

## Early art collection in première show

*Canada in the Nineteenth Century: The Bert and Barbara Stitt Family Collection*, a travelling exhibition organized by the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario is being shown for the first time.

The exhibition, at the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa until June 22, includes 102 works from the collection of some 300 early Canadian paintings, drawings and sketches donated by Hubert and Barbara Stitt in 1981. The selection, which covers elements of the entire collection, represents the most beautiful and historically interesting works. They also illustrate many aspects of Canadian life and times of the past century.

In the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, a period of great British expansion, watercolour painting and drawing were popular methods of recording events, people and landscapes, especially in new places.

### Military training

Of the 39 artists in the exhibition, at least nine were either British army or navy officers who were trained to draw at military academies and who made pictures of the various places where they were stationed throughout the empire. The highly documentary nature of military drawing is evident in a group of drawings of Quebec City and its environs dating from 1830-1831, by Lieutenant Thomas George Marlay.

George Alexander Frazer, another artist whose identity is traced through a military career, painted a well-known work, *Niagara Falls*. In 1825 he accompanied Sir John Franklin's second overland expedition from Penetanguishene to Fort William to join the Surveying Service on the Great Lakes under Lieutenant Henry Wolsey Bayfield.

A group of topographical drawings and watercolours by William Robert Herries date from 1837. At the time he was an ensign with the 43rd Regiment of Foot stationed in New Brunswick.

### Various backgrounds

Among the artists without military training is George Heriot, deputy postmaster general of British North America from 1800 to 1816. His greyish brown wash drawing, *Natural Steps, Montmorency, June 21, 1809*, is on view. Also included are two brown wash drawings depicting the Cascapédia River, Quebec by the Marquis of Lorne, governor general of Canada from 1878 to 1883.

William Armstrong, a well-known Canadian artist of the nineteenth century, was a civil engineer, photographer and teacher, as well as a watercolourist, whose subjects included landscapes, Indian and pioneer life, current events and marines, many of which were used as illustrations in newspapers.

Six works by William Hind, another renowned Canadian artist of the period, relate to his role as official artist on a 1861 Labrador expedition headed by his brother Henry Youle Hind, eminent Canadian geologist and explorer. William Hind's sketches were used to illustrate his brother's report, *Explorations in the Interior of the Labrador Peninsula, the Country of the Montagnais and Nasquapee Indians*, published two years later.

Daniel Fowler, a highly skilled and talented watercolourist who emigrated from England to Canada in 1843, settled on Amherst Island near Kingston. The collection of Fowler's work includes European, British and Canadian subject matter.

A group of English landscapes in the



Hoppner Francis Meyer, *Portrait of a Girl*, watercolour over pencil.

collection by Frederick Arthur Verner is also on view. He is well known for his Indian and buffalo subjects.

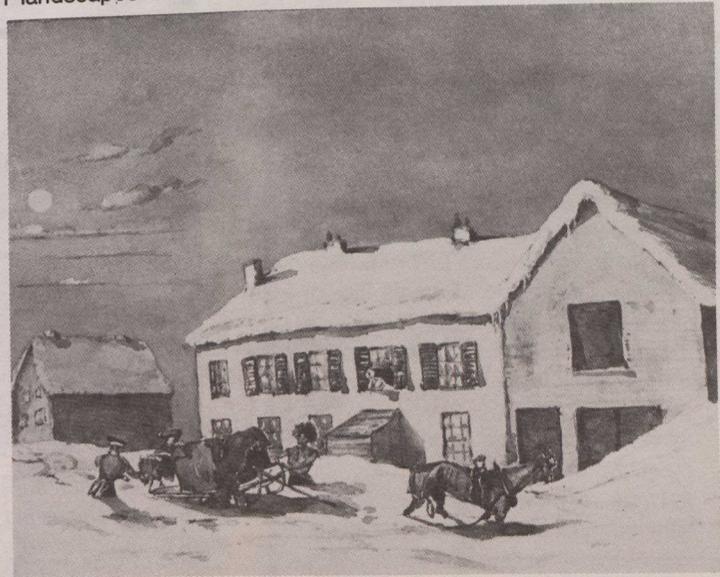
### Few works in oil

The two oil paintings in the exhibition are European subjects by the Canadian-born artists Paul Peel and Horner Watson. Paul Peel attained a considerable reputation for his genre subject matter while Homer Watson was a popular painter of rural Ontario countryside scenes.

Lucius O'Brien, a native-born artist, from Shanty Bay, Ontario, became the first president of the Royal Canadian Academy. The bewitching luminosity of *Cape Trinity, a September Day on the Saguenay River* is characteristic of some of the best work by Canadian artists of the time.



William Hind, *The Nipisis in Burnt Country*, watercolour and gouache.



William Robert Herries, *Returning from the Ball*, 1837, watercolour.