Arthur Steven at the Ryerson Press: Designing the Post-War Years (1949-1969)¹

Randall Speller²

Lorne Pierce (1890-1961), the editor of the Ryerson Press from 1920 to 1960, will long be remembered for his energetic and inspired leadership of one of English Canada's most historic³ and influential publishing firms. His role in the creation and development of a Canadian literature, and his nurturing of a generation of Canadian writers are now rich areas of study for the literary and book historian.⁴ Yet Pierce must also be remembered for the significant part he played in the development of Canadian book design and illustration. His personality, his taste, and his commitment to publishing beautiful books at the Ryerson Press contributed to the transformation of the Canadian book industry.

During the period from 1920-1950, Ryerson established an important reputation as a publisher of well-designed and well-illustrated books. As Sandra Campbell has pointed out, Canadian

1 An earlier version of this essay was presented in November 2001 at the History of the Book in Canada Volume III Open Conference in Vancouver.

2 Randall Speller is a librarian at the Art Gallery of Ontario. He thanks Arthur and Jessica Steven, Mary Cserepy-Taylor, Pat Gangnon, Bill Taylor, and Earle Toppings for their assistance with researching this essay.

3 The literature on the history of the Ryerson Press is extensive. See for example Janet B. Friskney's "Beyond the Shadow of William Briggs: Part I, Setting the Stage and Introducing the Players," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 33:2 (Fall 1995): 121-63; as well as her "Beyond the Shadow of William Briggs: Part II, Canadian-Authored Titles and the Commitment to Canadian Writing," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 33:2 (Fall 1997): 161-207.

4 Sandra Campbell states that Pierce's "vision and energy established The Ryerson Press as a major publisher." See her "Nationalism, Morality and Gender: Lorne Pierce and the Canadian Literary Canon, 1920-1960," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 32:2 (Fall 1994): 135-160. See also Margery Fee's "Lorne Pierce, Ryerson Press, and the Makers of the Canadian Literature Series," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 24 (1985): 51-71; and Justin W. Fox's "Breaking the Canadian Mould: Evelyn Richardson, Lorne Pierce, and the Publication of *We Keep a Light* and *Desired Haven*," *Epilogue* 9:2 (1994): 57-74.

art was a vital part of Pierce's patriotism and literary mission, and his "exposure to such art was, therefore, an important element in appreciating 'the spirit of Canada.'"⁵ Campbell also notes that "Pierce's exposure to the cultural nationalism of the Group of Seven sharpened his patriotic desire to publish such poets as Bliss Carman, Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, and Wilson MacDonald, whose landscape poetry seemed to him to give Canadians a literary sense of their landscape in a manner analogous to the canvases of the Group of Seven."⁶ For Pierce, art and literature went hand in hand. Pierce was a strong advocate and collector of Canadian art throughout his career, and his wife, Edith Chown Pierce, was a recognized pioneer collector of Canadian glass. The arts and their personal associations with artists were central to their lives, and contributed to Pierce's solid and lasting commitment to the production of well-designed books. Many artists, including C.W. Jefferys, Thoreau MacDonald, and members of the Group of Seven, enjoyed the patronage and employment of the Ryerson Press.⁷ Pierce ensured that many of the books he published "were beautifully designed to set a standard in appearance which other Canadian books might be made to emulate or surpass."⁸ Pierce, himself, stated that each book "has to be designed and sometimes illustrated, and promotion discussed with several departments. We want the book to read well, and make sense, and we want it to look professional, for the Editorial Department is jealous of the House imprint, and wants all its books to look as if they came from master craftsmen."⁹ W.S. Wallace, in his (albeit incomplete) bibliography of the Ryerson Press, records the Press's contribution to the graphic arts in Canada and credits the influence of Pierce:

In what I have said about Lorne Pierce's work as editor of The Ryerson Press, I have confined myself to the matter of publication. I have not dealt with the revolution he accomplished in the matter of format. William Briggs has published books in a decent and respectable format as became the Book Steward of the Methodist Church; but I cannot think that anyone was ever persuaded to buy one of his books because of its appearance.

5 See Campbell, 142.

6 Campbell, 135.

7 C.H. Dickinson, *Lorne Pierce: A Profile* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1965), 44.

8 Dickinson, 47-48.

9 See Lorne Pierce, "Book Publications," *The Book Rumour: Published by the House Committee of The Ryerson Press* No. 35 (Nov. 1949): 3.

Pierce evidently made up his mind from the beginning that he wanted the books which he edited to be published beautifully. He enlisted the services of several Canadian artists, notably Thoreau MacDonald (who designed the Ryerson crest or colophon), and he designed formats for Ryerson books that were so far ahead of what had preceded them that one could not recognize them as publications of the same house. One needs only to look at the *Ryerson Poetry Chapbooks* to realize the change.¹⁰

Pierce gathered around him some of the most talented book artists of his day to create books that are now recognized highlights of twentieth-century Canadian book design. He remained an active participant in the art direction of books he felt should receive special treatment. Although he was not entirely responsible for the design work of the Press,¹¹ he called on a select group of artists to work on dust jackets, endpapers, and title-pages for projects he felt warranted them. Many of these artists were personally known to Pierce in the then small art community of Toronto. He seldom looked far afield. Ryerson's graphic identity therefore was clearly established by the 1940s, and there is a growing body of writing concerning the artists who did the most to shape it.¹²

Thoreau MacDonald (1901-1989) and C.W. Jefferys (1869-1951), the two most important artists associated with the Ryerson Press, were to shape and influence the look of many Ryerson publications well into the early 1960s. MacDonald's first project with Ryerson began in 1931, and he worked sporadically alongside Pierce until

10 W.S. Wallace's "Foreword," *The Ryerson Imprint* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, [1954]), 6

11 Steven relates that Frank Flemington took on some of the design work after his arrival in 1941 or '42. Flemington was not a trained designer and Pierce continued to be actively involved in most design decisions.

12 Apart from the items already mentioned, see Dennis Duffy's "Art-History: Charles William Jefferys as Canada's Curator," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 11:4 (Nov. 1976): 3-18; Robert Stacey's *Charles W. Jefferys (1869-1951)*, *Lives and Works of the Canadian Artists* 7 (Toronto: Dundurn Press, [1977]), 6 pp.; and Robert Stacey's *"Under Some Malignant Star": The Strange Adventures of Uncle Jim's Canadian Nursery Rhymes by David Boyle and C.W. Jefferys* (Toronto: Toronto Public Library, 1992), 55 pp. For MacDonald, see E.R. Hunter's *Thoreau MacDonald* (Toronto: Ryerson, [1942]), 43 pp.; Norman Kent's "The Line Drawings of Thoreau MacDonald," *American Artist* 29:10 (Dec. 1965): 36, and his "Thoreau MacDonald, Canadian illustrator," *American Artist* 10:1 (Jan. 1946): 22; L. Bruce Pierce's *Exhibition of Drawings by Thoreau MacDonald*, *Thornhill Public Library, Thornhill, Ontario* (Toronto: Norflex, 1971), 48 pp.; and Patrick Trant's *A Small Tribute to TM*. (s.l.: Oakland Press, [1989]), 10 pp.

Pierce's own retirement in 1960. There is no doubt that Pierce "was predisposed towards [MacDonald's] decorative treatment of books."¹³ Pierce shared similar tastes with his "intimate personal friend,"¹⁴ and admired his honesty,¹⁵ his "pointed comments" about art and design,¹⁶ and his simple and direct depiction of the settled landscape of rural Ontario. MacDonald's artistic standards were exacting. His illustrations were simple, direct, and easily adapted for book work; and his hand lettering was crisp, bold, and surprisingly modern.¹⁷ More importantly, his work was always gracefully interwoven into the overall page layout; everything was well integrated and balanced. Pierce was convinced that MacDonald "had, along with his father [J.E.H. MacDonald], done more to raise the standard of good book-making in Canada than any other one can think of."¹⁸

C.W. Jefferys was Pierce's neighbour in York Mills, north of Toronto. Besides having a "close and enduring friendship,"¹⁹ the two men shared an "utter devotion" to "the history and tradition of Canada, its great characters and outstanding events."²⁰ Their association began in 1921 when Ryerson published George M. Wrong's *Ontario Public School History of Canada* and *Ontario Public School History of England*,²¹ and continued until Jefferys's death in 1951, following soon after Ryerson's publication of the final volume of *A Picture Gallery of Canadian History* (1950). Bringing Canadian history to life for generations of students with his carefully researched and detailed drawings, Jefferys's work became the backbone of Ryerson's profitable educational publishing program. As one of the

13 See Margaret Edison's *Thoreau MacDonald: A Catalogue of Design and Illustration* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973), 14 pp.

14 See Lorne Pierce's *Thoreau MacDonald: Being a Talk on the Artist Given in Hart House, University of Toronto, Upon the Occasion of the Warden's Exhibition of Drawings for "Maria Chapdelaine," February 9, 1942* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1942), 1.

15 Edison claims that MacDonald deplored the press work done at Ryerson's Toronto plant (14).

16 Pierce, *Thoreau MacDonald*, 1.

17 Will Novosedlik states that "the use of hand-lettered typography... would characterize Canadian book design for more than 30 years." See his "Our Modernist Heritage" [Part I] *Applied Arts Magazine* 11:1 (Mar./Apr. 1996): 31. He also states that MacDonald's "use of contrast and simple forms show him to be far more modern than his predecessors and contemporaries in Canada," 32.

18 Pierce, *Thoreau MacDonald*, 3.

19 William Colgate, *C.W. Jefferys* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, [1944]), 22.

20 Pierce, *Thoreau MacDonald*, 3.

21 Colgate, 22.

most recognizable features of a Ryerson textbook or historical publication, his illustrations were central to the public's understanding of what a Ryerson book contained, and continued to be used for decades after his death.²²

Apart from their highly recognizable style, another factor contributed to MacDonald and Jeffreys' high profiles as book artists. Never members of Ryerson staff, they were always hired on a project-by-project basis and, as a result, much of their work is signed. During Pierce's tenure Ryerson books developed a unique and highly identifiable graphic identity (Fig. 1). Certainly other publishers produced beautiful books, but what Ryerson could claim was the long-term implementation of a consistent policy for design and illustration. And Pierce was central to that policy.

Although the years up to 1945 have been documented, it quickly becomes apparent that the history of Ryerson's contribution to book design after World War II is, for the most part, unknown territory. Ryerson is seldom mentioned in any of the recent histories of post-war Canadian book design,²³ and apart from brief and very obscure references to design staff,²⁴ it is difficult to determine who was working for the firm, or if there even was an art department. And this is especially problematic. For, as we have seen, there is no evidence that Pierce's commitment to well-designed books diminished after the War. Throughout the Canadian publishing industry there was every indication of a growing commitment to book design after 1945. A body of historical and contemporary literature has developed to show that the Canadian industry was transformed by new design

22 See also Sandra Campbell's "From Romantic History to Communications Theory: Lorne Pierce as Publisher of C.W. Jefferys and Harold Innis," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30:3 (Fall 1995): 91-116.

23 Brian Donnelly makes no mention of Ryerson in his excellent thesis on the history of post-war graphic design, "Mass Modernism: Graphic Design in Central Canada, 1955-1965, and the Changing Definition of Modernism," MA thesis, Carleton University, 1997; his 1996 exhibition catalogue *Graphic Design in Canada since 1945* (Ottawa: Carleton University Art Gallery, 1996); or his 1996 article "At Forty: Canadian Graphic Design Comes of Age," *GDC@Forty* (Ottawa: The Society of Graphic Designers of Canada, 1996), 4-7. The same is true of Will Novosedlik's two-part essay on modernism in Canadian graphic design: "Our Modernist Heritage" *Applied Arts Magazine* 11:1 (Mar./Apr. 1996): 30-35, and 11:2 (May/June 1996): 81-88.

24 See, for example, Paddy Thomas's brief mention of Steven in "Renowned for Artists and Art: Peel the Painter's Paradise" in *A History of Peel County: To Mark its Centenary as a Separate County, 1867-1967* ([Brampton: Charters Pub. Co.], 1967), 145-46.

Figure 1. Patrick Anderson's *The White Centre* (1946) and Clark Locke's *Country Hours* (1959), designed by Thoreau MacDonald. Haliburton's *Sam Slick in Pictures* (1956), illustrated by C.W. Jefferys.

ideas in a few short years. As John Morgan Gray points out “the reaching out for experience and qualifications was the publishing trade’s response to the literary explosion of the late 1940s.... Canadian publishers’ awareness of their own deficiencies was reinforced by their dealings with authors who had been published elsewhere. The resulting growth in editorial range and of interest in more sophisticated bookmaking was probably greater between 1945 and 1960 than in the previous fifty years.”²⁵

The purpose of this paper is simply to investigate what happened to art direction and design at the Ryerson Press in the years up to its eventual closing in 1970. Using what little evidence there was, I set out to locate some of the designers whose work I had been able to identify. Arthur Steven provided me with the key; he shared his remarkable memories of twenty years as head of the Ryerson Press art department, and provided me with names and contact information for other staff. The story began to emerge with a series of interviews with Steven and members of his former staff,²⁶ and an attempt to recreate, in part, the post-war art department of what Mary Cserepy called the “wonderful madhouse of Ryerson.”

Art Direction after 1949

Lorne Pierce was an astute bookman, well aware of what was going on in the worlds of publishing, art, and design. The creation in 1948 of the Art Directors Club of Toronto (ADCT) and the popularity of their annual exhibitions of commercial art and design starting in 1949²⁷ were major influences on the Toronto book and commercial art world. By 1950 Pierce knew that the look of the book, both internationally and in Canada, was undergoing a fundamental change, and that Ryerson would have to change with it in order to remain

25 John Morgan Gray “Canadian Books: A Publisher’s View,” *Canadian Literature* 33 (Summer 1967): 31.

26 Those interviewed include Arthur Steven, Pat Gangnon, Mary Cserepy, and Earle Toppings, as well as Jessica Steven, Arthur’s wife and a painter in her own right.

27 See the Art Director’s Club of Toronto *Annual of Advertising and Editorial Art* (Toronto: The Club, 1949-[1964?]). The first exhibition was held at Eaton’s Fine Art Galleries (College Street, Toronto), in April 1949. The Club itself was formed by a group of art directors from advertising agencies, publishing firms, creative printing houses, art studios, and allied businesses. Its purpose was to improve the standard of advertising and editorial art, and to provide encouragement and assistance wherever possible toward that end.

profitable. Pierce would write prophetically in 1951 that "Canada has lagged in building beautiful books, yet there are now appearing an increasing number, publishers and artists working hand in hand. The time is not far distant when we may have our own exhibitions of the most beautiful books of the year, with fitting recognition of outstanding achievement."²⁸ We also know from interviews with former employees that it was in the summer of 1949 that Pierce began to rethink art direction and book design at the Press.

Apart from the external industry forces outlined by Gray, there would have been many reasons within Ryerson for Pierce to rethink art direction. One was an aging workforce. Many of the talented long-time staff were leaving and needed to be replaced, as is evident in the staff newsletter of the early 1950s:

Mr. Hasselman has been with us since he joined the House for the second time twenty-seven years [sic] [i.e. since 1922]. No man in the House during that time knew so well the art of typography, how to make a book that had that unmistakable touch of distinction. He is not merely a craftsman of a high order but a man of great nobility of mind and character. He has left his imprint upon almost a generation of our work, and has laid a foundation that others can well and truly build upon.²⁹

When Hasselman died on 17 April 1954, his obituary concluded that "To him, the making of a book as well as the reading of it was an act of high devotion. He left his imprint upon almost a generation of our work."³⁰ And later on that year, another obituary lamented the death of an employee respected for excellence in design: "William L. Cope, for fifty-eight years a member of the printing department, and for nearly forty years superintendent, died suddenly on June 15th. In composition presswork and binding he made the plant a leader in this branch of Canadian industry, and was known for the excellence of his work. In no small way he helped create book-making in Canada in both quality and style, in fine deluxe publications as well as mass production."³¹

Such long-term employment histories were not unique to the time or to the Ryerson Press, but they do testify to the need for

28 From Lorne Pierce's *On Publishers and Publishing* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1951), 1-2; (The Beverly Papers; X).

29 Lorne Pierce wrote this tribute. "Charles Hasselman," *The Book Rumour: Published by the House Committee of The Ryerson Press* No. 33 (Apr. 1949): [7].

30 "Charles Hasselman," *The Book Rumour* No. 54 (June 1954): 2.

31 "William L. Cope," *The Book Rumour* No. 54 (June 1954): 2.

renewal. While Pierce respected the technical skills of the staff, he knew that they were not sufficiently trained to meet the challenges of new design trends. In May of 1950 Pierce, increasingly intent on showing the layout staff that good design was an economic priority, invited Beatrice Warde, the well-known British typographer then on a North American lecture tour, to visit the Ryerson Press and talk to the staff:

An interesting event of May 2nd was the visit of Mrs. Beatrice L. Warde, Director of Publicity of The Monotype Corporation, London, England, to The Ryerson Press. Mrs. Warde is a recognized British authority on typography, layout and design. For two months this spring she visited the United States and Canada. In Toronto she addressed the Art Directors Club, Toronto Typographic Composition Association, Graphic Arts School, etc. On May 2nd she spoke at The Ryerson Press to a group from the offices and factory, all of whom work with layout.

Mrs. Warde brought with her twenty British books from the "Fifty Books" selection of this year and in addition, a number of recently published British pamphlets, letterheads, catalogues, hand bills and magazines, showing the extraordinary extent to which the typographic renaissance has affected not only book and top rank publicity printing, but recently even obscure provincial school magazines, church bulletins, institutional stationery, etc.³²

Ryerson's exposure to new design ideas had begun. If Ryerson books were to compete in the marketplace and in the design exhibitions of the ADCT, the firm would require outside help. There may also have been other personal³³ and professional reasons why Pierce wanted to reduce his responsibilities for art direction. Arthur Steven speculates that the demand for a designer may also have come from other employees and managers in the Ryerson plant.³⁴ They, too, knew Ryerson was falling behind, as the direct relationship between good design and good economics was increasingly recognized within the profession.³⁵

32 See "Visit of Authority of Typography," *The Book Rumour* No. 38 (May 1950): 6.

33 Pierce's wife was to die on 23 April 1954 (*The Book Rumour* No. 54 [June 1954]: 2).

34 Personal interview with Arthur Steven, 26 May 2001.

35 "Another natural improvement in this stern competition was an improvement in the quality of Canadian book production. This might in any case have followed the war as austerity measures and shortages of supply were left behind. The reappearance of good papers and book cloths, of an abundance of metal

Sometime in the early summer of 1949 Pierce decided that a full-time art director was needed for the firm.³⁶ True to character, he made use of his local network of art world contacts. While other publishers were eventually to hire trained typographers from Europe, Pierce made a telephone call two blocks away. He asked Fred Finley (1894-1968), then Director of Advertising and Design (1946-1960) at the Ontario College of Art (OCA) on McCaul Street, to send down a selection of recent graduates. Arthur Steven and three other graduating students³⁷ were chosen by the College and interviewed by "Dr. Pierce." A few days later a letter arrived stating that Steven had the job, his first full-time position. Steven's joy at being chosen, however, was short lived. Pierce had interviewed the students while C.H. (Clarence Heber) Dickinson (1899-2000), the General Manager, was away, and Dickinson was "put out" that he had not been consulted on the candidates. Without Pierce knowing, Steven was called in for another interview. It turned out to be a formality as Dickinson agreed, once he had reviewed his portfolio, that Steven was a good candidate. Nonetheless, when Pierce found out about the second interview he was not amused.³⁸ The incident heralded

for varied type-faces invited experiment and innovation, and such books as were being made in Canada had become far too expensive to be acceptable if badly printed and drab of format. Still it was clear that more costly production would further increase prices. The solution lay in a more imaginative employment of materials and better workmanship. ... [C]ircumstances were pushing the Trade a step toward more professional standards. ... the essence of the matter is the production of tasteful and attractive volumes at prices appropriate to their market. This raising of standards was not even well begun in a season or two, and is by no means generally achieved yet. But there has been steady progress and each season now sees the publication of several Canadian-made books which can be sent abroad without apology." From John Morgan Gray's "English Language Publishing in Canada 1945-1955," *CLA Bulletin* 11 (June 1955): 295.

36 The following information was obtained during interviews with Arthur and Jessica Steven on 24 Apr. and 26 May 2001, on 16 July 2002, and in subsequent telephone calls and letters.

37 One of the candidates was Jack Birdsall who graduated from OCA in 1949.

38 Dickinson, the book steward, was the general manager responsible for all the operations of the Press, and thus was above Pierce, as editor. According to Steven, Dickinson and Pierce were very different personalities. Dickinson was straight-laced and slightly pompous, but a pleasant man with a "methodist sense of humour." Pierce was meticulous and impressive, natty about his dress, and always knew the proper thing to say with an excellent turn of phrase. Pierce was a hero, not only to Steven, but also to many of the men and women employed at Ryerson. The Stevens both adored him.

the complicated future relationship between the art and editorial departments. Pierce was not the only manager who would oversee Steven's work.

Arthur Steven

Arthur Steven was born in London, Ontario, on 13 August 1920. His parents moved soon afterwards to Toronto where Steven spent most of his public school years. Upon their return to London around 1935 Steven attended high school, albeit with some interruptions and postponements. It was from London that he enlisted to serve in the R.C.A.F. in the 429 Bomber Squadron based in Yorkshire, England. He was later to join the Fighter Command of 421 Squadron on the Continent.

Upon decommissioning in 1945 Steven applied and was immediately accepted into the Ontario College of Art (OCA) in Toronto, and started classes while still in uniform, like many in his year. In the years following the War, the College was full of ex-servicemen of all ranks, most on a veteran's allowance, and all about five years older and more experienced in the ways of the world than the traditional OCA student. Those years at OCA were an experience for both teacher and student; the servicemen adjusting to peacetime, and the teachers to rambunctious adults. Steven spent five years at the College studying life drawing, painting, design, illustration, and "commercial work" which included typography and layout. Also included were courses in art history, costume, architecture, and colour theory, as well as a course in museum studies at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Steven finished his courses and graduated in 1949, but spent two extra terms (Fall and Spring) taking another life drawing course. He was finished by the spring of 1950.

Steven's book design career started in his fourth year of OCA (1949). Mary Quayle Innis was a friend of Steven's aunt, Margaret Tanton, and Steven was commissioned by Innis to prepare illustrations for a young-people's history of Canada entitled *Changing Canada: Fish, Fur and Exploration*.³⁹ In his spare time Steven did 90% of the illustrations and the design. The work was "back-breaking" but provided excellent training. Inspired by C.W. Jefferys, he "may even have copied" some details from Jefferys' historical illustrations. The book was eventually published by Clarke, Irwin in

39 *Changing Canada: Fish, Fur and Exploration* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1951), 32 pp., with "Illustrations by Arthur Steven."

1951.⁴⁰ Other design work during these years involved a summer (circa 1947 or '48) designing food labels and packaging for the Somerville Paper Box Company of London, Ontario. Jessica Steven (Arthur's wife) remembers particularly his work on a package for Hunt's Candies.

Steven believes his first working contact with Ryerson was in August 1949⁴¹ but that, after some time off, he was at work full-time, with the new department operational by the summer of 1950. He purchased the department's first drawing table and art supplies on his first day of work. Steven's office, located next to Pierce's in the editorial department, was a vault on the third floor of the Ryerson building at 299 Queen Street West,⁴² where he served as the art department's only employee for the next decade.

Steven entered the book design business at a time when there was little design education or training in Canadian colleges or universities. He was not trained as a typographer or designer, and had limited exposure to the subject at OCA. Most of his knowledge eventually came from night classes in Toronto and from what he later learned on the job. In 1950 there were few other established art departments in Canadian publishing houses to look to for assistance or advice. Most of the men and women who came to dominate the profession in Toronto in the late 1950s and early '60s were European trained and educated, and their influence only began to be felt by mid-decade.⁴³ Steven had a lot of catching up to do.

40 This book was followed by Innis' *Changing Canada, Book 2: New France and the Loyalists* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1952), 32 pp., also illustrated and designed by Steven.

41 No known personnel or department files have been located to date for Steven or other staff mentioned in this paper. There are no records in the United Church of Canada Archives, the Lorne Pierce papers at Queen's University, or in the archives of McGraw-Hill Ryerson in Whitby.

42 The building is now the home of City TV, CHUM, Bravo, and MuchMusic, etc.

43 Frank Davies arrived in Canada in 1951; Frank Newfeld, Leslie Smart, and Antje Lingner arrived in 1954 and were all soon employed. Davies, Newfeld, and Smart were trained in England, and Lingner in Germany. During the next few years these men and women set about transforming the world of Canadian publishing and book design. See Monica Biagioli's "Humble Servant of the Printed Word: Antje Lingner," *DA: A Journal of the Printing Arts* 47 (Fall/Winter 2000): 5-16, and Randall Speller's "Frank Newfeld and the Visual Awakening of the Canadian Book," *DA: A Journal of the Printing Arts* 45 (Fall/Winter 1999): 3-31.

One of Steven's first projects was to design the dust jacket for Pierce's book on *E. Grace Coombs (Mrs. James Sharp Lawson), A.O.C.A., O.S.A* (1949), a Canadian artist and one of Steven's OCA teachers. The sheets of the book had already been printed and the case was ready, but the dust jacket had been left to the last moment. The new employee had to create a design – and fast. The experience made an impression. Steven insisted long afterwards that jacket design had to begin sooner in the production process. Another early project in those first months was Reginald V. Harris's *The Church of St. Paul in Halifax, Nova Scotia* (1949). Steven also remembers that C.W. Jefferys' drafts for the third volume of *The Picture Gallery of Canadian History* Vol. 3 (1950) arrived during his first year. Jefferys had been very ill and many of the illustrations for the book were incomplete.⁴⁴ When the manuscript arrived in the art department it was dumped on the floor leaving Steven and Frank Flemington to sort through it and fill in the blanks. Steven and T.W. McLean⁴⁵ touched up many of the drawings, adding a few of their own. Steven even remembers adding an illustration of a steamship done in Jefferys' style.⁴⁶

In his early years Steven worked closely with Pierce, and considered him a mentor. Steven remembers him as meticulous and perceptive, a “hands-on” editor who was an active participant in the look of Ryerson publications. Steven at first sought Pierce's approval on most projects: notes and small sketches of dust jackets and title pages were left on Pierce's desk for him to look over. Pierce, due in part to his deafness, would respond in writing. Pierce was supportive of the art department, yet his taste was clearly influenced by his Methodist faith and by the work of J.E.H. MacDonald and his son Thoreau. “Pierce had a way of asking you to revisit a project he did not approve of, or wished to do differently,” claimed Steven. He would listen to ideas and consider them seriously, but once his decision was made he would “gently guide you in another direction.”

44 Jefferys died on 8 Oct. 1951.

45 An obituary for Thomas Wesley McLean (1881-1951) noted his collaboration with Jefferys, stating that “in recent years Tom McLean was closely associated with Charles W. Jefferys in illustrating the latter's *Picture Gallery of Canadian History*. It is something of a coincidence that the two men should pass away so nearly together” (“Obituary: Thomas W. McLean,” *The Monthly Letter [Arts & Letters Club]: New and Views of Club Programmes and Club Activities* Jan. 1952: 6).

46 See for example “The Modjeska” signed “A.S.” under “Lake & River Steamboats” in *The Picture Gallery of Canadian History*, Vol. 3, 79.

Pierce was much less “stodgy” and more liberal in his attitudes to design and illustration than C.H. Dickinson, whose taste was more “Methodist” in its persuasion. Pierce often strove to change Dickinson’s mind on individual projects and design proposals if there were any objections or concerns. As time passed and Steven’s skills developed, more and more decisions were left up to the art department. There were fewer notes.

Steven’s work at Ryerson was largely invisible once he became a full-time employee. His signature seldom appears on jacket illustrations, and his design work was never credited within the text. Yet other designers were clearly at work during those years (Fig. 2). Albert Angus Macdonald, for example, completed the design and illustrations for Billy Button’s *I Married an Artist* (1951), Harold Kurschenska designed John Robert Colombo’s poetry anthology *The Varsity Chapbook* (1959), and Carl Dair designed John Coulter’s play *Riel* (1962). These designers have their names carefully recorded on the versos of the title-pages or elsewhere on the covers. The reason for this apparently erratic accreditation was a clearly understood policy at the Ryerson Press that everyone I interviewed remembered: no full-time employees were allowed to put their names on the designs or illustrations of Ryerson books. Only contract employees – those working on specific projects from outside the company – were allowed to credit their work, as we can see in the books listed above, and in the work of Jefferys and MacDonald. Employee signatures were sometimes allowed for special projects, but otherwise the company guideline was adhered to steadfastly. The results can be imagined. The individual men and women who designed for Ryerson during the post war years are invisible.⁴⁷

In opposition to company policy during these early years, Steven was able to discreetly insert his name or an initial on the occasional dust jacket or illustration, something that appears to have been

47 It is generally the rule that the work of book design is seldom recognized on the printed page. In most publishing houses the men and women who design books and select the typography and the binding cloth do so anonymously. This was especially true at Ryerson, which not only published but printed and bound books at its Queen Street premises. And while statements such as “Designed, printed and bound in the plant of The Ryerson Press, Toronto, Canada.” or “Presswork and Binding by The Ryerson Press” can often be found, there is no mention of the people behind the work. Only when employees retired or died were their contributions recognized in staff or industry publications.

Figure 2. Billy Button's *I Married an Artist* (1951), designed and illustrated by Albert Angus Macdonald; John Robert Colombo's *The Varsity Chapbook* (1959), designed by Harold Kurschenska; and John Coulter's *Riel* (1962), designed by Carl Dair.

easier in the early 1950s. The jackets for Philip Child's *Mr. Ames against Time* (1949), J.V. McAree's *Cabbagetown Store* (1953), and William Arthur Deacon's *The 4 Jameses* (1953), among others, are signed "Steven" in very small letters (Fig. 3); Isabelle Hughes' *The Wise Brother* (1954) and the map endpapers of Marjorie Freeman Campbell's *Niagara: Hinge of the Golden Arc* (1958) are signed with a very small 'S' in the lower right corner. These "signatures" are the first indicators of a consistent design presence at Ryerson in the post-Thoreau MacDonald years.

Gradually, Steven was doing everything, even though many of the projects on which he worked had very restricted budgets. Pierce and Ryerson Press enjoyed a reputation for taking on book projects that no one else would, which left them with little financial backing and no expectation of profit. Budgets and equipment determined much of what had to be done. Since poetry books usually had a run of only 500 copies, the design and illustration budgets were non-existent. With so little room to work, poetry books had no priority with the design team and were given minimal treatment using available Ryerson type and ornaments.⁴⁸ The jackets were hand lettered and illustrated using a single colour (a two-colour cover was an unheard-of luxury).⁴⁹ Although the advantage of printing such projects in-house was that they could be done cheaply with Ryerson equipment, the disadvantage was that there was little innovation or experimentation. The same formula would appear over and over again to keep the projects under budget. In the face of post-war economic pressures – rapidly rising supply costs, rising wages, and competition from other consumer goods – the "raison d'être" of the art department was to produce attractive books economically, without cost over-runs.⁵⁰

Other projects, more vital to company profitability, had larger design budgets. The aim of the powerful educational publishing department headed by Victor Seary⁵¹ was to get as many books as

48 The standard guide of specimen type for designers and printers appears to have been *Type Book, Borders, Ornaments, Rules* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, [1940s?]), [245] pp. There is a copy in the Canadiana Reference stacks of the North York Central Library.

49 Later on, Steven remembers visiting a United States publisher and learning how to blend the inks on a dust jacket so as to make two colours look like three, a process that Earle Toppings called "split fountain."

50 Gray, "English Language Publishing."

51 Seary eventually took over from John Webster Grant as editor in chief.

Figure 3. Philip Child's *Mr. Ames against Time* (1949), William Arthur Deacon's *The 4 Jameses* (1953), and J.V. McAree's *Cabbagetown Store* (1953), with jackets signed "Steven."

possible on the “Circular 14” list of Ontario’s Department of Education. Any book that made this list was guaranteed extended sales and numerous editions. Educational books, in production for years, required a huge investment of time and effort from the design department, often involving numerous authors, illustrators, designers, and staff. For Steven, one of the most memorable educational texts was *Winds of Change: A History of Canada and Canadians in the Twentieth Century* by Hugh Peart and John Schaffter (1961) (Fig. 4). Steven did the design, Vernon Mould the illustrations, and Robert Kunz and Marion Paton the maps. It was possibly unique in its time for its chapter by Clare Bice on the history of Canadian art. Other memorable educational texts were the Canadian Books of Prose and Verse series, which included *Beckoning Trails* by P.W. Diebel (1962),⁵² *Life and Adventures* by Philip Penner and Edna Baxter (1962), and the Ryerson Readers Series (1966), a five-book set⁵³ that took the art and editorial departments three years to complete.

Hundreds of books had to be designed and illustrated during these years. Summer was the busiest time for the art department getting ready for the fall lists. The hurried schedule often left little time for sophisticated work at the design table. Impossible deadlines necessitated hiring outside artists. As a major Canadian publishing house the Ryerson Press was a major draw for Canadian artists seeking employment. Although Ryerson jobs were not particularly well paid, the work was considered prestigious and there was a steady stream of artists making their way to Steven’s door. Steven looked at all of their portfolios and hired “hundreds” of them, or so it seemed, including many free-lancers who were specialists in their fields hired to work on specific projects. Some of the artists Steven remembers, and those he thought highly of were: Adrian Dingle (1911-1974), Hilton Hassell (1910-1980), Vernon Mould⁵⁴ (b. 1928), Jim Reidford (b. 1911), Sally Wildman (b. 1939), Thoreau MacDonald (1900-1989), Clare Bice (1909-1976), John and Allan Mardon, and Lyle Glover (b. 1921). Tom McNeeley (b. 1935) was especially remembered for his professionalism and talent — a man whose work was always done correctly and on time. Also memorable was Norval Morrisseau (b. 1931) working on *Legends of My People: The*

52 The first time Steven designed the text was for its 41st printing (1962).

53 The five titles, with designs by Steven, were: *My First Book*, *On My Way*, *See Me Go*, *New Adventures*, and *Fancy Free*.

54 Earle Toppings would describe Vernon Mould as Ryerson’s new C.W. Jefferys.

Great Ojibway (1965), for which Steven did the design.⁵⁵ Other contract designers included such well known men as Carl Dair and Hans Kleefeld, both of whom were active in the Society of Typographic Designers of Canada (TDC).

As his confidence grew, as his skills developed, and as other designers entered the field, Steven's work gradually developed more sophistication. Each book was a visually unique item, and each one presented a different problem and solution. Steven's jacket design for Desmond Pacey's *The Picnic* (1958) is one of the most attractive Ryerson jackets of the decade (Fig. 5). Comparing the image of the leafless tree against the leafless elms by MacDonald on the cover of Clark Locke's *Country Hours* (1959) (Fig. 1) we can see how Steven has modernized Ryerson's image. Steven's tree is contained within an irregular, almost abstract form, and the broad gestural strokes of yellow behind the tree and across Pacey's name show Steven's homage and recognition of the new abstraction that was sweeping the fine arts. The sans serif type was also a gesture towards the new modernism. Yet the book itself is remarkably cautious. More effort went into the cover than the contents. Steven relates that the art department sometimes worked only on the jackets, leaving the text entirely to the staff printers.

Art Direction after 1960

Few book designers were represented at ADCT exhibitions, and prior to the creation of the Society of Typographic Designers of Canada (TDC) in Toronto in 1958 there was little opportunity for book designers to meet, even though most knew one another. European trained designers tended to stick together, and "then" so claimed Steven, "there was the rest of us" (those with Canadian training). At the same time, there was little effort amongst designers to promote their work to a wider public. With the creation of the TDC the profile of book design in Canada increased to an extent unrealized before, and with the support of such reporters as Robert Fulford at the *Toronto Star* and Pearl McCarthy at the *Globe and Mail*, the TDC gained widespread interest and influence. In the years prior to the TDC, J.E.H. and Thoreau MacDonald were the only book designers and/or illustrators familiar to the public. "The establishment of the Society had succeeded in generating a critical

⁵⁵ *Legends of My People*, ed. Selwyn Dewdney, was published by Ryerson in 1965, and reprinted by McGraw-Hill Ryerson in 1977.

Figure 4. Hugh Pear and John Schaffter's *Winds of Change: A History of Canada and Canadians in the Twentieth Century* (1961), designed by Steven and illustrated by Vernon Mould, with maps by Robert Kunz and Marion Paton.

Figure 5. Desmond Pacey's *The Picnic* (1958), jacket design by Steven.

mass of interest in design, and by 1960 it can be said that the profession had truly emerged in its own right.”⁵⁶ The TDC helped to transform Canadian publishing.

Steven worked at getting to know people in the TDC, eventually serving as secretary/treasurer during the term of William Toye in 1961. Ryerson Press then began submitting work to the annual exhibitions, albeit on a limited scale. Modest about his accomplishments, Steven would submit only a select number of entries to the TDC exhibitions from 1960 to 1964. One of his most successful entries was the well-known cover for *Poetry* '62, with its oversize numbers dominating the jacket on both sides. A design breakthrough for Ryerson, it was featured in the “Typography '63” exhibition (Fig. 6), and was a winner of the American Book Design Award for that year. Clearly, the design and look of Ryerson books was shifting.

Other institutional changes at Ryerson contributed to the shift. Upon Pierce's resignation in 1960, John Webster Grant took his place. An ex-navy chaplain, author, and scholar, Grant was not a traditionally trained businessman and made no pretence of it. A much different corporate atmosphere developed, one which was to allow for important change in the art department.⁵⁷ More attuned to modern design and ideas, Grant confidently left Steven pretty much on his own. Steven seized the opportunity to move the Press forward by introducing new design ideas, and by hiring staff who could initiate or help implement innovative perspectives and approaches.

Katherine Berry

In 1961 after a decade of working alone, and burdened by an increasing workload, Steven began to advocate for extra staff in the art department. Katherine Berry was the daughter of one of the ministers who worked in the offices of the United Church of Canada on the top floor of the Ryerson building. Her father, as Steven understood it, spoke to Dickinson, who encouraged Steven to hire her. After looking at her portfolio, Steven decided he could use her assistance.

⁵⁶ Donnelly, “Mass Modernism,” 58.

⁵⁷ John W. Grant (b. 1919), editor in chief at Ryerson from 1960 to 1963 and Professor of Church History at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, from 1963 to 1984, was described by Pat Gangnon as “very advanced for Ryerson” and a wonderful “motivator.” Steven states he was a “true gentleman with a fine sense of humour.”

Figure 6. Included in the “Typography ’63” exhibition, *Poetry ’62* was a winner of the American Book Design Award for that year.

Figure 7. Dorothy Roberts' *Twice to Flame* (1961), jacket printed in orange, yellow, and black, designed by Katherine Berry.

Berry's hiring marked a significant change for the art department; it showed management's recognition of the rapidly increasing workload, and it allowed the introduction of fresh ideas. Although she stayed for a little less than a year and worked on only a few projects, two of her book designs were shown at the TDC's *Typography '61* exhibition: Edward Cragg's *Mission Unhindered: Studies in the Book of Acts* (1961) and Dorothy Roberts' *Twice to Flame* (1961) (Fig. 7).⁵⁸ The hot orange and yellow colours and hand-drawn letters and flames against a black background were a beacon signalling Ryerson's new look for poetry. When Berry left in the spring of 1962 it was clear that she had to be replaced, and that more staff were necessary to process the expanding number of publications. A search was soon underway.

Pat Gangnon

In May 1962, Steven hired Pat Gangnon as an assistant designer. Gangnon (b. 1937) had graduated as an illustrator from the Ontario College of Art in 1960, and in November of that year went to work for H. & S. Reliance, specializing in fashion spreads and commercial images. While there she did cover illustrations for the *United Church Observer*, which came to the attention of its publisher, the Ryerson Press. After 18 months at Reliance, she accepted Steven's offer of a job as an assistant designer.⁵⁹

The Ryerson Press allowed Gangnon to nurse and develop her skills as a designer and illustrator, and to be fully engaged with every aspect of book-making. Allan Fleming warned her of its conservative reputation and recommended she work with Frank Newfeld, also a designer/illustrator, at McClelland and Stewart. But Newfeld had a reputation for being "difficult" and for "destroying" those who did not stand up to him, and Gangnon knew she would never have the artistic confidence to oppose him. She went to Ryerson fully aware of its conservatism but happy to be working for a major publisher, and happy to do the work that was given her. She soon found out that the art department was doing a lot of work on a very tight schedule, and that none of her design work was going to be credited in the texts. Yet, in Steven she found a supportive manager who encouraged her work and fresh ideas. She described him in our interviews as conservative and aware of the demands of upper

⁵⁸ See *Typography '61*, items 25 and 29.

⁵⁹ The following is from conversations with Gangnon on 27 July and 1 Aug. 2001.

management, all the while trying to introduce and manage change. She recognized his excitement in the TDC and his attempts to introduce TDC design principles into Ryerson publications.

Almost immediately she was set to work on Phyllis Webb's first book of poetry, *The Sea is Also a Garden* (1962), a project which revealed interoffice rivalries. John Robert Colombo, best remembered by the staff for his acid tongue, was a Ryerson editor who was also looking to shake up Ryerson operations. Wanting her to "sow her wild oats," he encouraged Gangnon to by-pass Steven and design a book that Colombo felt Steven would never allow her to do. Nonetheless, her design, which included non-representational illustrations, received Steven's support and Ryerson approval (Fig. 8). Earle Toppings described this remarkable book as "a high point in poetry production at Ryerson."⁶⁰ With the backup and support of Colombo, Steven, and Toppings she did her best to push the boundaries. Even the illustration of the nativity for a Christmas 1962 cover of the *United Church Observer*⁶¹ was meant to be "different."

One of her most interesting designs, and one of the most visually experimental Ryerson texts ever published was *Mass Media in Canada* (1962), edited by John A. Irving. Influenced by Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), with its typography and design by Harold Kurschenska,⁶² Gangnon remembers it as "great fun to do." A collection of essays with a hand-lettered title-page, the text was composed of varied type printed on pale blue paper. Each essay had its own introductory page listing the title and author; Gangnon broke the words into fragments and arranged them into various patterns and shapes (Fig. 9). The swirling faces of the crowd illustrating the dust-jacket encloses a truly remarkable production (Fig. 10). Gangnon recalls being hurt by one critic's comment that

⁶⁰ Earle Toppings, an editor at Ryerson from 1961 to 1967, was interviewed on 3 Oct. 2001.

⁶¹ "[The technique used in the illustration] wasn't accidental' she says. 'In this sort of work you have to know what you want to achieve, and how you are going to get it.' The technique she developed will have a short life, Miss Gangnon thinks. 'It's different, and anything that is different only lasts a short time,' she says" (E.L. Homewood's "What's New," *The United Church Observer* 15 Dec. 1962: 5).

⁶² Gangnon went to speak with Harold Kurschenska (b. 1931) at the University of Toronto Press when she was just out of school. He was very kind and became a great influence on her work, introducing her to the TDC, and encouraging her participation.

Figure 8. Page from Phyllis Webb's
The Sea is Also a Garden (1962),
designed by Pat Gangnon.

Figure 9. Eugene Hallman's essay
"Television," published in John Irving's
Mass Media in Canada (1962)
designed by Pat Gangnon.

Figure 10. Swirling faces of a crowd illustrate
Gangnon's design for the dust-jacket.

the book had been printed in railway timetable type on butcher paper, but she was nonetheless encouraged to keep working in new directions. Other books designed by Gangnon include: T.C.B. Boon's *The Anglican Church From the Bay to the Rockies* (1962), Phil S. Long's *The Great Canadian Range* (1963), William S. Morris's *The Unity We Seek* (1962), Raymond Souster's *Colour of the Times* (1964), and Yves Thériault's *Agaguk* (1963) (Fig. 11).⁶³

In the two years she was at Ryerson, Gangnon's designs were a breath of fresh air. Her hiring was an indication of Ryerson's attempts to change its image following the death of Pierce in 1961, and face some of the design challenges of the heady days of the TDC. Gangnon "cut her teeth" at Ryerson, and found it a great place to work, but the initially wonderful family atmosphere was, in the end, too comfortable and confining. She resigned in 1965 to accept a job with Leslie Smart and Associates that she thought would be more challenging.⁶⁴

Mary Cserepy

Hiring recent graduates out of art school became a tradition in the art department. Steven always hired what Toppings called "the kids," but it was "the kids" who brought in the new ideas. Steven gave his young assistants the new poetry and fiction – projects they could play with, and he kept the more important business and long-term educational projects for himself. Educational texts were designed to make profits, and there was less room for experimentation. Tradition here reigned. At weekly meetings of the Editorial Board Steven, who was a member after 1961, presented staff design proposals

⁶³ Exhibited in *Typography '64*, item 140.

⁶⁴ For six months in 1965 Gangnon worked part-time for both Leslie Smart and Associates and Clarke, Irwin, then took a year's leave on a Canada Council grant. She returned to Leslie Smart in 1966 but later in the same year established her own company, Pat Gangnon Design Limited, creating corporate graphics and commercial designs. The business lasted for 24 years as a full-time operation and on a contract basis afterwards. Eventually, with free-lance work, teaching, and her company contacts, she worked for most of the well-known Toronto publishers: Clarke, Irwin; Gage; Longman; McClelland and Stewart; and Macmillan. Currently active as a illustrator for children's educational texts, Gangnon also teaches two-dimensional design, design drawing, and image composition at OCAD. Later texts she worked on include the *Selected Poems of George Woodcock* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1967) and Bruce Hutchison's *Western Windows* (Toronto: Longman, 1967).

for books currently in production.⁶⁵ As the younger design staff were rueful about not being able to sign their work, they were anxious to push the envelope of the Ryerson “tradition” and establish their artistic identity. Steven became adept at convincing the Board to accept many of the more controversial projects while under constant pressure to produce designs that would increase sales.⁶⁶ Some designs had to be reworked, but most made it through the Board process.

In the Spring of 1962 Mary Cserepy graduated from OCA where, as one of Frank Newfeld’s students, she had been introduced to the craft of book design. In June of 1962 Steven hired her to replace Katherine Berry. Immediately, she was set to work producing dust jackets and designs. One of her early projects was the jacket for Hugh Hood’s *Flying a Red Kite* (1962) (Fig. 12). Cserepy remembers it as a “way out,” whimsical design with too many faults – the floating title on the cover was too small. In hindsight it should never have been allowed but, to her surprise, the jacket was approved by the Editorial Board and put into production. As a young graduate and new employee she had expected more of a reaction, and more input from the Editorial Board.

Cserepy, too, was influenced by the growing TDC movement, and was aware of the latest trends and news. The art department worked together closely and enjoyed experimenting with new ideas, even though they were not always the right solution. Like Gangnon, and with the support and encouragement of Steven and Colombo, Cserepy worked in all areas of the Press – on educational texts, charts, maps, and covers for children’s books – whatever was needed at the time. For Cserepy some of her most important projects at Ryerson included Eli Mandel’s *Black and Secret Man* (1964), George F.G. Stanley’s *The Story of Canada’s Flag: A Historical Sketch* (1965), *Modern Canadian Stories* (1966), and the design of the Ryerson Paperback Series. She also designed a new colophon for the house. One of her few credited projects was the paperback edition of Douglas J. Wilson’s *The Church Grows in Canada* (1966) (Fig. 13).⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Steven was also encouraged to suggest and develop his own ideas for new books, two examples of which are: Ottelyn Addison’s *Tom Thomson: The Algonquin Years* (1969) and Edna Staebler’s *Food That Really Schmecks* (1968).

⁶⁶ Steven remembers a company joke that the sales department wanted every book cover to be “red,” as they felt that “read” books always had the best sales.

⁶⁷ The hardcover edition of *The Church Grows in Canada* was designed by Cserepy, and included the same illustrations, yet no credits appear in the text.

Figure 12. Hugh Hood's *Flying a Red Kite* (1962), designed by Mary Csereny.

Figure 11. Yves Thériault's *Agaguk* (1963), designed by Pat Gangnon.

Dealing with the conservative corporate culture of Ryerson, its publishing traditions and corporate history, within the context of the social and technological upheavals of the 1960s were all issues for young designers (and editors) at the Press. Frustration was a common reaction due to the different perspectives of a new generation and a new time. Was the Board aware of the social upheaval taking place outside their windows? Cserepy, like others, often wondered if the Editorial Board was fully aware of design's ability to reduce costs, communicate ideas, and promote sales. Was enough attention paid to Ryerson books by senior staff at the weekly meetings? Although the sales department always appeared to embrace modern design, most other departments were indifferent. In hindsight, and with her later experience working for other publishing firms, Cserepy believed that Ryerson's art department was not always considered a vital part of the book production process. It seldom provoked the inter-office and author/publisher confrontations she was to witness in other firms. Cserepy remembers that it was often the printers on the press floor who commented on her designs and illustrations, letting her know what would and would not work.⁶⁸ One of the Scottish printers told her "Ye canna do this Mary" when presented with one of her more experimental projects. This was often the most reaction she received.

Like Gangnon, Cserepy developed the impression that real opportunity and challenge lay elsewhere. She left Ryerson in 1966, initially to work at McClelland and Stewart, and after a short time moved to Clarke, Irwin. Later, apart from a two-year position in the children's book division of McClelland and Stewart, she worked largely in free-lance design.⁶⁹

Bill Taylor

Bill Taylor replaced Gangnon in 1964. His career was almost identical to Steven's: after a stint in the RCAF, he graduated from the OCA in 1950, just a year after Steven. Although they had not known each other

68 Such comments were sometimes the result of the physical limitations of the press equipment, rather than a design issue, but Cserepy still remembers the impression it left on her.

69 Other books designed and illustrated by Cserepy are Alden Nowlan's *Bread, Wine and Salt* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1967), Delbert A. Young's *Last Voyage of the Unicorn* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1969), and Nazeen Sadiq's *Camels Can Make You Homesick and Other Stories* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1985).

Figure 13. Douglas J. Wilson's *The Church Grows in Canada* (1966), designed by Mary Csereny.

Figure 14. Paul St. Pierre's *Breaking Smith's Quarter Horse* (1966), designed by Bill Taylor.

well at school, they remembered one another. Though his real talent was as an illustrator, Steven thought Taylor an excellent designer, and they worked well together as a team. After closing out Ryerson's final years, they left the firm in 1969, and have remained lifelong friends.

For Taylor, his most important work at Ryerson was Tom Coughlin's *The Dangerous Sky: Canadian Airmen in World War II* (1968), which he expanded from a simple manuscript into a book fully illustrated with war photographs. With his expertise in full-colour illustration, he also designed a set of full-colour covers for a series of books on careers for young people entitled the Canadian Careers Library, one of which was Nan Shipley's *The Railway Builders* (1965). Taylor's experience at Ryerson was much the same as Gangnon's and Cserepy's, except that he appears to have derived the most satisfaction from his position. Of all the assistants, his albeit brief career lasted the longest (Fig. 14).

Although, according to Steven, the art department's position at Ryerson was stronger under the leadership of Vic Seary, the financial position of the company began to falter. The Press was not run as professionally as it should have been, and by the Fall of 1970 Ryerson was \$2.8 million in debt.⁷⁰ The acquisition of new German-made colour presses, which were essentially not suited to book manufacture, resulted in a huge expenditure and higher than expected operating costs. In Steven's view, their acquisition brought down the press.⁷¹ McGraw-Hill bought out the company in December of that year, and in 1971 it was renamed McGraw-Hill Ryerson.⁷²

70 For example Jack McClelland's decision to expand McClelland and Stewart in 1967 resulted in a financial crisis that by 1970 brought the company to the "brink of collapse." See the "Historical Introduction" to Carl Spadoni's and Judy Donnelly's *A Bibliography of McClelland and Stewart Imprints, 1909-1985: A Publisher's Legacy* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1994), 41. The year 1969/1970 was a general period of crisis for Canadian publishers and their art departments. McClelland and Stewart faced huge financial problems and Frank Newfeld resigned in 1970 under similarly "impossible conditions" (see Speller's "Frank Newfeld," 19).

71 John Webster Grant concurs with this view, stating: "In 1970, mainly through losses incurred in connection with the purchase of an expensive but unsatisfactory colour press, The Ryerson Press was sold to the American firm McGraw-Hill" ("The Ryerson Press," *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, [Toronto: Oxford U P, 1983], 722).

72 See George Parker's "The Sale of Ryerson Press: The End of the Old Agency System and Conflicts over Domestic and Foreign Ownership in the Canadian Publishing Industry, 1970-1986," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 40:2 (Fall 2002): 7-56.

Steven's resignation in 1969 was triggered by a restructuring proposal that he felt would destroy his department. Management brought in an expert who wanted to separate all of the departments and create different companies that would compete for contracts both within Ryerson and with outside firms. Steven felt the policy was ludicrous and resigned,⁷³ and Taylor soon followed. The departure of, until then, the longest serving art director in Toronto⁷⁴ marked the end of an era.⁷⁵

Steven, Taylor, and Cserepy stayed in touch. Steven claims he played cupid for Taylor and Cserepy who married in 1973. Both continued to work as commercial artists and illustrators throughout the 1970s and 1980s.⁷⁶ Recently, upon their retirement, Taylor and Cserepy were honoured by the OCAD Alumni Association for co-ordinating the Alumni Life Drawing and Painting classes since 1978.⁷⁷

Conclusion

The history of book design and illustration at the Ryerson Press has, to date, been preoccupied with the years before World War II and the remarkable achievement of Thoreau MacDonald. MacDonald's design work was Ryerson's instantly recognizable trademark for almost three decades, and it remains a highlight of twentieth-century book design. Although many of his designs were adapted for general use, MacDonald remained a contract designer without responsibility for overall design. He could "deplore [Ryerson's] press work"⁷⁸ without the responsibility of changing it. After the War, MacDonald could

73 Steven always remembers that upon announcing his resignation, the United Church had no record that he had ever been employed at Ryerson. There was a long series of negotiations over pension arrangements.

74 His record has been broken by Antje Linger who worked at the University of Toronto Press from 1954 to 1995.

75 Steven subsequently became an art and history teacher at Gordon Graydon Secondary School in Port Credit from 1970-1986. He also continued to paint, and had an exhibition of his work at the Art Gallery of Mississauga in 2001.

76 "Mary Cserepy and Bill Taylor have collaborated on several bookjackets which are currently in book stores. Some of the titles include: *Lazaro* by D[avid] Kendell (McClelland & Stewart, 1983), *Paul Nowlen* by R[obert] Harlow, (McClelland & Stewart, [1983]) and *Death Over Montreal* by G. Bilson (Kids Can Press, [1982])" *Alumnus: Ontario College of Art Alumni Association* Spring 1984: 2. Other titles include Joan Clark's *The Hand of Robin Squires* (Clarke, Irwin, 1977).

77 "Thanking Bill Taylor," *Alumnus* Winter 2001: 4.

78 Edison, *Thoreau MacDonald*, 14.

portray the nostalgic passing of a rural way of life without having to deal with the increasing urban reality of Canada, its new writers, or the technological advances that were revolutionizing the world of illustration, books, commercial design, and Canadian publishing itself.

"If," as Will Novosedlik states, "the modernist movement ... has always been primarily a response to changing technology,"⁷⁹ then post-war Canadian book design has been actively involved in that response. As Novosedlik has pointed out, the evidence for its response was the increasing trend away from the ornamented arts and crafts influence of William Morris, which (in the work of J.E.H. and Thoreau MacDonald) dominated Canadian design for 40 years, towards the new industrial modernism of the "international style"; a style that embraced "mechanized" production and rejected ornamentation.⁸⁰ In a world increasingly saturated by visual images, as opposed to verbal ones, "visual communication" in alliance with the need to "impart the most information with the greatest economy of means" eventually came to dominate book design.⁸¹ The practical manifestation of this was the gradual abandonment of the traditional ways of book design, "a combination of illustration and hand-lettered display typography" towards "photography and machine-set type."⁸² One needs only to look at Ryerson's textbooks from the early 1960s to recognize the design changes that were taking place throughout the industry. *Modern Business Practice* (1960) (Fig. 15) and *Winds of Change* (1961) (Fig. 4), both designed by Steven, are confident and assured productions that espouse all of the features of the new design movement. And they show that the Ryerson Press was, if not a leader, an active participant.

In hiring Steven, Pierce admitted that the "traditional ornamented arts" he himself had admired and supported for so long were not part of the future. The Ryerson Press required a new design direction. This was a brave move for Pierce, but one rooted in economic necessity. Ryerson became one of the first publishers in Canada to create an art department, and with Steven, one of the first with a full-time art director. During his first decade he worked in the larger-than-life presence of Pierce, a man he revered, and a man

79 Novosedlik, Part II, 81.

80 Novosedlik, Part I, 32-34.

81 Novosedlik, Part II, 84.

82 Novosedlik, Part I, 31.

Figure 15. *Modern Business Practice* (1960), designed by Arthur Steven.

whose literary and artistic vision continued to dominate the Press's daily operations up to 1960. Yet, gradually, Steven steered the company away from the design work of Thoreau MacDonald towards the contemporary work of the European trained designers who began to dominate the profession and the TDC. There were significant hurdles, and progress was often slow, but his achievement is all the more remarkable for them.

Steven had the difficult task of steering a conservative company with a long and historic tradition of printing, binding, and publishing in new design directions. The history itself was often an impediment, for there was not always a consistent corporate commitment to design innovation⁸³ and, according to Steven, C.H. Dickinson remained indifferent to the contemporary design interests so evident in the other Toronto firms. Similarly, the company's policy of forced anonymity for design employees guaranteed the invisibility of their names and reputations beyond the firm. There were economic restrictions as well. Ryerson had far less financial flexibility than other publishers who contracted out their printing and binding to firms such as T.H. Best.⁸⁴ Restricted budgets resulted in design work that was confined to the outer covers, leaving the text block to the in-house printers. At the same time Ryerson seldom experimented with type, paper, and binding cloth in the same way as McClelland and Stewart, for example. It was rare to see the playfulness of Frank Newfeld, Harold Kurschenska, or Leslie Smart. Ryerson was not a firm of bold design departures.

Steven was unable to introduce radical design changes at Ryerson. The economic and corporate culture prevented that. According to Toppings, Steven was a modest man who was never an active self-promoter, yet he was, as Pat Gangnon claimed, a born diplomat. Steven used his diplomatic skills to negotiate his way within the

83 Earle Toppings is of the opinion that there was never an institutional commitment to design excellence at Ryerson during the 1960s. It was a much better bindery than a printer. Toppings believes that Ryerson's origins as the job printer of the Methodist Church, producing fast and cheap copy for Sunday services, left the house traditionally indifferent to the best in the book arts. "The appearance of Ryerson books had most to do with the modesty and utilitarian simplicity of church materials, from Sunday school papers to hymn books." Excesses such as four-colour printing were not allowed. Too, Ryerson was a complete publisher – doing everything in-house from editing, to printing, to binding, to dust jackets. This left it with much less financial, technical and artistic flexibility than other Canadian houses that used outside printing firms.

84 A firm often used by McClelland and Stewart.

corporation. He was committed to the new design trends he witnessed all around him, and was able to transcend the past traditions of the house without abandoning them entirely.⁸⁵ He was able to use what was valid and effective from each design school to create a look that was respectful of both. "His feet" according to Gangnon, "were in both camps."

What Steven accomplished was the introduction of a greater design variety into Ryerson publications; the graphic arts were increasingly eclectic under his supervision. He used every opportunity and advantage to promote fresh ideas for new books. Even the rapidly increasing workload resulting in the hiring of new staff in the 1960s was used to diversify and expand Ryerson's "look." Gangnon, Cserepy, Taylor, and others, were each able to bring their own style and talent to Ryerson's books.⁸⁶ Steven never insisted that staff designers follow his example or copy his style: they were free to create and were fully supported in their endeavours. The young designers, such as Gangnon, pushed the barriers with completely new and experimental work. That they were able to do so is a testament to Steven.

Contrary to what is implied in recent literature, design at the Ryerson Press remained a significant part of its book production up until the closure of the company in 1970. Steven, Berry, Gangnon, Cserepy, and Taylor, along with a host of other contract artists and designers, created the look of the Ryerson Press after World War II. Only a fragment of their work is credited to them, and much of it will remain unidentified, but at least now part of the story is told. For what is evident here is that Ryerson was an active participant and remained at the centre of the book design movement of the late 1950s and 1960s, a movement that transformed the look of the Canadian book and effectively changed the history of design communication in Canada for the rest of the century.⁸⁷

85 Thoreau MacDonald's drawings were used as late as 1969 in Addison's *Tom Thomson: The Algonquin Years*. C.W. Jefferys' illustrations were used in Thomas Chandler Haliburton's *Sam Slick in Pictures* in 1956 (Fig. 1), and in educational texts for years afterwards.

86 The eclectic nature of much of this work may have been a direct reaction against the dominance of Thoreau MacDonald's signature look.

87 Donnelly, "Mass Modernism," 63.

SOMMAIRE

Sous la direction de Lorne Pierce, Ryerson Press s'est bâti, avant la Deuxième Guerre, une solide réputation à titre d'éditeur de livres bien conçus et illustrés. Malgré cela, après la Deuxième Guerre (1939-1945), lorsque l'Art Director's Club de Toronto et les Typographical Designers of Canada (TDC) étaient en plein essor, et lorsque les éditeurs canadiens tiraient profit des bénéfices économiques et artistiques de la conception graphique moderne du livre, Ryerson Press disparut de la discussion. Dans toute la littérature sur la conception graphique du livre qui est disponible, la participation et la contribution de Ryerson durant l'après-guerre n'ont jamais été documentées, malgré le fait évident que l'engagement de Pierce en ce qui a trait aux livres bien conçus n'avait pas diminué après la guerre.

Qu'est-il arrivé à la direction artistique et à la conception graphique chez Ryerson au cours des années précédant son acquisition par McGraw-Hill en 1970 ? Utilisant des entrevues avec Arthur Steven, le directeur artistique chez Ryerson de 1949 à 1969, ainsi qu'avec d'autres membres de son personnel de l'époque (Pat Gangnon, Mary Cserepy et Bill Taylor) cet essai tente de reconstituer le service de création artistique de Ryerson durant l'après-guerre.

Bien que la maison Ryerson demeura une firme profondément conservatrice avec un but précis clairement défini, elle fut graduellement transformée par des changements organisationnels et technologiques qui eurent lieu après la Guerre. Ryerson fut l'un des premiers éditeurs de Toronto à instaurer un service de création artistique, et trouva en Arthur Steven le directeur artistique idéal afin de faciliter un tel changement. Avec l'influence grandissante de la conception graphique européenne moderne du livre au cours des années 1950, l'influence et l'exemple des TDC, ainsi qu'avec les idées revendicatrices des jeunes graphistes qui s'étaient joints à la firme au cours des années 1960, l'évolution des livres de Ryerson en termes de conception graphique était inévitable. Cet article examine comment Steven a pu diriger Ryerson dans de nouvelles directions en ce qui a trait à la conception graphique, et ce qu'il a pu accomplir.

Contrairement à ce qui est implicite dans la littérature récente, la conception graphique chez Ryerson a constitué une partie importante de sa production de livres jusqu'en 1970. Arthur Steven, Katherine Berry, Pat Gangnon, Mary Cserepy et Bill Taylor, avec une foule d'autres artistes et graphistes engagés à contrat, créèrent la nouvelle

apparence de Ryerson, une apparence qui était beaucoup plus variée, éclectique et innovatrice. Ce qui est évident, c'est que Ryerson était un participant actif et demeura au centre du mouvement de conception graphique du livre de la fin des années 1950 et 1960, un mouvement qui transforma l'apparence du livre canadien et a effectivement changé l'histoire de la conception graphique en tant que mode de communication au Canada jusqu'à la fin du siècle.