Design and Ideology in *A Pocketful of Canada*¹

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In 1946, the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship issued *A Pocketful of Canada*, edited by John D. Robins, head of English at Victoria College, and published in Toronto by William Collins. According to the Introduction by H.M. Tory, who chaired the Council at the end of his distinguished career in the administration of post-secondary education in Canada, this compact hardbound collection of visual, literary, cultural, and political materials was designed to present “an interesting and informative view of the real growing and developing Canada as may be gathered from a study of the written record,” in order to reach “the hands and hearts of many thousands of people everywhere.”³ This message was reinforced by the backcover blurb of the later paperback editions, which announced, “Here is no dry-as-dust anthology, but a book reflecting all the vigour and diversity of the Canadian scene, a book designed to bring to the attention of the world the Canadian way of life.” Its claim that this volume “will make Canadians aware of their literary heritage and serve as an ideal gift to friends in other countries” confirms that while its initial target audience was local, *Pocketful* was also intended to serve as a “book ambassador overseas.”⁴

In his editorial preface, Robins took pains to state that the volume “is not intended as an anthology, it makes no claim to be a repository

1 John D. Robins, ed. *A Pocketful of Canada* (Toronto: Collins, 1946; 2nd ed. 1948; 3rd ed. 1952; Braille ed., 1970s). I would like to thank Janet Friskney and George Parker for assistance with various questions that arose during the course of my research; as well as Scott Mackenzie, Inter-Library Loans, Bennett Library, Simon Fraser University, for his diligent pursuit of my requests; Martin Gerson for aiding with the illustrations; and the editorial vetters of this essay for their helpful suggestions.

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3 H.M. Tory, Introduction, *Pocketful*, v-vi.

4 “Canadian Book Design,” *Quill & Quire* 13 (Jan. 1947): 39.

of the best Canadian writing.” Rather, the principle of selection was to choose material that was “characteristically Canadian, in mood, or content, or both.” Dedicated to “the man on the street and the woman in the streetcar,”⁵ *Pocketful* constructs a deliberately appealing vision of Canada during the period of post-war reconstruction. Despite Robins’s caveat, the Council’s own later publicity would describe the volume as “An anthology of Canadian poetry, prose and art, selected in a successful attempt to capture the spirit of Canada and its people.”⁶ The story of this book’s production, dissemination, and reception, together with an analysis of its contents, provides a fascinating window into a crucial period in Canada’s cultural history, when post-war ideologies would lead to far-reaching consequences through the eventual impact of the Massey Commission.

A non-governmental organization, the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship was founded in 1941 and became the Canadian Citizenship Council in 1946, shortly before the Canadian Citizenship Act came into force on 1 January 1947.⁷ During the War, the Council issued various pamphlets, such as *Suggested Program for Remembrance Day in the Schools of Canada* (1941) and *International Planning for Education* (1944). After the War, its name appeared in 1945 and 1946 on publications concerning adult education,

5 John D. Robins, Preface, xiii-xiv.

6 “Publications of the Canadian Citizenship Council” appended to the Canadian Citizenship Council “Annual Report, 1948-49,” 5 May 1949, MG28, I 85, vol. 31, Canadian Citizenship Council fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (LAC).

7 According to the administrative history written for the finding aid to the Canadian Citizenship Council fonds (CAIN No. 181952, LAC):

The Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship was established in 1941 and consisted of representatives from eight provincial departments of education, the Canadian Education Association, the Canadian Association for Adult Education and the Canadian Teachers’ Federation. The association acted as a link between the federal government and the provincial departments of education. It distributed information of the Wartime Information Board, published pamphlets and books and distributed material on education, community organization and democratic methods to schools, groups and communities.

The Council helped organize the Citizens’ Forum Radio and the Joint Planning Committee, both of which were later taken over by the Canadian Association for Adult Education. After the war, the name was changed to the Canadian Citizenship Council and membership widened to include national and provincial organizations and interested government bodies. It became the main resource centre for educational agencies concerned with language teaching for immigrants, and it conducted research in immigration problems and continued its wartime programme of developing responsible and participating citizens.

community centres, democracy, and UNESCO.⁸ *A Pocketful of Canada* may have been one of the last productions issued under the Council's original name.

The broad reach envisioned by the Citizenship Council was enacted in 1948, when the Canadian Council for Reconstruction through UNESCO selected this volume for inclusion in possibly 20,000 boxes of school supplies to be sent to classrooms in war-devastated areas of continental Europe.⁹ Because the records of the book's publisher have not survived, no information is available regarding the size of the print run of the initial hardback edition or the two subsequent paperback editions of 1948 and 1952. Nor is it clear whether UNESCO preferred the cloth-bound edition of 1946 (which sold for \$3) or the paperbound version of 1948, which cost 50 cents. The book's current ubiquity in Canadian libraries and second-hand book catalogues confirms that many copies went into circulation during the period when Canadian publishing was recovering from its wartime slump.

My interest in this book lies in the relation between its ideology, format, and the different visual and textual genres of its contents. Particularly intriguing is the internal conversation created by the inclusion of woodcuts and photographs in a wide-ranging collection of literary and informative texts. The notion of capturing a large nation in a small book is itself a daunting proposal, underlining the iconic value of the codex format in Western culture. In his preface, Robins expressed gratitude to over a dozen Committee members and Toronto librarians for their assistance. "Miss Marie Tremaine and Miss Florence Murray of the Toronto Reference Library" and "Miss Margaret Ray, Associate Librarian of Victoria University"¹⁰ are thanked for the biographical notes and other assistance, which likely included the book's meticulous indexing and documentation of sources. The list of Committee members constitutes a roll call of prominent men

8 Amicus, the Canadian National Catalogue, lists a number of such titles, including *Blueprint for a United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization, August 1945* [Ottawa: Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship, 1945].

9 Canada Council for Reconstruction through UNESCO, Report of Activities, July 1947-March 1949, included in their submission to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences, 28 July 1949, Canadian Citizenship Council fonds, LAC: <<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/massey/h5-318-e.html>>, accessed 9 April 2006. Unlike some of the other items cited in this document, the number of copies of *Pocketful* is not specified.

10 John D. Robins, Preface, xiv.

representing government (diplomat Hugh Keenleyside), the arts (John Grierson of the National Film Board and Edward Corbett of the Banff School of Fine Arts), and letters (author and journalist Wilfrid Eggleston), and suggests that little in this volume was left to chance. The range of these people's backgrounds seems to have influenced the table of contents, which reflects the multiple interests addressed by a book designed by a committee. Hence, *Pocketful* invites being read as a communal post-war statement of Canadian identity which could also serve as a recruiting document for immigrants.

The latter interpretation is especially applicable to the first edition, whose final sections, subtitled "Political" and "Documents and Statistics," present statistical tables of the country's land mass and population (numbers and "racial origins"), details of Canada's system of government, and political texts and documents ranging from statements by John A. Macdonald and Wilfrid Laurier to Canada's Proclamation of War on Germany and a wartime speech by then Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King. The sub-section titled "Cultural" is anchored by artist Lawren Harris on "Reconstruction through the Arts," and includes selections on folklore by Marius Barbeau, the country's foremost ethnographer, and texts by other experts on Canada's architecture, art, and music. The paperback editions of 1948 and 1952 lack the original introduction and sport vastly reduced final sections, reducing the original volume's 434 pages to 347 in 1948 (retaining the eight texts from the "Cultural" section) and to 316 in 1952 (with the eight cultural texts replaced by four briefer historical documents from the first edition). Despite drastic cutting of the final sections of informative, patriotic, and historical material, the literary contents remained virtually unchanged. In the edition of 1952, Charles G.D. Roberts's story, "Rabbit Play in the Moonlight," was replaced by E.J. Pratt's poem, "Newfoundland," presumably to acknowledge the latest recruit to Confederation. Also added to this final edition was "The Canadian Pattern," Vincent Massey's introduction to his nationalistic essay, *On Being Canadian* (1948).

The editors' selection of William Collins as publisher comes as no surprise. This "great Scottish-British firm"¹¹ had set up its Toronto office during the 1930s; in the early 1940s, under the leadership of Frank Appleton, it enlarged its Canadian operations to overcome wartime disruption of the trans-Atlantic book trade. Alongside local production of imported popular fiction, Collins developed a small

11 "F.F. Appleton Retires," *Quill & Quire* 13 (Oct. 1947): 44.

Canadian literary list that began with Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising* (1941).¹² Several Canadian titles were added each year, including Robins's *The Incomplete Anglers* (1943), which won the Governor General's Award for non-fiction. This volume was designed by artist Franklin Carmichael, Appleton's friend and a member of the Group of Seven, who might have also designed *A Pocketful of Canada* had he not died unexpectedly in 1945.¹³ By 1946, Collins was known as both a respected literary publisher and a major participant in the paperback revolution,¹⁴ most of whose list was manufactured in Canada even if written elsewhere. Its "White Circle" paperback series, which comprised mostly mysteries and romances, also included occasional Canadian literary titles, such as Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* and Hugh MacLennan's *Two Solitudes*, as well as the final edition of *A Pocketful of Canada*.¹⁵

In accordance with its title, *Pocketful* is indeed small: the dimensions of the hardback – 7.5 × 4.5 inches – are scarcely larger than the paperback, unlike *The Incomplete Anglers*, for example, which is the standard size of 8.75 × 6 inches. Both the book's compact size and the title word "Pocketful" suggest that the soft-cover version was planned from the beginning, pocket book then being the generic term for the paperback format. In all editions, the printed sections manifest economies of space that connote post-war paper shortages: thin paper, small fonts, and minuscule margins – those on the inside are so narrow that many pages of prose are difficult to read, a feature noted in one review.¹⁶ This frugal formatting renders the book's visual

12 "The White Circles Are Now 'Made in Canada,'" *Quill & Quire* 8 (May 1942): 24.

13 The youngest member of the Group of Seven, Carmichael had designed many books for Collins; *Pocketful* includes two of his woodcuts in "Canadian Vista." See "Canadian Book Design," *Quill & Quire* 13 (Jan. 1947): 38-39, and Grant Campbell, "William Collins During World War II: Nationalism Meets a Wartime Economy in Canadian Publishing," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada / Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* 39 (Spring 2001): 45-65.

14 Robert Weaver, "Two-Bit Culture," *Canadian Forum* 33 (July 1953): 78-82.

15 More information about Collins White Circle paperbacks, including an inventory, can be found at <<http://www.dougcomicworld.com/INVENTORY-CollinsPaperbackSite.html>> accessed 9 April 2006.

16 "Granting that to make it pocket size, the material is occasionally more crowded than we could have wished, and that the excellent endpaper designs were a little obvious in the painful symmetry of their arrangement, it is still a book for any Canadian to be proud of. As is undoubtedly intended, it would be our choice for a book ambassador overseas. Perhaps a new edition, in a larger size with

features all the more striking. In all editions, original woodcuts are distributed throughout the volume, while a 32-page photographic essay titled "Canadian Vista" assembles sharp-edged black-and-white photographs, many from the National Film Board (NFB). These two contrasting modes of illustration act in tandem to represent Canada as a land of opportunity, peace, and culture.

The book's impact begins with Laurence Hyde's striking cover illustration of an Indigenous Eve-figure caressing a deer, in a style which evokes Gauguin's bare-breasted Tahitian women (fig. 1). On the dust jacket of the original edition, it is also reproduced on the front cover of both paperback editions. Hyde's union of woman and nature, an image of the peaceable kingdom before this characterization of Canada was articulated by Northrop Frye,¹⁷ suggests enduring notions of the New World as paradise and underscores the theme of Canada as an idealized refuge from the turmoil of the Second World War. The cover's prominent citation of the illustrator's name and genre – "Wood Engravings by Laurence Hyde" – indicates that his work was known and valued. Influenced by the Group of Seven, and a friend of Thoreau MacDonald, Hyde had previously worked with Kemp Waldie at the Golden Dog Press.¹⁸ He produced many sets of prints "either to illustrate a story or to tell a story entirely in pictures," as well as pen-and-ink sketches for the *Canadian Forum*, and at the time of this book's production was in the fourth year of a three-decade affiliation (1942-72) with the NFB.¹⁹

Curiously, there exists a second dust jacket that sharply contrasts with Hyde's, this one signed by Stanley Turner, A.R.C.A, a professional illustrator who worked for various Toronto publishers from the

wide margins and the best in paper, will be available some time later as a gift volume for lovers of fine books." "Canadian Book Design," *Quill & Quire* 3 (Jan. 1947): 39.

- 17 "If we had to characterize a distinctive emphasis in [the Canadian] tradition, we might call it a quest for the peaceable kingdom." Northrop Frye, "Conclusion," *Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1965), 848.
- 18 Hyde and Waldie collaborated on Hyde's *Engravings for Macbeth* (Toronto: Golden Dog Press, 1939).
- 19 Patricia Ainslie and Alan Horne, "Laurence Hyde: An Interview," *Devil's Artisan* 21 (1987): 4 and 7-28; "Part II," *Devil's Artisan* 22 (1987): 3-30. See also Patricia Ainslie, *The Wood Engravings of Laurence Hyde* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1986). Unfortunately, none mentions Hyde's work for *A Pocketful of Canada*.

Figure 1. Dust jacket designed by Laurence Hyde for the first edition of *A Pocketful of Canada*, 1946.

Reproduction courtesy C. Gerson's private collection.

1920s until 1950.²⁰ It was included in "The Private Eye" exhibition of Canadian collectors mounted by the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario, in July-November 2004. The

²⁰ Stanley F. Turner (1883-1953) illustrated books ranging from *Famous Canadian Stories: Retold for Children* by Leslie Horner, edited by Donald G. French (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923) to *Son of the Hawk* by Thomas Raddall (Toronto: Doubleday, 1950), including McClelland and Stewart's Cavendish Library editions of L.M. Montgomery, initiated in 1947.

Turner dust jacket belongs to bookseller Fred Turner (no relation to Stanley), who graciously sent me a colour photocopy. While the text on the back of the Turner jacket duplicates that on the Hyde jacket, the flaps differ. The Turner back flap lists eight recent books from Collins, including two issued in 1947, while the front flap cites the review of *Pocketful* from the *Canadian Geographical Journal* of January 1947. However, all Canadian advertisements from November and December 1946 feature the Hyde cover. While this material evidence suggests that the Turner jacket was created in 1947, after the original publication of the book in the fall of 1946, the reason for its production remains a mystery.²¹

Turner's full-colour cover presents a jolly trans-Canadian collage (fig. 2): against a landscape of snow-topped peaks and steep waterfalls, teepees and totem poles mingle with parliament buildings, a wheatfield, a castle-like CPR hotel, a factory with smokestacks, a lighthouse, one man fishing from his campsite and another hunting, all connected by waterways with sailboats and a steamship, a bridge traversed by automobiles, and a central rainbow. These details of human and industrial activity differ markedly from Hyde's pastoralism, nor do they comply with the canon of national images promulgated by the National Gallery/Sampson-Matthews project, which during the War had disseminated hundreds of thousands of silkscreen prints of Canadian paintings of rugged landscapes and rural scenes by an array of artists, including members of the Group of Seven.²² Turner's cover is more in line with what Andrew T. Hunter terms "the other landscape," which depicts a "worked terrain," and resembles celebrations of industry such as Grant Tigner's "Animated Seaway Map" (1954).²³ The existence of these highly contrasting covers not only demonstrates the differing conceptions of Canada prevalent during the immediate post-war period, but also serves the present discussion by accentuating *Pocketful's* internal visual dialogue between its woodcuts and its photographs. The traditional genre

21 I have not been able to locate any other copies of this dust jacket, despite searches on Amicus, Worldcat, <<http://www.bookfinder.com>>, and the Toronto Reference Library.

22 See Joyce Zemans, "Envisioning Nation: Nationhood, Identity, and the Sampson-Matthews Silkscreen Project: The Wartime Prints," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 19.1 (1998): 7-51.

23 Andrew T. Hunter, *The Other Landscape* (Edmonton: Edmonton Art Gallery, 2003), 9, 24; *The St. Lawrence Seaway: The Realization of a Mighty Dream* ([Montreal]: Distillers Corporation-Seagrams Ltd., 1954).

Figure 2. Dust jacket designed in 1947 by Stanley F. Turner for *A Pocketful of Canada*. Reproduction courtesy Fred Turner's private collection.

of the woodcut, typical of fine-press work of the era, represented craftsmanship, artistic taste, simplicity, and harmony: qualities further enhanced by Hyde's largely pastoral images. The activities of daily rural and urban life, on the other hand, were documented by the technology of the camera, a medium appropriate to the age of progress.

In addition to the cover, Hyde contributed nine woodcuts which fall into two orders of complexity. Small, single-subject images head the four subsections of the first group of texts under the titles of Tidewater, Snake Fence Country, West by North, and The Bush.

Along with the image of the fountain from the title page, they also appear on both sets of end-papers (fig. 3), creating an orderly and rather conventional display of a country populated by seafarers, canoeists, and farmers, dramatized by a few rifle-brandishing Natives on horseback. More interesting and complex are the four larger images that head the major sections (fig. 4). "From Sea to Sea" presents the geographical expanse of Canada – again figured as female – by showing the sun shining in the West at the same time as the stars glow in the East. "Around the Year" deftly narrates the seasonal cycle, with women activating the fruitful seasons of spring and summer.²⁴ The pastoral returns in the image of the drinking fawn (echoing the doe on the cover) that introduces "The Patchwork Quilt"; most sophisticated is "Signposts," with the beacon of a lantern shining out into the night and back into the room, as reflected in the window. This image heads the section containing the articles on culture, politics, history, and statistics, most of which were cut from the second and third editions.

A POCKETFUL

OF CANADA

Figure 3. Endpapers designed by Laurence Hyde for *A Pocketful of Canada*.
Reproduction courtesy C. Gerson.

²⁴ Hyde's use of female figures coincides with Hugh MacLennan's analysis of Canada as feminine ("The Psychology of Canadian Nationalism," *Foreign*

FROM SEA TO SEA

AROUND THE YEAR

THE PATCHWORK QUILT

SIGN-POSTS

Figure 4. Chapter headings designed by Laurence Hyde for *A Pocketful of Canada*, 1946. Reproduction courtesy C. Gerson.

Hyde's decorative woodcuts complement the cultural ideology expressed through the volume's assemblage of selected texts. While Canada had opened its doors to waves of immigrants during the prosperous 1920s, their welcome was shaped by an attitude of Anglo-conformity. In the words of Irving Abella and Harold Troper, "When economic necessity dictated the admission of non-British and non-American immigrants, it was always in descending order of ethnic preference. Following British and American immigrants, preference was given to northern and then central Europeans. At the bottom were Jews, Orientals, and blacks."²⁵ In today's multicultural society, it is difficult to remember that before the 1960s, Canada conceived of itself as "a monocultural, monolingual, single-nation state and made no apologies for being so."²⁶ In this uniform cultural landscape, French Canada was regarded as a quaint region that supplied dramatic history and local colour. Anglo-conformity was expected of all immigrants, with "ethnic identification ... at best a transitional stage, a way station on the road from immigrant to true Canadian."²⁷ While the 1946 edition of *Pocketful* includes census tables that show that in 1941, some 20% of Canada's population claimed a heritage that was neither French nor British, the volume's contents scarcely hint at the presence of other cultures (or "races," in the idiom of the day).

Similar to the way its demographic outlook reflects the norms of its era, *Pocketful's* socio-political content should not be divorced from the context of the Cold War. In the writings of Watson Kirkconnell, for example, from the 1930s onward, the rhetoric of citizenship and democracy was used to promote anti-communism. Kirkconnell's much reprinted wartime booklet, *Canadians All: A Primer of Canadian National Unity* (1941), issued by the Director of Public Information under the authority of the Minister of National Services, talks of

Affairs 27 [1948/49]: 413-25) and fits with Jody Berland's discussion of the ways that the ongoing "feminization of Canada's literature and popular culture" serve to "render Canadian culture as closer to nature, aesthetically highbrow, non-violent, uncorrupted, committed to public good but powerless before the masculinized figures of (external) authority." Jody Berland, "Marginal Notes on Cultural Studies in Canada," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 64 (Fall 1995): 522-23.

25 Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982), 5.

26 R.J.F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000), 178.

27 H. Troper, "Multiculturalism," *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, ed. Paul Robert Magosci (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1999), 1001.

“two major conspiracies against civilization,” linking Nazism to “the Communist conspiracy.”²⁸ Richard Cavell has commented on the political context of the Massey Commission of 1949–51, suggesting that its promotion of culture “emerged out of, and in many ways was a response to, the climate of the Cold War.”²⁹ This analysis is supported by Massey’s *On Being Canadian* (1948), which tried to articulate the characteristics of a “Canadian type” while also alerting Canadians to the “Communist menace.”³⁰

Kirkconnell was too prominent to be omitted from *A Pocketful of Canada*; hence, it is significant that rather than selecting one of his familiar ideological statements, the editors preferred an entirely innocuous text – a comic poem, “The Merchant’s Tale,” written in the doggerel style of Robert Service and narrated by a trapper who claims to have survived a winter storm by bedding down in a den of hibernating bears. Notwithstanding the increasingly chilly climate of the Cold War, *Pocketful*’s implicit political stance, carefully leaning towards the CCF ethos of the Canadian left, can be discerned not only from its inclusions and exclusions, but also through the known affiliations of other contributors. Lawrence Hyde had done illustrations for *New Frontier* and other progressive periodicals of the 1930s. F.R. Scott’s poem, “Efficiency,” pulls no punches about the inadequacy of the capitalist system, whose failures also underscore poems by Anne Marriott, Leo Kennedy, and Frederick E. Laight.

While no records survive concerning the preparation of the original volume or the two paperback editions of *Pocketful*, the later removal of the introduction and preface suggests that after 1946 the book was no longer under the control of the originating committee, and the reduction of the non-literary sections further implies that the publisher regarded the book principally as a literary commodity. We do not know who decided to add Massey’s chapter to the edition of 1952, a gesture that may have had less to do with Cold War ideology than with a desire to honour the man whose appointment that year

28 Watson Kirkconnell, *Canadians All: A Primer of Canadian National Unity* (Ottawa: Director of Public Information, 1941), 14. In addition to being distributed in nearly 400,000 copies, its contents were broadcast over CBC radio. However, Kirkconnell’s political activity was subsequently curtailed, as he bitterly recalls in his memoirs, *A Slice of Canada* (Toronto: U of Toronto P for Acadia University, 1967), 176–79.

29 Richard Cavell, Introduction, *Love, Hate, and Fear in Canada’s Cold War* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2004), 5.

30 Vincent Massey, *On Being Canadian* (Toronto: Dent, 1948), 3, 23.

as the first Canadian-born Governor General marked an important step in the country's growing sense of maturity.

What, then, does the reader learn from *Pocketful's* literary content about "the Canadian way of life?" Assembling 135 works of poetry and prose by 102 different authors, the book bravely proclaimed that Canada possessed a substantial textual culture. This was very masculine – just 17 authors were women, who wrote 21 of the texts. Most selections were originally composed in English. Tory's Introduction noted that "much of Canada's story is written in the French language, in distinguished stories, essays, poems, and songs which cannot be translated without the loss of essential charm and effectiveness. A French-language companion piece ... remains to be produced to complete the picture";³¹ however no such volume ever appeared. In line with the notion that "charm" is one of its distinctive qualities, selections scattered throughout the volume depict French Canada as a community of contented religious and rural folk. Translated are Adjutor Rivard's sentimental salute to "The Cradle" (always occupied by God's latest little blessing), George Bouchard's mouth-watering description of "The Old Bake-Oven," and Louis Hémon's heroic account of "making land" from *Maria Chapdelaine*. Token tributes to the history of New France appear in selections from the journals of Cartier and Champlain, the former recounting the raising of the French cross at Gaspé in 1534, and the latter describing the founding of Quebec in 1608, along with a brief extract from the *Jesuit Relations* concerning the martyrdom of Father Daniel in 1648. Items about French Canada that were written in English include one folktale, two patois poems by William Henry Drummond, and Marjorie Pickthall's poem "Père Lament." The only French-Canadian public figures to appear in the book are ethnographer Marius Barbeau, whose scholarly account of "Crafts in Early French Canada" supports the nostalgic vision of the other selections, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who speaks for "Political Liberalism."

"Indians" are less in evidence than French Canadians, and are equally subjected to the stereotyping typical of mid-century anglophone Canada. They are first met in a tribute to the heroism of a young RCMP constable who in 1879 peacefully escorted a band of over 1000 "renegade Crees, Stoney, and Assiniboine Canadian

31 Tory, Introduction, *Pocketful*, vi.

Indians,”³² who had disregarded the Canada-United States border, from Montana to their designated reserve at Fort Battleford, Saskatchewan. Native writer Pauline Johnson, who was undoubtedly the most popular Canadian poet during the first half of the twentieth century,³³ is represented by a single small poem, “The Corn Husker.” While one of her best, it is overshadowed by three substantial poems about Aborigines by Duncan Campbell Scott. The reader learns a little more about First Nations culture from Barbeau’s explanation of totem poles and Charles Clay’s version of a Cree creation story. In the photo essay, a picture of “Trappers stretching muskrat skins to dry” offers no further identification of the two men, although they are clearly First Nations or Métis, as are some of the “Cowboys in the cookhouse of a ranch in British Columbia.”

Multicultural Canadians are even rarer, despite their statistical presence. Recent arrivals appear in Laura Goodman Salverson’s memoir of visiting Winnipeg’s immigrant sheds with her father, a cultivated Iclander. This selection posits a clear distinction between desirable literate Icelanders and animalistic “Doukhobors” in smelly sheepskin coats. Even more welcome were immigrants from Britain, as represented in Wilfrid Eggleston’s story “Through a Blizzard,” which celebrates a stalwart English lad who is determined not to allow adverse weather to impede his trek to the land agent’s office to register his claim to his chosen quarter-section of Saskatchewan prairie. Jews, on the other hand, are begrudged a single sonnet by A.M. Klein, less space than granted to most of his fellow poets who had shared the pages of the ground-breaking Modernist collection of 1936, *New Provinces: Poems of Several Authors*.³⁴

Although the reader sees few Indians, there are canoes aplenty – occupied by white men – from explorers Alexander Mackenzie and David Thompson to vacationers Ralph Connor and John D. Robins. In the literary selections, Canada is presented as rural, vast, and northern, with people engaged in threshing, sugar-making, barn-raising, square-dancing, fishing, playing hockey, and prospecting for gold. Towns and cities are sparse: urban Canada appears in two

32 L.C. Douthwaite, “The R.C.M.P. Provides an Escort,” *Pocketful*, 62.

33 Confirmed by Linda Quirk’s bibliographical study, “Skyward Floating Feather: A Publishing History of E. Pauline Johnson’s *Flint and Feather*,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada / Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* 44 (Spring 2006): 69-106.

34 While Robert Finch is also represented by a single poem, there are two by each of Leo Kennedy, F.R. Scott, and A.J.M. Smith, and four by E.J. Pratt.

of Earle Birney's poems about Vancouver, in Hugh MacLennan's account of the Halifax Explosion, in Leacock's invitation to Mariposa, and, quite unexpectedly, in an article from *Saturday Night* by Mary Lowrey Ross titled, "A Be-Kind-to-Toronto Week Might Do the Patient a Lot of Good." Morley Callaghan is represented by a story set in New York; Winnipeg and Montreal are both virtually absent.

Many aspects of the selections and their arrangement feel somewhat arbitrary – perhaps the inevitable fate of an ambitiously wide-ranging volume designed by a committee. There are surprisingly few children, but humour has not been forgotten, nor Canada's contribution to the two world wars. However, the only signs of armed conflict – or any violence – ever occurring on Canadian soil are situated far in the past, with the first edition's inclusion of two articles from the Treaty of Paris (1763) and the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817. The division of the literary contents into four major sections likewise seems rather capricious. Most consistent is "Around the Year," whose poems and essays follow the seasonal cycle.³⁵ Most random is "The Patchwork Quilt" where – likely in the interest of saving space at a time when paper remained scarce – Leo Kennedy's tersely Modernist poem, "Prophecy for Icarus," directly precedes Robert Service's "The Cremation of Sam McGee." This catch-all section concludes with the words and music to "O Canada," "The Maple Leaf [Forever]," and "Alouette" (en français). To quote A.J.M. Smith's review, "The shifts from the serious to the whimsical and from the first-rate to the mediocre make this the most irritating part of the book."³⁶

From a literary perspective, poetry fares better than prose, testifying to the greater stability of Canada's poetic canon. Other than a few long selections from deservedly forgotten versifiers, the editors' choices stand up surprisingly well both for earlier poets (Bliss Carman, W.W. Campbell, Isabella Valancy Crawford, Archibald Lampman, Charles G.D. Roberts, and Duncan Campbell Scott) and for those of the 1930s and 1940s. Well-represented are the Modernism of Robert Finch, E.J. Pratt, and A.J.M. Smith, and the political and artistic radicalism of Anne Marriott, F.R. Scott, and Dorothy Livesay.

In the midst of the crammed pages of text, the section of sharp-edged black-and-white photographs surrounded by wide,

35 This favoured way of presenting Canada can be found in collections ranging from Charles G.D. Roberts's *Songs of the Common Day* (1893) to R.E. Watters's *British Columbia: A Centennial Anthology* (1958).

36 A.J.M. Smith, rev. of *A Pocketful of Canada*, *Canadian Historical Review* 18 (June 1947): 216.

white margins provides respite to the eye. In contrast to the scattering of the woodcuts throughout the volume, the gathering of the photographs into one (unpaginated) section enhances their impact. Winnipeg – then recognized as Canada’s most multicultural city – remains invisible, but the absence of Montreal from the literary sections is compensated with three separate images of the city in the photographic essay prepared by Donald W. Buchanan, a major figure at both the NFB and the National Gallery of Canada. Indeed, much of the content of this visual section seems to have been selected to coordinate with the volume’s written texts. Some photos document work, cities, industry, and transportation, topics largely absent from the literary selections, while others complement specific poems, stories or essays. Invoking different genres, photos of two “Indian totem poles” from Kitwanga, British Columbia, and Emily Carr’s painting, *Blunden Harbour*, serve to illustrate Marius Barbeau’s account of “Indian Art and Myth in the Totem Poles,” while the opening images of schools, old and new (fig. 5), correlate with the selection from Nellie McClung’s *Clearing in the West*. Many of the photographs are arranged to create a progressivist perspective. For example, to represent the past, we see the historic church of Notre Dame de Bonsecours in Montreal; on the facing page, to represent the present, are the Supreme Court of Canada and grain elevators at Port Arthur. Work performed by healthy-looking men, buildings old and new, and technologies both traditional and advanced are recurring themes, along with transportation (by train, bus, airplane, boat, and dogsled) and landscape from coast to coast to coast. Also included are the fine arts, with examples of Canadian sculpture ranging from totem poles to the Vimy War Memorial, and paintings from Cornelius Krieghoff to Charles Comfort, including most members of the Group of Seven. In a splendidly prescient gesture towards two of our enduring national preoccupations, the final page of this section pairs hockey and politics under the heading, “National Events” (fig. 6).

This visual section reinforces the book’s optimistic conception of Canada as a prosperous and untroubled northland, replete with schools and libraries, symbolic monuments, model homes, sturdy workers (all male and mostly white), abundant harvests, varied landscapes, flourishing cities, and iconic art, all pristinely undamaged by war and clearly appealing both to Europeans seeking a fresh beginning and to the book-buying Canadian public. Unseen are the country’s women – presumably contentedly busy within “The schools we build” and

THE SCHOOLS WE BUILD

The old type of one-room schoolhouse
is still common in some rural districts.

Montreal Standard

Our newer schools are designed to serve both
as classrooms and as community centres.

*Suburban school near Toronto—Architect J. B. Parkini
Photo by Gordon W. Powley*

Figure 5. Opening page of “Canadian Vista” section (photographic layout
by Donald W. Buchanan), *A Pocketful of Canada*, 1946.
Reproduction courtesy C. Gerson.

A professional hockey
game, Maple Leaf
Gardens, Toronto
Alexander Studios

NATIONAL EVENTS

The budget debate in the House of Commons.

National Film Board

Figure 6. Closing page of “Canadian Vista” section, *A Pocketful of Canada*, 1946.
Reproduction courtesy C. Gerson.

"The homes we live in," to cite two of this section's captions – nor is there any whiff of strikes, slums, or proletarian culture.

Launched at the beginning of Canada Book Week early in November, 1946, *A Pocketful of Canada* was well received in the five reviews that I have located. These indicate that the book reflected the way most Canadians wanted to see themselves, generally concurring with Douglas Leechman's assessment of the volume as "a singularly sympathetic and competent piece of work."³⁷ Some reviewers in the general press quibbled about specific choices or exclusions: the Toronto *Globe and Mail* would have liked a few more "word portraits of national figures."³⁸ The Toronto *Star* opined that the book "might well find a place in the library or on the bedside table of every ... Canadian," while sniping at the absence of photos of Toronto.³⁹ Academic assessment was a little more measured. A.S.P. Woodhouse, head of the University College Department of English at the University of Toronto, declared that "There can be few more useful books on the Dominion, and none more attractive," despite some scholarly misgivings about the popular and humorous selections.⁴⁰ The strongest critique came from Modernist poet and literature professor A.J.M. Smith, who praised the photographic essay, but would have preferred fewer examples of "charming, quaint, and wholesome local colour," and greater attention to "a sterner and more critical realism." He would also have liked to see a more generous sampling of older writers, and occasion for "radicals like Gourlay, Mackenzie and Woodsworth to speak their piece."⁴¹ Smith notwithstanding, the book figured prominently in *Quill & Quire's* list of "Best Sellers of the Month" in December 1946 and February 1947,⁴² after which it ceased to be named.

Sixty years after the initial publication of *A Pocketful of Canada*, the book's ambition and accomplishment remain impressive, even if hindsight makes it tempting to critique its upholding of the social

37 Douglas Leechman, "Amongst the New Books," *Canadian Geographical Journal* 34 (Jan. 1947): vii.

38 "A Souvenir of Canada," *Globe and Mail* [Toronto], 2 Nov 1946: 10.

39 "'Pocketful of Canada' Garners Rich Treasures from Many Fields," *Toronto Star*, 2 Nov 1946: 9.

40 A.S.P. Woodhouse, "Letters in Canada: 1946," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 16 (Apr. 1947): 323-25.

41 Smith, *Canadian Historical Review* 18 (June 1947): 216-17.

42 "Best Sellers of the Month," *Quill & Quire* 12 (Dec. 1946): 3; "Best Sellers of the Month," *Quill & Quire* 13 (Feb. 1947): 3.

norms of its day. Following the devastation of the Second World War, the editors of this small volume responded to Lawren Harris's call to create a Canadian "unity of spirit" through a program of "Reconstruction through the Arts"⁴³ by deploying the genres of print, art, and photography, as well as the new pocket book format, to make an enduring and accessible collective claim about the value of Canada's distinctive national and artistic culture. This ideology would become increasingly familiar through the work of the Massey Commission of 1949-51, whose report would further proclaim the significance of higher culture as a defining feature of Canadian identity. Although anthologies of Canadian writing would burgeon in the post-war decades,⁴⁴ no subsequent volume would attempt to capture so much of the nation in so small a space.

SOMMAIRE

Publié en 1946 par le Conseil canadien pour l'avancement de l'éducation et du civisme et reproduit sous forme d'édition bon marché en 1948 et 1952, le recueil *A Pocketful of Canada*, réunissant des documents littéraires, historiques et visuels, a été conçu en vue « d'attirer l'attention du monde sur le mode de vie des Canadiens ». À cela s'ajoutent des gravures sur bois de fil (exécutées par Lawrence Hyde) et des photographies documentaires accompagnées d'un large éventail de textes littéraires et didactiques appropriés. L'étude de la publication de cette monographie, de sa diffusion et de sa réception critique de même que l'analyse de son contenu, ouvre une fenêtre sur une période cruciale et fascinante de l'histoire culturelle canadienne étant donné que les idéologies de l'après-guerre, celles-là mêmes qui consacreront l'importance de la Commission Massey, ont eu une incidence sur cet ouvrage.

43 Lawren Harris, "Reconstruction Through the Arts," *Canadian Art* (June-July 1944); rpt in *A Pocketful of Canada* (1946), 357.

44 See Robert Lecker, *English-Canadian Literary Anthologies: An Enumerative Bibliography* (Teeswater, Ont.: Reference Press, 1997).