

Calvary at Oka exhibition at the National Gallery

The National Gallery of Canada is presenting an unusual exhibition from July 11 to August 17 called *The Calvary at Oka*. Seven reliefs of polychrome wood, which are part of the exhibition, focus attention not only on the artistic value of these late eighteenth-century works but also on the religious and social significance of the Calvary at Oka itself in early Canadian history. Slides, photographs, historical maps, archival documents and a special film on a pilgrimage to Oka, produced in 1973, are also part of the display to provide a better understanding of the wooden reliefs and to help place them in their proper setting and context.

Organized by the National Gallery's curator of Early Canadian Art, Jean Trudel, with the close collaboration of the assistant curator of Early Canadian Art, John R. Porter, *The Calvary at Oka* recalls the history of that early settlement in New France, situated on the north shore of the Lake of the Two Mountains, near Montreal, Quebec.

The seven chapels built purposely for the Stations of the Cross of the Calvary, were built between 1740 and 1742.

Those housing the polychrome wood

reliefs are found on the mountain behind the village. Four small oratories are on the flank of the mountain and three chapels on its top. Built by the Society of the Sulpicians of French origin, they reflect the concern of that



The Flagellation (c. 1775-1776), by François Guernon dit Belleville, one of the polychrome wood reliefs at the Calvary of Oka.



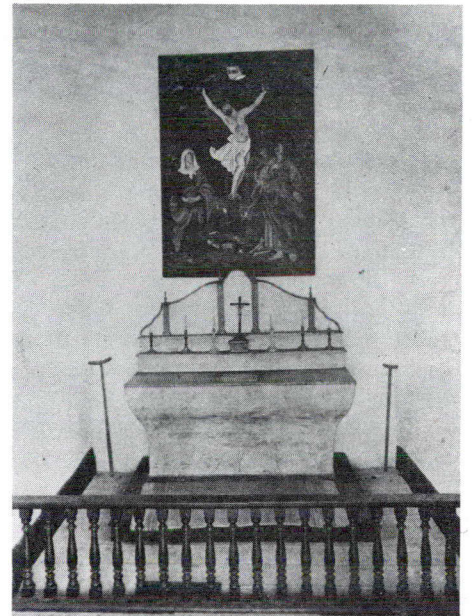
Photo John R. Porter

Second oratory of the Calvary in which The Flagellation is housed.

Society with the evangelization of the Indians. Over the years, Oka became a site of important pilgrimages.

Paintings obtained in France by the Sulpicians originally adorned the oratories and the chapels; determination to preserve these paintings led the Society to replace them in the more exposed chapels by the reliefs that are on view at the National Gallery of Canada. They are the works of François Guernon dit Belleville, a sculptor of French origin, and were completed in 1775-1776.

Jean Trudel and John R. Porter, have devoted, over a two-year period, extensive research into Oka. They have collaborated in writing a book, *The Calvary at Oka*, which contains coloured illustrations, historical references, important archival documents, and a study of the cultural and social milieu of that period.



Interior of Central Chapel

Sunday laws under review

Justice Minister Otto Lang recently requested the Law Reform Commission of Canada to conduct a review of the Lord's Day Act.

The present legislation contains basic prohibitions pertaining to work on Sunday while allowing certain work of necessity and mercy to be carried out on that day. It permits the staging of other commercial activities such as sports events where such events are allowed by provincial legislation.