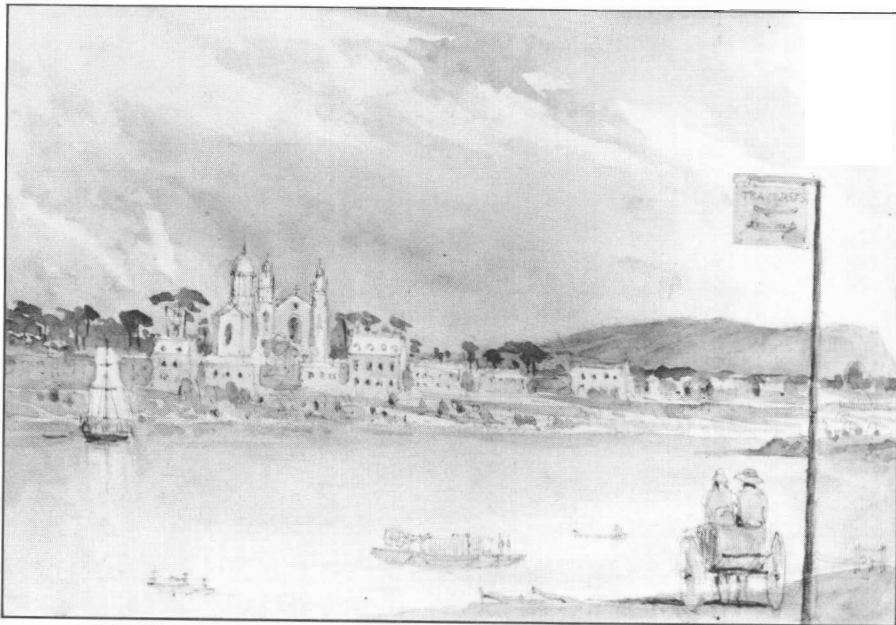


Figure 12: Philip John Bainbrigge, *St. Denis when [sic] our Troops were forced to retire*, ca. 1840. Watercolour on pencil: 15.5 × 22.5 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-2060.

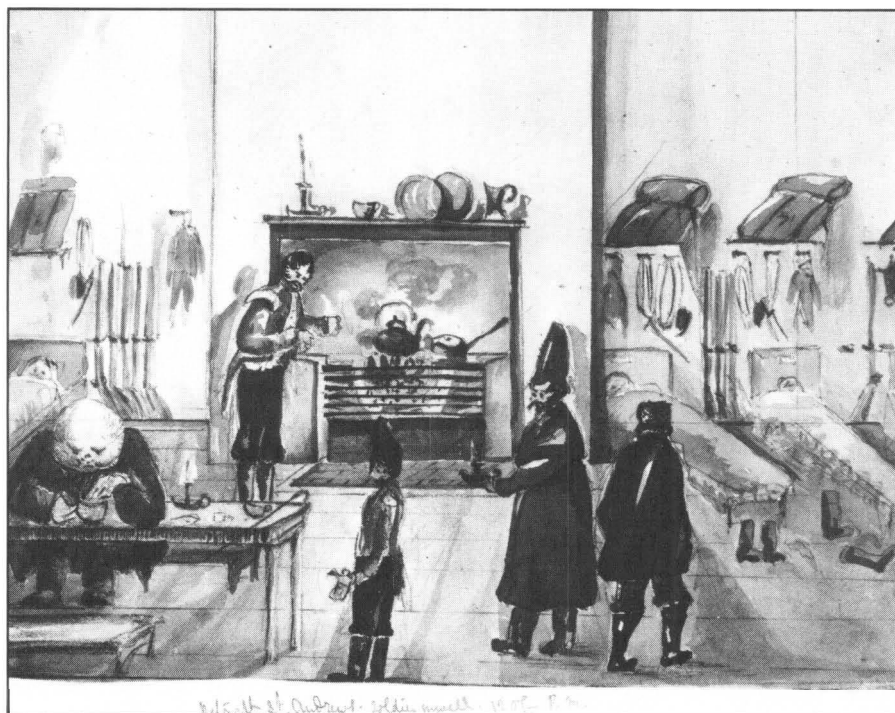


Figure 13: James Cumming Clarke, *Detachment at St. Andrew's, New Brunswick: Soldier Unwell*, 1854. Watercolour and pencil: 17.8 × 23.4 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-8404.

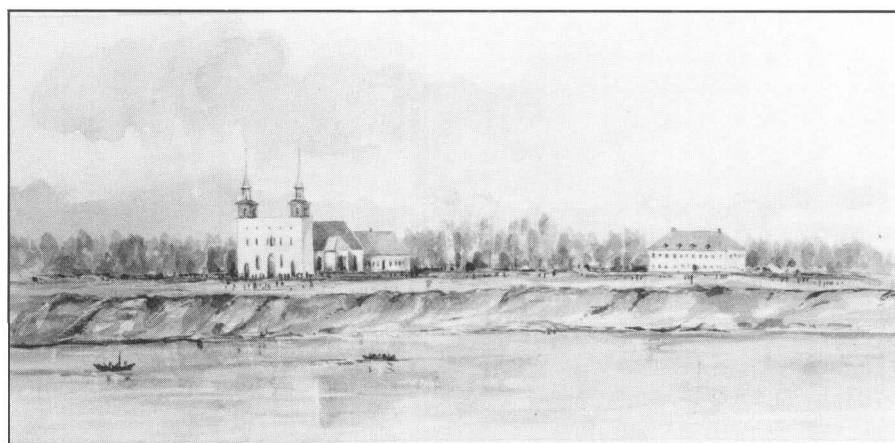


Figure 14: William H.E. Napier, *St. Boniface Roman Catholic Cathedral, Red River Settlement*, 1858. Watercolour: 8.9 × 18.4 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-1065.

famous set of lithographed prints entitled *The Quebec Volunteers*, depicting the uniforms of the militia troops raised among the civilian population of the city in 1837-1838 (Figure 11).¹⁹ Another important artist with a much wider range of activity was Philip John Bainbrigg (1817-1881) of the Royal Engineers. Posted to Canada in 1836, he recorded aspects of the Rebellion in Lower Canada, including a watercolour of St. Eustache after it had been burnt (Figure 12). He was later employed on special survey duties and travelled extensively through the colonies, recommending defensive measures and fortification needs. The Royal Ontario Museum owns a rare example of a Woolwich topographical exercise book by Lieutenant Louis Martineau, whose examining officer was Bainbrigg. This sketchbook demonstrates the type of work an officer was expected to be able to produce.²⁰ Other officers were employed in duties similar to Bainbrigg's; one, Henry James Warre (1819-1898), travelled widely, both as an aide-de-camp to General Jackson, and on a special tour of duty to the Oregon Territory in 1845-1846, recording such sites as Forts Garry and Victoria as well as views of crossing the Rocky Mountains.²¹ Sir James Alexander of the 14th Regiment was stationed at London, Canada West, from 1841 to 1843. His sketchbook includes views of garrison activities at London, Niagara, and Toronto; sketches of Goderich and Brantford; and portraits of fellow officers and artists, including George Russell Dartnell (1799-1878) of the 1st Regiment, or the Royals. James Cumming Clarke (1827-died after 1881), an officer stationed in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, in 1853 and 1854, compiled an impressive series of views of the military works, garrison activities and barracks interiors (Figure 13). William Wolfe (1832-1872) produced watercolours of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, which, although primarily non-military in subject matter, include a number of garrison views. William Napier (1830-1894) and George Seton (1819-1905) sketched throughout the United Canadas, as well as travelling to the Red River territory, where they executed views of Fort Garry and vicinity (Figure 14). The works of all these artists and a host of others are scattered in museum, gallery, and archives collections across the country, awaiting serious scholarly study. Although a number of superb catalogues have been produced,²² the real need in this area is for a publication similar to the Smithsonian Institution's *Inventary of American Paintings*.²³

With the outbreak of the Crimean War, most British regiments were withdrawn from Canada. At the same time, the potential of photography for military needs began to be recognized both in the Crimea and in China in 1859-1860. This meant a decline in the need for skills in artistic topography and watercolour drawing. Artistic training remained a part of the academic course work at Woolwich and other military academies, but fewer young officers recorded aspects of military life around them, preferring to purchase or commission photographic albums showing their stations, social life, surroundings, and friends. Changes in materials and techniques also caused problems. The types of paper and colours available, and new techniques of watercolour drawing, resulted in the production of works which have not survived the test of time. Pulp-based papers, introduced in the 1860s, do not last as long as the earlier rag-based papers, and sketchbooks from this period tend to be far inferior in quality. Nevertheless, in the 1860s and early 1870s, what remained of the British garrisons in Canada could still produce men like Francis Coleridge (active 1856-1891) of the 25th Regiment, whose volume of sketches of regimental life in Quebec and Montreal in 1865-1866 has been recently acquired by the National Archives of Canada; Henry Buckton Laurence (1842-1886), whose printed reminiscences entitled *Sports and Pastimes in Canada*, published in 1870, records aspects of military life in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec (Figure

15); and William Ogle Carlile (active 1861-1906) who, with Henry Martindale (active 1870-1873), produced *Recollections of Canada*, a series of prints published in England in 1873. Carlile also produced a series of drawings published in the *Canadian Illustrated News* showing the departure of the British garrison from Quebec in 1871.

The withdrawal of British troops did not mean the end of the military topographical tradition in Canada. By the 1840s, there were active Canadian-born military artists, such as John Herbert Caddy (1801-1887), a Royal Engineer who eventually settled in Hamilton, Ontario, and became an art teacher.²⁴ Although Caddy had been trained at Woolwich Military Academy, later Canadian military artists were probably self-trained amateurs. Robert Rutherford (1857-1933) an artillery officer whose career included service in the North-West Rebellion in 1885, painted many watercolours of military events and activities, including his most famous work, *The Surrender of Poundmaker* (Figure 16).²⁵ Rutherford, however, was a rare example of the military topographer on the late nineteenth-century scene. By 1900, the tradition had practically died out.²⁶

The visual legacy of military artists to this country's history is a large one. Their works are accurate renderings of the scenes with which they were familiar, and in most cases were not designed to appeal to passing artistic fancies or modes. Especially when he was recording sites, events, or topics of military interest, the military artist was aware that his fellow officers would be passing judgement not just on his artistic skill but on the veracity of his record. His colleagues' trained eyes, familiar with the marching formation, the neatness of uniform, the science of fortification, and the art of topography, could readily judge the ability of an officer to see and record faithfully these topics. Officers could be promoted because of their artistic abilities, as was the case with Robert Hood in 1816. Many officers recorded the same scenes or events, so that comparisons are usually available to enable us to make our own judgements on the truthfulness, and usefulness, of these visual documents.

Canadian archives have, from their inception, collected military documentary art, and separate units for handling of the medium of documentary art exist in most larger Canadian repositories. The National Archives of Canada, for example, has had a Picture Division (now the Documentary Art and Photography Division) since 1906. Because art holdings fall outside the education and training of most archivists, however, the context and the use of such material has sometimes been misunderstood. Archivists involved in the acquisition, organization, custody, and diffusion of documentary art must contend with questions about the validity of collecting such documentary art, and as a recent critical article in *Saturday Night* magazine amply demonstrates,²⁷ face comparisons with the museological and gallery world. Occasionally more direct questions are raised as to why such material is not in a gallery or museum where it could be displayed, rather than being stored in the cavernous storage rooms of obscure archival institutions.

All of these problems can be solved by developing a better understanding of documentary art. A dialogue on the issues involved in collecting this material has to be begun.²⁸ More research into these artists, the provenance of their works, and other factors surrounding the creation of the record has to be carried out, and the results of such research must be published. Finally, a comprehensive guide to archival holdings of documentary art must be developed as part of a greater archival information network. The documentary art records held in archives, libraries, museums, and other cultural institutions are valuable historical documents. Both archivists and the research public

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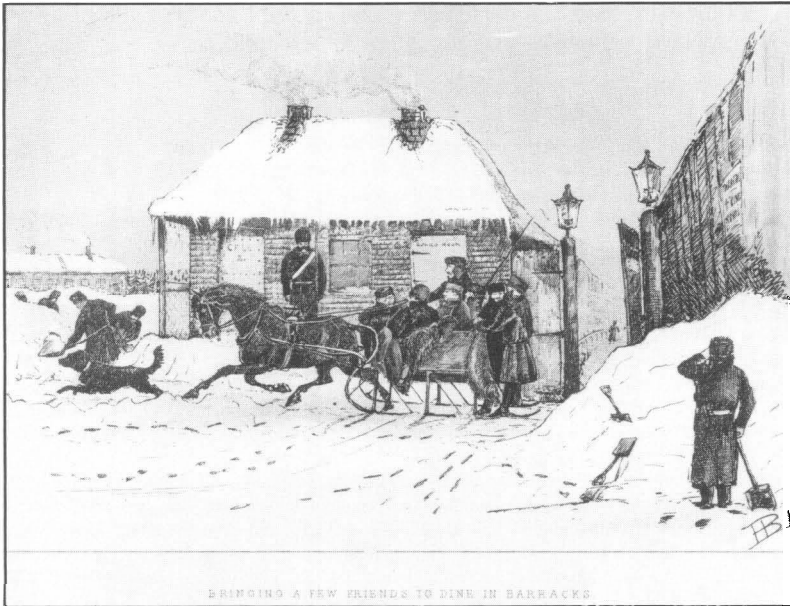


Figure 15: Henry Buckton Laurence, *Bringing A Few Friends to dine in Barracks*, ca. 1867. Colour Lithograph: 22.0 × 33.0 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-39751.

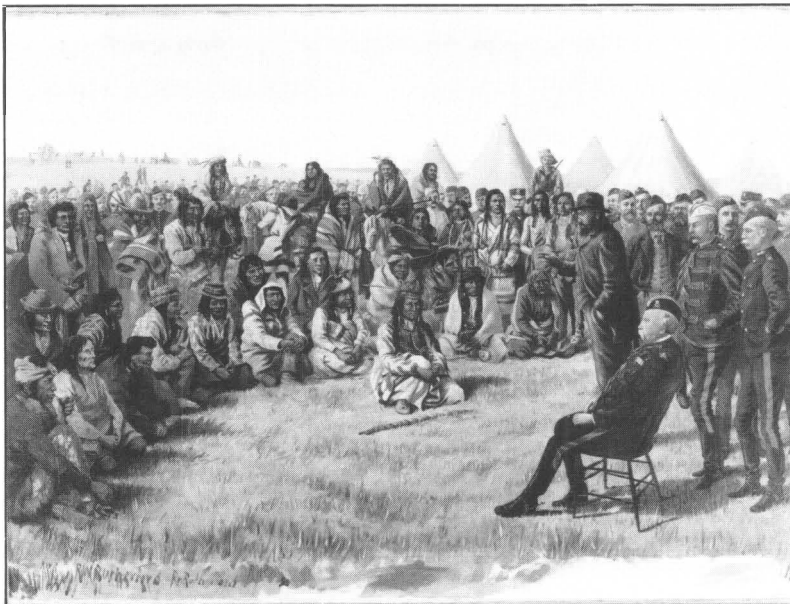


Figure 16: Robert W. Rutherford, *The Surrender of Poundmaker to Major-General Middleton at Battleford, Saskatchewan, on May 26, 1885*, 1887. Oil painting: 91.7 × 122.5 cm. National Archives of Canada, C-2769.

must know how to use them in order to understand not just Canada's military history, but many other spheres of the history of our country's development.

Notes

- 1 J. Russell Harper, *Early Painters and Engravers in Canada* (Toronto, 1970), p. 317.
- 2 *Records of the Royal Military Academy, 1741-1892* (Woolwich, 1892), p. 45.
- 3 *Records of the Royal Military Academy 1851* (Woolwich, 1851), p. 98.
- 4 The Davies sketchbook was originally offered for sale at the Sotheby Parke Bernet (London) Topographical Sale of 28 May 1981 in the American section, lot 30, as an anonymous work by "J.D." for an estimate of £2000-£3000. Staff of the National Archives of Canada's Picture Division recognized it as a Davies sketchbook, and bid on it, unsuccessfully. It eventually sold to a New York dealer, from whom the National Gallery acquired it later in the same year.
- 5 Robert H. Hubbard, *Thomas Davies* (Ottawa, 1972).
- 6 This drawing has only recently come to the attention of the author with its publication in D.W. Meinig's *The Shaping of America. A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*. Vol. I: *Atlantic America, 1492-1800*, (New Haven and London, 1986), p. 116. Previously it was believed that all of Dorchester's private papers and documents had been destroyed in 1808 by his widow. See the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, V (Toronto, 1983) p. 153.
- 7 Information on the dates of most of the artists listed in this article is derived from the excellent publication by W. Martha E. Cooke, *W.H. Coverdale Collection of Canadiana: Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings* (Ottawa, 1984), pp. 26, 158-61, 227-30, and 236; and from the artists' files of the Documentary Art and Photography Division, National Archives of Canada. An especially good discussion of the *Atlantic Neptune* can be found in Augustus Loring's article, "The Atlantic Neptune" in Elton W. Hall, ed., *American Maritime Prints* (Dartmouth, 1985), pp. 1-40.
- 8 Sinclair Hitchings of the Boston Public Library delivered a lecture entitled "The War of 1812 as Fought by Printers" at the 11th Annual North American Print Conference held in Toronto in May 1980, the proceedings of which are forthcoming. For more about American naval prints, see *The War of 1812. Huzzah for the American Navy! A Massachusetts Historical Society Picture Book* (Boston, 1962) and Edgar Newbold Smith, *American Naval Broadships. A Collection of Early Naval Prints (1745-1815)* (New York, 1974).
- 9 National Archives of Canada, Documentary Art and Photography Division, Artist biographical file 705-646.
- 10 Carol Lowrey, "The Society of Artists and Amateurs 1834: Toronto's First Art Exhibition and Its Antecedents," *Revue D'Art Canadien/Canadian Art Review* (RACAR), 8 no. 2 (1981), pp. 99-118.
- 11 These journals and other periodicals, such as *The Naval Chronicle*, are available in few Canadian locations; the Royal Military College at Kingston and the National Archives of Canada own various runs of them.
- 12 Marie Elwood, "The Discovery and Repatriation of the Lord Dalhousie Papers," *Archivaria* 24 (Summer 1987), pp. 108-116, discusses all of Dalhousie's artists.
- 13 A number of studies relating to Cockburn already exist, including Michael Bell and W.M.E. Cooke, *The Last Lion* (Kingston, 1978) and Christina Cameron and Jean Trudel, *Quebec au temps de James Paterson Cockburn* (Quebec, 1976).
- 14 Jim Burant, *Friendly Spies on the Northern Tour, 1815-1837* (Ottawa, 1981).
- 15 Thomas C. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker* (London, 1838), p. 83.
- 16 Thomas Vaughan and Bill Holm, eds., *Soft Gold: The Fur Trade and Cultural Exchange on the Northwest Coast of America* (Oregon, 1982) tells a great deal about the early exploration of the Pacific coast by Russian, Spanish, French, British, and American naval and army expeditions.
- 17 C. Stuart Houston, *To the Arctic by Canoe 1819-1821: The Journal and Paintings of Robert Hood, Midshipman with Franklin* (Montreal, 1974).
- 18 Paul Hachey, *The New Brunswick Landscape Print* (Fredericton, 1980).
- 19 Mary Allodi, *Printmaking in Canada: The Earliest Views and Portraits to 1850* (Toronto, 1980); and Jim Burant, "Record of Empire, 1835-1896: The John Agmodisham Vesey Kirkland Album," *Archivaria* 22 (Summer 1986), pp. 120-28.
- 20 The Louis Martineau sketchbook is accession 984.90.1 of the Canadiana Department, Royal Ontario Museum. The National Archives owns a similar collection of drawings done by Elias Walker Durnford (CAAD, Acc. 84503/46).
- 21 Madeleine Major-Fregeau, *Overland to Oregon in 1845: Impressions of a Journey Across North America by H.J. Warre* (Ottawa, 1976).

- 22 Jim Burant and Judith Saunders, *The Garrison Years: London, Canada West, 1793-1853* (London, Ont., 1983); Honore de Pencier, *George Russell Dartnell* (Toronto, 1987), and National Archives artists' files.
- 23 Smithsonian Institution, *Directory to the Bicentennial Inventory of American Paintings Executed Before 1914* (Washington, 1976). This project, initiated by the National Collection of Fine Arts, compiled lists of works by artists and sources on a computerized data base which is regularly updated. The list is available in a print-out format to any interested institution, and includes entries from both public and private holdings.
- 24 Frances K. Smith, *John Herbert Caddy* (Kingston, 1985).
- 25 Martha Marleau, catalogue entry no. 39 from Douglas Schoenherr, ed., *The Painted Past* (Ottawa, 1984), pp. 72-75.
- 26 The military art tradition has continued in Canada up to this day, with the programme of commissioning war artists in both the First and Second World Wars. See R.F. Wodehouse, *Checklist of the War Collections* (Ottawa, 1968) and Heather Robertson, ed., *A Terrible Beauty: the art of Canada at War* (Toronto, 1977).
- 27 Noah Richler, "Inflated Images," *Saturday Night*, 103 no. 3, March 1988, pp. 62-64.
- 28 I was fortunate enough to have been involved with a session in the recent English Archives course directed by Hugh Taylor at the National Archives of Canada which dealt with documentary art and various problems associated with its acquisition and diffusion, a session where the questions which were raised were provocative and stimulating. I hope that the kind of dialogue generated there will be repeated in other arenas.