

## Historic Christmas cards on display

An exhibition entitled *1931 — Painters of Canada Series of Christmas Cards*, mounted in collaboration with Hallmark Cards Canada, opened recently at the Public Archives of Canada.

The exhibition highlights the recent acquisition by the Public Archives of an important part of the series which was published by William E. Coutts, the founder of Hallmark Cards Canada, and printed by Sampson-Matthews of Toronto.



*Solitude*, 1931 by *Lawren S. Harris*.

Included in the display are 77 silk-screen prints and proofs, produced for the 1931 "Painters of Canada" series, 12 unpublished silk-screen prints, as well as selected documentation. Twenty-six artists contributed to the series, among them several members of the Group of Seven, including Lawren Harris and A.J. Casson.

A.Y. Jackson, who encouraged William Coutts to issue the series saw it as a source of revenue for struggling artists. He also saw an excellent opportunity to create contemporary Canadian greeting cards. Launched during the Depression, however, the series proved to be a financial failure.

"Although the actual number of cards printed is uncertain," says Diane Tardif-Côté, an archivist with the Public Archives, "we do know that the price



*Christmas Morning*, 1931. *Serigraph* by *Frank C. Hennessey*.

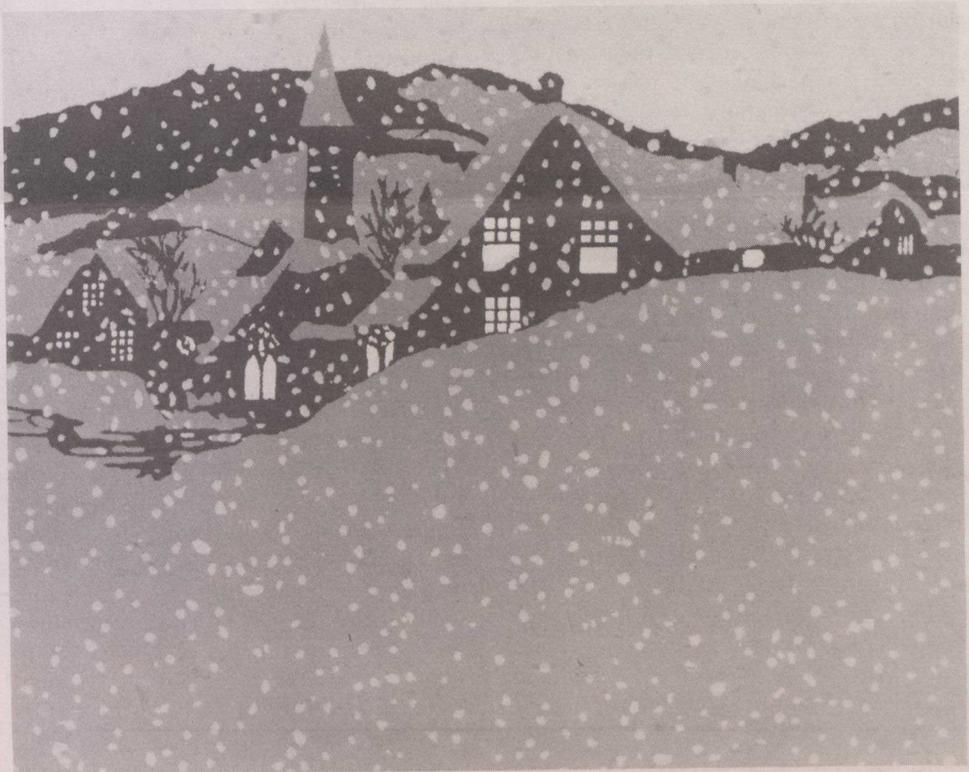
ranged from \$37.50 to \$67.50 per one hundred cards and that only 25 to 50 copies of each were sold."

Nevertheless, the "Painters of Canada" series marked the beginning of an ongoing tradition for Hallmark Cards Canada and according to Michael

Chortyk, who took part in developing the series, it represents Mr. Coutts' greatest achievement with respect to style, processes and quality of product.

The exhibition *1931 — Painters of Canada Series of Christmas Cards* is open until January 8, 1984.

Public Archives photos



*Village Evening*, 1931. *Serigraph* by *A.J. Casson*.