

birthplace, Africville. Black communities are warned to be on their guard against losing what they already have. Snapshots of the first Africville Reunion, now a yearly event, are on display in this section. Newspaper clippings and copies of newspaper headlines, quotes from and pictures of speakers at "The Africville Experience Conference: Africville Relocation" remind us of the shame of the demolition of Africville and the injustice done to relocated black communities across North America.

This is a simple and well-designed show that gets its point across. The sequence of the displays allows for several ways to follow the story, and the various sections run together though not necessarily consecutively. Explanatory notes and captions are easy to find, succinct and legible in French and English. The exhibition area is well illuminated. Seating in front of the video presentation and in the simulated church interior allows time and space for listening and contemplation. The variety of media used enhances the visual interest of the show, despite the relative dearth of artistic images or valuable artifacts.

An illustrated catalogue (\$5.00) providing commentaries by former Africville residents on what it was like to live in Africville, their dislocation and a brief history of Africville and the Black presence in Nova Scotia accompanies the exhibit. "Africville: A Spirit That Lives On," will be touring across the Maritimes, central Canada and the West until December 1992.

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A Place in History: Twenty Years of Acquiring Paintings, Drawings and Prints at the National Archives of Canada. JIM BURANT, JENNIFER DEVINE, LUCIE DORAIS, LYDIA FOY, EVA MAJOR-MAROTHY, MARTHA MARLEAU, TERRESA McINTOSH, SUSAN NORTH, DOUGLAS E. SCHOENHERR, and ALLISON THOMPSON. NAC. 30 October 1990 — 31 March 1991. 300 p. catalogue.

As part of its mandate to preserve "all public records, documents, and other historical material of every kind, nature, and description," the National Archives of Canada has built up a large collection of documentary art (some 200,000 items) chronicling aspects of Canadian life before the era of photography, as well as selected themes from the modern period. "A Place in History," formerly on view at the Archives building in Ottawa, displayed the most important acquisitions of the last twenty years, including no fewer than seventy-eight works by fifty-seven different artists. Of these, twenty-six items had been purchased under the terms of the *Cultural Property Export and Import Act* (1977), legislation that restricts the export of cultural property and funds repatriation from abroad. Most if not all of the examples postdate the mid-eighteenth century, because works from the earlier period of settlement are now very rare. Such exhibitions, of which there have been several in the past two decades, offer scholars an opportunity to learn about recent discoveries, and provide the general public with an insight into how the Archives records our national heritage.

Because art museums tend to focus attention on the aesthetic aspects of art, the documentary area often receives less recognition. But holdings of the latter type actually involve a very broad investigative approach intended to determine the circumstances

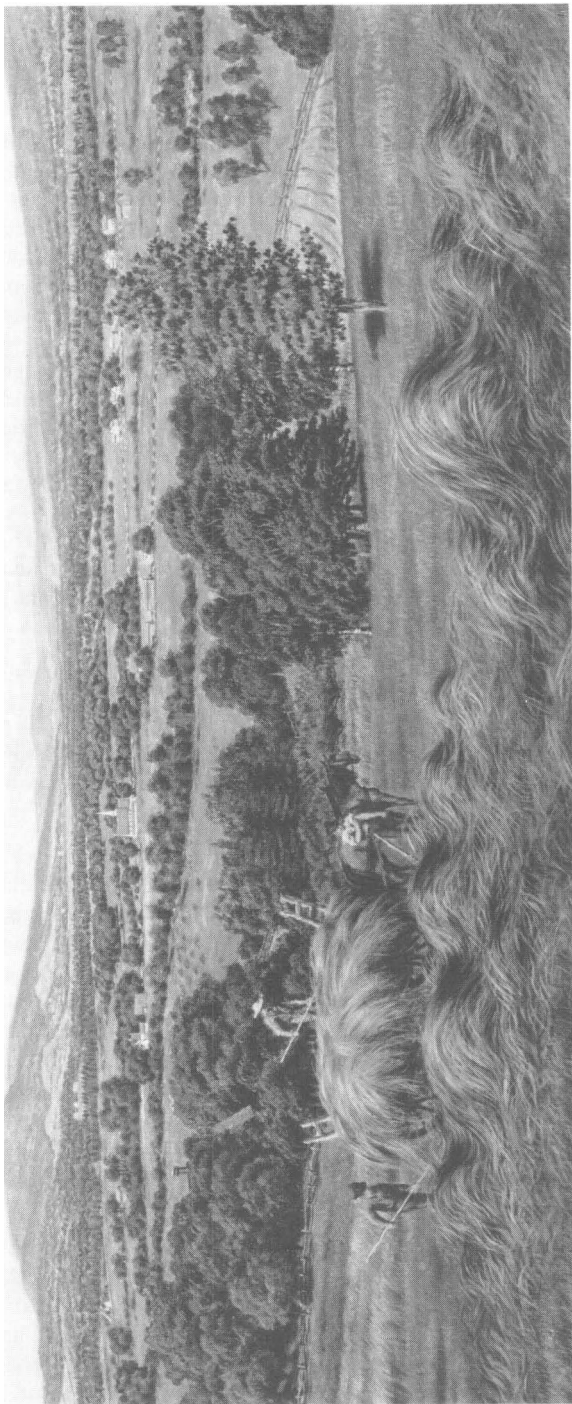
under which the work was created and the degree to which it accurately records historical fact, together with the usual issues of art historical context and authenticity. This in turn produces some interesting clues to attribution that might not otherwise emerge. In mounting an exhibition of documentary art, the principal difficulty is in striking a balance between the necessity to explain and the problem of overwhelming the casual visitor with a mass of technical detail.

In this exhibition, anthropological and ethnographic records, topographical landscape, historical portraiture and an assortment of more recent poster and commercial designs are arranged in chronological and thematic order in four sections, each introduced by a brief text. The first segment, "As Long as the Sun Shall Shine: The First Peoples", includes works by Angelica Kauffmann, and her Swiss compatriots, Rodolphe von Steiger and Peter Rindisbacher, alongside those by Paul Kane and American Theodore J. Richardson (who inspired Emily Carr to paint West Coast Indian villages). Kauffmann, who never visited Canada, recorded an authentic "mother's parka" of ringed seal in *Woman in Eskimo Clothing from Labrador* of 1768-1772. The garment, modelled by a European, incorporates a large boot designed to carry a young child, an extinct motif known only from writings of eighteenth-century explorers and a few engravings. The scientific purpose is in sharp contrast with the Romantic vision of Frances Ann Hopkins, whose husband served with the Hudson's Bay Company. Her work, entitled *Left to Die*, incorporates Plains Indian garb in a sentimental grand manner *tableau* that speaks as much to European perceptions of Canada as it does to native customs and attire.

Under the heading "Artists in a New Land", nineteenth-century topographical paintings by professionals and amateurs are presented. An album by Lord Dalhousie's official draughtsman appears beside a rare sketch of a farmhouse interior by a physician who accompanied the Prince of Wales on his tour of British North America in 1860. Here, too, is the work of Philip John Bainbrigge and George St. Vincent Whitmore, whose artistic association has only recently been documented (*Archivaria* 29, 168-172). The highlight of this section, however, is a small oil panel by William G.R. Hind, entitled *Harvesting Hay, Sussex, New Brunswick*. Purchased as a work by "R.J. Best", the present attribution to Hind was confirmed when an archivist identified the tiny white church in the middle-ground as one in Sussex, New Brunswick, where the artist retired in 1879.

"Timeless Mementos", the third portion of the exhibition, is given over to portraits of Canadian historical figures, reflecting the National Archives' commitment under its 1968 agreement with the National Gallery of Canada to maintain a National Portrait Collection. Some examples are executed by artists resident in Britain, but more typical of local trends is a cut-paper silhouette of *Louis-Joseph Amédée Papineau*, son of the exiled Quebec patriote, whose profile was taken by the French artist, Auguste Edouart, during the sitter's exile in the United States in 1840.

The final segment of the exhibition, "Our Times: Art as a Record in the 20th Century" recognizes photography as the chief documentary tool of the modern era, and shifts the focus to emblems of national identity—such as the 1959 logo that emblazoned the initials 'CN' in the consciousness of every rail traveller in Canada. Also represented are Canadian artists, whose papers are deposited in the National Archives, as well as editorial cartoonists, now regularly exhibited at the Canadian Museum of Caricature on



William George Richardson Hind (1833-1889). *Harvesting Hay, Sussex, New Brunswick*, ca. 1880. Courtesy Documentary Art & Photography Division, National Archives of Canada.

St. Patrick Street in Ottawa. Finally, a limited-edition Warhol serigraph of *Wayne Gretzky*, salutes the entrepreneurial instincts of one Vancouver art dealer who, in a marriage of art and mammon, enlisted the aid of a brokerage house to sell the series to Canadian investors.

The exhibition succeeds in presenting the material in an orderly and comprehensible manner, despite lighting difficulties in the temporary installation area and the necessity to glaze oil paintings as a security measure. One cannot help observing, however, that the National Archives is altogether too modest in the discreet explanations it has attached to each of these works. Without a guided tour (which could be arranged upon request for interested groups), there are few hints in the captions of the detective drama that lies behind the display—overseas contacts, negotiated purchases, generous donations, new historical insights and a retinue of unexpected attributions that comes only from hard-slogging research. The published catalogue chronicles the whole fascinating saga with 200 illustrations and twelve colour plates integrated in the text. It will be a welcome addition to the literature of earlier exhibitions, such as the *Image of Canada: Documentary Watercolours and Drawings from the Permanent Collection of the Public Archives of Canada* (1972) and *The Painted Past: Selected Paintings from the Picture Division of the Public Archives of Canada* (1984), as well as the three travelling displays that supplied the material for the “Records of our History” series (reviewed in *Archivaria* 23, 171-173). With new attributions to its credit, and work of this quality, it is time that the National Archives made a larger point of its contribution to the study of art and history in this country.

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Plague to AIDS: Lessons from our Past. MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE. Mounted at the Academy of Medicine, Toronto. 9 May — 30 November 1990. 39 p. catalogue.

“Plague to AIDS: Lessons from our Past” is a travelling exhibit which will be visiting museums in Ontario and the West. Although small, the exhibition makes a strong statement. Museum objects, photographic and textual records, and videotapes are used to support a persuasive argument: that infectious diseases are much more than biological phenomena. The exhibition suggests that diseases are and always have been socially constituted realities, both in the way they have been established and spread, and in the way they have been understood and dealt with. Furthermore, being the locus of disease, society has the responsibility to recognize and alleviate its fear and hatred of the victims of infectious diseases. This didactic aim is clear in Linda Dale’s introductory essay to the exhibition catalogue: “Our society’s response to AIDS has combined fear, compassion, and denial . . . A comparison between past and present might increase our understanding of today’s response to AIDS and prod us to test critically the assumptions underlying those actions and emotions.”

Being thus ambitious, the exhibit has strengths and inevitable weaknesses. The title itself is an example. On the one hand, the title “Plague to AIDS” promises more than it delivers. The exhibit is divided into three parts: an introductory section, a case study of the plague, and a look at the history of cultural, medical and political responses to infectious diseases focusing on AIDS. Epidemic diseases of the intervening centuries are represented only briefly; “Plague and AIDS” would be a truer title. On the other hand,