

# The Gryphon



The Newsletter of the Friends of the  
Osborne and Lillian H. Smith Collections

Spring 2022



## FROM THE CHAIR

The first half of 2022 is action-packed for the Friends of the Osborne.

In January, our Zoom bookseller panel offered an inspiring and thought-provoking conversation. “Going Forward: How children’s booksellers survived and thrived during the pandemic and their vision for the post-Covid future” drew nearly 90 registrants to hear booksellers Eleanor LeFave, Heather Kuipers, Itah Sadu, and Shelley Macbeth, ably moderated by book wholesaler Maria Martella. If you missed this wonderful conversation, you can access it here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1npHkJRzhyKKnjEPQplGrl7Dcxwkt49BC/view> or through the Friends website.

The postponement of last fall’s Sybille Pantazzi lecture was disappointing for all. We and our speaker, Roy Henry Vickers, were delighted that we were able to reschedule for Thursday, February 10. You can hear Roy’s profoundly moving talk here: <https://www.crowdcast.io/e/the-art-of-storytelling-3/register>.

Jeffrey Canton, the *Globe and Mail* children’s book reviewer, will give the 2022 Albert & Clara Lahmer Lecture on Thursday, March 24, at 7:00 p.m. A storyteller, bookseller, and former York University lecturer in children’s

literature, Jeffrey will take a look at “other voices” in the history of Canadian children’s books.

It promises to be a fascinating evening. Details and the Crowdcast link can be found on page 2.

Last year, our virtual AGM and tour (on Zoom) was a wonderful opportunity to see members from Japan, the US, and Canada. We welcome you to join us on Wednesday, May 18, at 4:00 p.m.,

for the 2022 AGM, which will include a tour of new acquisitions by Services Specialist Jennifer Yan.

Virtual lectures and meetings have proved a wonderful opportunity to bring together members and children’s book enthusiasts from across Canada and around the world. We are delighted that so many of you attended Kathy Stinson’s beautiful Stubbs lecture “The Reader I Was, the Writer I

## Welcome to the Osborne Collection!

The Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books has four main areas of concentration. The Osborne Collection itself contains literature published before 1910. The Lillian H. Smith Collection comprises books of literary and artistic merit published in English from 1910 onward. The Canadiana Collection is a selection of 19th- and 20th-century children’s books in English, related to Canada, or whose authors, illustrators, or publishers are associated with Canada. The Jean Thomson Collection of Original Art has over 5,000 original illustrations for children’s books in watercolour, pen-and-ink, woodcut, and many other media.

**As part of the Toronto Public Library system, the Collection is open to all.**

[facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Osborne-Collection-of-Early-Childrens-Books-177552168943174/](https://facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Osborne-Collection-of-Early-Childrens-Books-177552168943174/) \* [osbornecollection.ca](http://osbornecollection.ca)  
[www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/osborne/](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/osborne/)

Email the Friends at: [FriendsOsborne@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsOsborne@gmail.com)

Lillian H. Smith Branch/ Toronto Public Library, 239 College Street, Toronto, ON, M5T 1R5, 416-393-7753. See the website for hours.

**See page 16 for membership and donation details.**

Am,” on November 11 or during the following week. We do look forward to being able to gather in person for certain events, but it has been a delight to see such widespread participation.

We had a glitch in the mailing of some of the print copies for the fall issue of *The Gryphon*; our

apologies if you received yours late. And please let us know if your copy never arrived.

Thank you to all who have renewed and to new members; your generosity and support are much appreciated. Thank you to Maggie Knaus, our Outreach co-chair for pulling together the bookseller

panel with the assistance of Emma Hunter.

Finally, a big hand for the Osborne staff for all their hard work during these past months and in the months to come.

—Gillian O’Reilly

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**18th Annual Albert & Clara Lahmer Memorial Lecture**  
**Thursday, March 24, 7:00 p.m.**  
<https://www.crowdcast.io/e/early-voices-own-voices/register>

**Jeffrey Canton: Early Voices, Own Voices, Changing Voices: Canadian Children’s Literature from 1968 to 1990**



Photo by Don Lloyd

Jeffrey Canton, storyteller, academic, and *Globe and Mail* children’s book reviewer, looks at publishing

in the early years of the children’s book renaissance that began with Canada’s centennial celebrations. Independent Canadian publishers began to spring up, ones that were quite different from the tiny handful of independents that had existed prior to 1967. And they had a very different vision of Canada that they wanted to share with young readers. What were those visions? What voices found their way into print? What happened as the industry grew?

**15th Annual Sybille Pantazzi Memorial Lecture**  
**Thursday, October 6, 2:30 EST (7:30 in the UK, BST)**

**Chris Riddell**



Chris Riddell was the 2015–2017 UK Children’s Laureate. He is an artist, writer, political cartoonist,

and a three-time winner of the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal for his illustrations. Author/illustrator of over forty books, he has illustrated many more, including series with

Paul Stewart, and works by authors such as Lewis Carroll, Kathryn Cage, Jonathan Swift, Neil Gaiman, and Kevin Crossley-Holland (*Arthur: The Always King*, 2021). Registration information will be posted on the Friends website when available and published in the fall issue of *The Gryphon*.



**34th Helen E. Stubbs Memorial Lecture**

More information will be posted on our website as soon as details are confirmed and will also be included in the fall 2022 issue of *The Gryphon*.

## Join Us!

### Friends AGM and Members’ Virtual Tour

Wednesday, May 18, 2022, 4:00 p.m. EDT

Join us on Zoom for our second virtual AGM and members-only tour of new acquisitions. Registration information will be sent in early May and will be posted on our website and Facebook page.

If you do not have email, but would like to attend by phone, please leave your name and number with Osborne staff (416-393-7753) and one of the Friends will contact you with the information you’ll need.

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## EXHIBITIONS

### On Now

#### Meddling Kids: A Children's Mystery Book Exhibit

January 31–April 16



Uncover the secrets of children's mystery and detective stories at the Osborne. From the famous Sherlock Holmes to elementary school amateurs, this exhibit explores the development of children's mystery fiction from the 19th century to the present day. Encounter old favourites

like Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys alongside newer children's mystery fiction. Free. All are welcome. Osborne Collection, 4th floor, Lillian H. Smith Branch.

### Late Spring/Summer

#### All At Sea: Pirates, Merfolk and Sea Creatures in Children's Books

May 2–July 16

Set out on a high seas adventure at the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books! From shipwrecks to sea serpents, this exhibit explores all things oceanic in children's books from the 19th century to the present. Encounter classics like *The Little Mermaid* and *Treasure Island*, alongside newer books. Free. All are welcome. Osborne Collection, 4th floor, Lillian H. Smith Branch.

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## FROM THE COLLECTION

At the time of writing, there are two days remaining in November and the snow has descended upon Toronto, not waiting for December to make its appearance. These last two months of the Gregorian calendar include many celebrations from across many cultures, many with their own diverse methods of timekeeping and types of calendars. However one marks the days and years, and despite all of the woes of the pandemic, gathering and celebrations are top of mind for many at this time.

The Osborne Collection typically sees an increase in the number of visits around the holidays, especially with children being off from school and parents looking for a fun and educational diversion. Our visitors have no further to look than the wonderful displays across special collections. The current exhibit, *Wait! There Is More* is an amusing and nostalgic exhibit featuring books that are part of a series. Old favourites are mingled with new and lesser-known titles, and original artworks can be enjoyed throughout. After reopening to the public, staff have been working to establish a more routine schedule again, offering the expected four shows per year, and giving the public something wonderful to look forward to and enjoy.

Although the Pantazzi lecture was rescheduled to early 2022, the Stubbs lecture

on November 26, 2021, featuring guest speaker Kathy Stinson, was a remarkable success. There were 114 live viewers at the time of the broadcast, and 47 replay views during the following week. Delivered virtually via the Crowdcast platform, this lecture marks the second in Osborne's history to be delivered online. Services Specialist Jennifer and Librarian Myrna worked together to facilitate a smooth and seamless experience for viewers, synchronizing the abundance of visual materials that Kathy used to accompany her lecture, and managing to get as many viewer questions answered as possible. The rescheduled Pantazzi lecture, which was to take place on the same day as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30, 2021, instead took place on Thursday, February 10, 2022, online once again, with guest speaker Roy Henry Vickers.

We eagerly await the reinstatement of further services, including in-person programs, and in the meantime we continue to plan and mount exhibits, provide the excellent customer service upon which our customers depend, and create as many virtual experiences as possible to keep everyone informed and engaged.

—Sephora Henderson



From *Snow Flakes and the Stories They Told the Children* by Matilda Betham-Edwards. Illus. Hablot Knight Browne. 1863.

# ALICE IN TORONTO: THE ADVENTURES OF CHESHIRE CAT PRESS AND LEWIS CARROLL'S *ALICE*

## Part 1: George A. Walker Wood Engraving Blocks



1980: Sometime in George's first year studying printmaking at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto one of his teachers, Bill Poole, approached him with an idea for a project. Poole had always wanted to produce the first fully Canadian edition of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Poole's friend Joseph Brabant was an avid Carroll collector, student of Carrollinia, and a respected member of the North American and UK Lewis Carroll Societies. Bill was an avid printer and established designer who housed his press in a relocated fruit barn on his property atop the cliffs in Grimsby. What they needed now was an illustrator and Bill recognized George would fit the bill perfectly. George, who was just turning twenty in 1980, was already proving himself to be a disciplined and careful printmaker with a characteristic that would be an added bonus suited to the Wonderland tale: a mad sense of humour.

By the time George and I married in December of 1984 *Alice* was a constant in our lives. George would chip away in his printshop in the basement of our apartment on Columbus Avenue, beside his Vandercook SP15 Proof Press, working on the blocks he would present to Bill and Joe at their monthly lunch meetings at a fancy restaurant. They wouldn't finish the book until 1988 so it was a labour of eight years for George to complete the blocks and for Bill to set the text by hand.

A word now about printing, which will make clearer to you the difficulty of carving wood engravings. The finished image you see of the printed block is backwards from the block itself. George draws his image and then transfers it backwards to the surface of the



endgrain of his woodblock, usually maple. Then he uses the tools of the silversmith to delicately gouge out the areas he wants to not print. The process is called white line and the part that does print is left alone (not carved away, such that the ink will stick to it) by the engraver, while a black line is made by cutting away so that a white line is left on either side of the dark line. George essentially taught himself wood engraving during the project. You can see how the engravings at the beginning are small and tentative, and then more complex images develop as George became a confident engraver.

Cheshire Cat Press was founded in 1979–80 by Bill Poole, Joseph Brabant, and George A. Walker, to publish Carroll-related publications. When Mr. Brabant discovered he was ill with cancer (1998) he asked friend and fellow Lewis Carroll Society member Andy Malcolm to assist. CCP was on hiatus for many years during which time (2001) we lost Bill Poole. The two remaining members, Malcolm and Walker, started the press again in 2015.

—Michelle Hogan-Walker



This article is the first in a series about the George A. Walker woodblocks held in the Collection. Read the fall 2022 issue of *The Gryphon* for part 2.

## CHILDREN'S NATURAL HISTORY BOOKS ABOUT BIRDS

As a recently retired Services Specialist at the Osborne Collection, I devote much of my time (somewhat obsessively, I admit) to my preferred leisure activity of birding. When not observing birds in the field, I love reading about them. Lately I've been delighted to spend time reviewing the subject of birds in children's natural history books held at Osborne. This article presents a brief selection of favourite titles, published from 1658 to 2014.

### Comenius: *Orbis sensualium pictus*



Joh. Amos Comenii. *Orbis sensualium pictus: hoc est omnium principalium in mundo rerum.../Joh. Amos Comenius's Visible world, or, A nomenclature, and pictures, of all the chief things that are in the world...* Trans. Charles Hoole. London: Printed for S. Leacroft, MDCCLXXVII [1777].

Osborne's earliest children's book to contain significant natural history content is *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* by Moravian pastor and educator John Amos Comenius (1592–1670). Originally published in German with Latin in 1658, it was translated into English with Latin in 1659.

Often credited as “the first picture book for children,” it contains a pictorial alphabet based on animal noises and other sounds (for example, the letter A is represented by a crow, as “The Crow crieth à à à”), followed by 151 chapters on a wide range of subjects. Each chapter contains a woodcut image, dual-language vocabulary, and descriptive text.

Of the seventeen chapters devoted to wild and domestic animals, six feature birds. Chapter 21, “Living-Creatures: and First, Birds,” presents a “King's Fisher.”

This image shows the kingfisher “making her Nest in the Sea.” The belief that kingfishers nest on the open ocean derives from the Greek myth of Alcyone and Ceyx, who are transformed by the gods into kingfishers, or “halcyons.” Ovid writes in *Metamorphoses*, Book XI, that Aeolus, God of Winds, calms the seas for a brief period each winter, to permit Alcyone to brood on her floating nest (this, incidentally, being the origin of the expression “halcyon days”). In reality, most kingfisher species nest in holes tunnelled into banks of earth.

One wonders why Comenius accords the kingfisher first place in his section on birds. Perhaps he was motivated by the “royal” status implied by its name, as he similarly begins his section on mammals

with “Lyon, King of four-footed Beasts.” Subsequent bird-themed chapters are titled: “Tame Fowls,” “Singing-Birds,” “Birds that Haunt the Fields and Woods,” “Ravenous Birds” (i.e., birds of prey, or raptors), and “Water-Fowl.” While Comenius presents mainly European species, he does include some exotics—ostrich, bird of paradise, and “party colour'd parret.”

This illustration is taken from the 12th edition (1777). Osborne also holds a 1672 English/Latin edition of this work.

Editor's note: Please see Myrna Scully-Ashton's “Amazing Abecedariums” on page 14 for additional commentary on *Orbis Pictus*.

### Thomas Boreman: *A description of three hundred animals*



Boreman, Thomas. *A description of three hundred animals: viz. beasts, birds, fishes, serpents, and insects: with a particular account of the manner of their catching whales in Greenland: extracted from the best authors, and adapted to the use of all capacities.* London: Printed for J.F. and C. Rivington; B. Law; G.G.J. and J. Robinson; T. Carnan; R. Baldwin; and E. Newbery, M. DCC. LXXXVI [1786].

Thomas Boreman was a London bookseller and publisher active from about 1730 to 1743. As one of the first English publishers to specialize in children's books, his innovative

techniques influenced later practitioners such as John Newbery. He is well-known for his *Gigantick Histories*, a series of ten miniature books for children, published between 1740 and 1743.

*A Description of Three Hundred Animals* (London: Richard Ware, Thomas Boreman and Thomas Game, 1730) was Boreman's first book for children. Osborne is fortunate to hold a first edition of this title.

Boreman subscribed to English philosopher John Locke's belief that education is most effective when combined with entertainment (*Locke. Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 1693). In his “Note to the Reader,” Boreman writes of his intention to engage the attention of children with “short descriptions of Animals, and Pictures fairly drawn (which last Experience shews them to be much delighted with).”

The arrangement pairs descriptions of beasts, birds, fishes, serpents, and insects with copper-engraved illustrations. One hundred and thirteen birds are represented. Reproduced here is page 121, showing the Virginia nightingale (an early name for the northern cardinal), the blackcap warbler, and the hummingbird.

Boreman does a great job in describing the iridescence of the hummingbird's feathers (the actual word "iridescent" had not yet entered the English language): "Its Colour is wonderfully resplendent; so that it cannot be well represented by any Painter; for with a green, such as is seen in the Necks of Peacocks, a golden flame colour, and yellow, are strangely mixt; so that being exposed to the Sun beams it shines admirably."

In compiling *A Description of Three Hundred Animals*, Boreman drew heavily on Edward Topsell's *The History of Four-Footed Beasts*, which was first published in 1607, and reprinted in 1658. (Toronto Public Library's Baillie Special Collections Centre has a copy of the 1658 reprint.) Following Topsell, and echoing the tradition of medieval bestiaries, he includes fantastic creatures—dragon, unicorn, lamia, manticore, allocamelus, and cockatrice. His main source for birds was *The Ornithology of Francis Willughby* by John Rae, which was first published in 1676.

*A Description of Three Hundred Animals* went into multiple editions during the 18th century and Boreman published two supplements: *A Description of a Great Variety of Animals and Vegetables* in 1736, and *A Description of Some Curious and Uncommon Creatures: Omitted in the Description of Three Hundred Animals* in 1739. Osborne has a 1744 edition of the first supplement, published by Richard Ware, and a first edition of the second, published by Richard Ware and Thomas Boreman.

As can be seen, the engravings leave much to be desired in terms of accuracy—a common characteristic of early animal books whose illustrators had little or no access to live or prepared specimens, and generally copied or extrapolated from earlier works.

## Charlotte Smith: A natural history of birds



Smith, Charlotte. *A natural history of birds*: Intended chiefly for young persons. London: John Arliss, 1819.

Charlotte Smith (1749–1806) was by all accounts a fascinating woman. A highly regarded English novelist and poet, she was a passionate abolitionist, and an early feminist who left her abusive husband to support her family of ten children through writing. Towards the end of her life, she published five children's books. *A Natural History of Birds* was released posthumously in 1807. This is the second edition (1819). Following the taxonomy

of Carl Linnaeus, Smith presents six orders of birds in a series of letters addressed to children. For each species or group she provides information on appearance, diet, and behaviour, followed by excerpts from myth, history, fable, and poetry.

## Thomas Bewick: *The new lottery book of birds and beasts*



*The new lottery book of birds and beasts, for children to learn their letters by as soon as they can speak.* [Illustrated by Thomas Bewick.] Newcastle: Thomas Saint, 1771. (Gift of Mr. F. A. Warren)

Thomas Bewick (1753–1828) was a major figure in the history of English book illustration who transformed the art of wood engraving in the 18th and 19th centuries. He grew up on a farm in northern England where he developed a life-long love of nature. Two of his best-known works, *A General History of Quadrupeds* (1790) and *A History of British Birds* (issued in two volumes in 1797 and 1804), were motivated in part by his desire to improve upon the inadequate illustrations in Boreman's *A Description of Three Hundred Animals*.

Bewick's first animal engravings were published in 1771, when he was just eighteen years old. *The New Lottery Book of Birds and Beasts, for Children to Learn their Letters by as Soon as They Can Speak* is attractively bound in Dutch flowery paper, with forty-eight woodcuts on twenty-four leaves. This charming primer displays a much higher standard of artistry than most woodcut-illustrated children's books of the period. Each leaf bears a picture of a bird and a beast, with the corresponding letter of the alphabet on the facing page. Like Boreman, Bewick includes a few mythical creatures, such as the phoenix and the unicorn.

## Darton's alphabet of birds



*Darton's alphabet of birds.* Illustrated by Harrison Weir. London: [Darton, 1866]. (Gift of Jane Dobell)

Osborne holds numerous examples of animal-themed alphabet books for children. This handsome Victorian-era toy book (toy books were an early form of today's picture books for children, characterized by their large format and emphasis on illustration) contains twenty-four engravings of birds,

each with a decorative letter boldly printed in red, and four lines of descriptive verse. Harrison Weir (1824–1906) was a leading illustrator in Victorian England, best known for his depictions of animals. He was also a cat fancier and animal rights advocate. Osborne holds a first edition of this title as well, published by Darton & Co. in 1858.

## Eric Daglish: *The larger birds*



Daglish, Eric Fitch. *The Larger Birds*. London and Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1928.

A series of books I have long admired at Osborne is *Animals in Black and White* by Eric Fitch Daglish (1892–1966). Daglish was a British engraver, author, and naturalist. *Animals in Black and White* consists of six titles: *The Larger Birds*, *The Smaller Birds*, *The Larger*

*Beasts*, *The Smaller Beasts*, *Fishes and Sea Animals*, and *Reptiles*. Osborne holds five of the six. Shown here is a striking engraving of the lesser spotted woodpecker from *The Larger Birds*. In his introduction, Daglish writes, “If beasts are the most intelligent, birds are the most attractive of all animals.” I strongly concur!

## Mary and Conrad Buff: *Elf owl*



Buff, Mary and Conrad. *Elf Owl*. New York: The Viking Press, 1958.

This is one of my favourite mid-century children’s books about birds. Unlike other titles mentioned in this article, it focuses on a single species—a pair of tiny elf owls nesting in a giant saguaro tree in the American Southwest. Notable for its close observation of Sonoran desert ecology and its lack of anthropomorphism, this book’s gentle sepia-toned illustrations are a perfect

complement to the rhythmic text. The elf owl is the smallest owl in the world. It measures roughly 12.5 to 14.5 centimeters long—about the size of a sparrow. Definitely a bucket-list bird for me! Sadly, elf owl populations are threatened or endangered in much of their range. Americans Mary and Conrad Buff wrote and illustrated fourteen children’s books between 1937 and 1968, many of which are nature-themed. Osborne holds five additional titles by this author/illustrator team.

## Mia Pelletier: *A children’s guide to Arctic birds*



Pelletier, Mia. *A children’s guide to Arctic birds*. Illustrated by Danny Christopher. Iqaluit and Toronto: Inhabit Media, 2014.

Inhabit Media is an Inuit-owned publishing company based in Iqaluit. The company was founded in 2006 to promote and preserve the knowledge and stories of Inuit and non-Inuit Arctic residents. Mia Pelletier is an

ecologist who works with Arctic seabirds and cooperates with Inuit communities on the management of protected areas. Danny Christopher is an artist and cofounder of Inhabit Media. This book offers a unique northern perspective on twelve species that migrate to the Arctic to breed, or live there year-round, providing information on where to find them, what they eat, how they sound, nests, eggs, chicks, and other “feathered facts.” Inuktitut names are included, for example “Ukpigjuaq” for snowy owl. The bright watercolour illustrations show each bird in its Arctic habitat.

These eight titles are just a tiny sampling of the riches contained in Osborne’s outstanding natural history collection. There are many more items to fascinate, instruct, and entertain birders, nature lovers, researchers, and anyone with an interest in historical or modern children’s literature. In addition to books, Osborne holds nature-themed board games, toys, and stunning original art. I hope you have the opportunity to visit the Collection in person, or to view the library’s digital archive at <https://digitalarchive.tpl.ca/>, where many of Osborne’s pre-1910 materials are available as downloadable pdfs.

—Martha Scott

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## A DONOR’S STORY: SYLVIA MCPHEE

December 1960, Moscow. Teacher Sylvia McPhee was visiting her sister, a Canadian diplomat, and had an opportunity to tour a Russian school, Elementary School No. 35. Sylvia notes it was “just a regular school,” not one of the show schools the USSR might usually take visitors through during the Cold War.

The principal was so pleased with their visit that she invited them back for the arrival of Ded Moroz (Grampa Frost, the equivalent of Father Christmas) and



Snegurochka (his granddaughter assistant, the Snow Maiden). At that event, Sylvia received an English-language copy of *The Humpbacked Horse*, a classic Russian folktale in verse by Petr Pavlovch Ershov. This edition is illustrated by N. Kochergin.

In 2014 Sylvia donated this copy to the Osborne along with a little rocking horse, also from Russia, a later present to Sylvia from her sister.

—Gillian O’Reilly

## NOTABLE ACQUISITIONS

The Osborne Collection has made four exciting new acquisitions.

### 1. An artist's edition of *The Ultimate Safari* by Nadine Gordimer (Johannesburg, South Africa: the Artists' Press, 2001)



Gordimer won the 1991 Nobel Prize for Literature for her integration of writing with activism against apartheid and racial oppression in South Africa. Despite a number

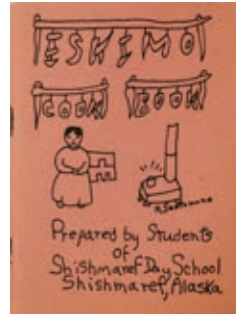
of Gordimer's works having been banned in South Africa, she continued to live and work there until her death in 2014.

Gordimer was respected for her first-hand knowledge of the issues refugees faced trekking through Kruger National Park, gained through her involvement in an earlier research assignment with the BBC. These insights inspired her to write *The Ultimate Safari*, the story of a girl escaping the Renamo Forces in Mozambique and making the journey toward a safer and brighter future by travelling through the Kruger National Park. Although the story is fictional, Gordimer's extensive knowledge of the area allows her to provide readers with a realistic perspective on displacement, immigration, xenophobia, and trauma as experienced by refugees.

Originally published in 1991, *The Ultimate Safari* was republished in 2001. Mark Attwood of the Artists' Press had recently read the work, and director Tamar Mason had been researching refugees' experiences in the Kruger National Park.

This edition includes illustrations by survivors whose experiences are similar to that of the central character. Aletah Masuku, Alsetah Manthosi, and Dorah Ngomane are seasonal labourers who felt that sharing their personal journeys through the medium of illustration would bring greater awareness to the issues. This artist's edition is one of only one hundred copies, inscribed by Gordimer and by each artist on their respective artworks. Short biographies of each illustrator, including their accounts of their journeys, are included.

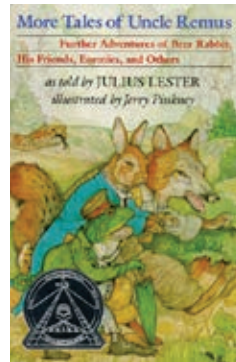
### 2. *The Eskimo Cook Book* (Anchorage, Alaska: Crippled Children's Association, 1952) by the Students of Shishmaref Day School



This is the first edition of a series of books that were sold in a successful long-running fundraiser benefitting the Alaska Crippled Children's Association. The association adopted a new name in 1998, and is now called the Alaska Center for Children and Adults (ACCA).

The cookbook is full of Alaskan community recipes written and illustrated by the students. The students were credited for their illustrations and recipes. Many of the recipes are comically brief, clearly written from the point of view of a child. For example, Marion Olanna's Frozen Flounders recipe: "After the flounders are caught, let them freeze. Eat as much as you want of it."

### 3. "Rabbit Makes a Monkey of Lion" from *More Tales of Uncle Remus* (New York: Dial Books, 1987), art by Jerry Pinkney



The Osborne has recently purchased an original watercolour by Jerry Pinkney, for the Jean Thompson Collection of Original Art. A signed original watercolour for a spread (two facing pages), this illustration features the character Brer Rabbit coming out of his tree-trunk home, talking to a bird sitting on a branch in a forest setting.

Pinkney has described the importance of Brer Rabbit thus: "Working on both the Uncle Remus tales and John Henry has shown me an important link between pivotal and opposite African American folk heroes. Brer Rabbit, the sly trickster, originated during slavery and was the first African American folk hero. Slaves who wanted to get the better of their masters needed to be cunning and sly—hence the trickster role."

Sadly, Pinkney passed away in 2021, but his works have continued to bring to light the importance of stories and characters like Brer Rabbit. Pinkney used his platform as an illustrator of children's books to celebrate African American themes. Some highlights from



Pinkney's career include five Caldecott Honor Medals, five Coretta Scott King Awards, five Coretta Scott King Honors, and the 2016 Coretta Scott King–Virginia Hamilton Lifetime Achievement award.

#### 4. Seven serigraph prints by Roy Henry Vickers

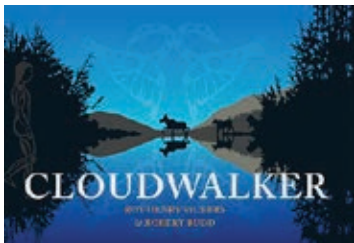


We are thrilled to have acquired seven limited edition serigraph prints from our 14th Annual Sybille Pantazzi lecture presenter, Roy Henry Vickers. Vickers is a

prolific and multitalented artist who works in a number of media, including as a carver, painter, and printmaker. He is also a publisher, author, storyteller, a recognized leader within the Indigenous community, and an advocate and spokesperson for recovery from addictions and abuse. Vickers's efforts have garnered him accolades for his contributions to Canadian society and culture: the Order of British Columbia, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from York University, and the Order of Canada.

The serigraphs are from Roy Henry Vickers and Robert Budd's Northwest Coast Legends series. Three of them, "**Raven Skin on Weget**," "**Raven in Tree**," and "**Storyteller**," are prints selected from the first title of the series, *Raven Brings the Light* (Madeira Park, British Columbia: Harbour Publishing, 2013). The story begins with a boy named Weget who is destined to bring light into the dark land. Weget can change into a raven by wearing raven skin, as brought to life in "Raven Skin on Weget." In "Raven in Tree" observes the best way to bring light.

In "Storyteller," Vickers celebrates the importance of storytelling, with gratitude to Chester Bolton, Chief of the Ravens, from the village of Kitkatla.



The fourth serigraph is from the second title in the Northwest Coast Legends series, *Cloudwalker* (Madeira Park, British Columbia: Harbour Publishing,

2014). This title shares the story of Astace, a Gitxsan hunter who is carried away into the clouds by a group

of swans he had attempted to catch. While in the clouds, he grows weak and starts to spill water from the cedar box he is carrying. When he returns to earth, he discovers new lakes and rivers that were never there before. The print "**Swim for Swans**" was selected from *Cloudwalker*. It depicts Astace swimming in the lake underneath a group of swans, before they take him into the clouds.



*Orca Chief* (Madeira Park, British Columbia: Harbour Publishing, 2015) is the third release from the Northwest Coast Legends series. In it, an Orca Chief is upset

with hunters who failed to uphold the balance of the ocean's resources by not using sustainable harvesting methods. Two prints were purchased, "**Orca Breach**," in which the orcas celebrate by jumping above the sea waters after the hunters have listened to the Orca Chief's instructions, and "**Bubble Net**," in which two humpback whales swim in a circle formation, blowing bubbles to force a school of herring to gather around, making it easier for the family of humpbacks to feed.



*Peace Dancer* (Madeira Park, British Columbia: Harbour Publishing, 2016) is the fourth title within the series and shares the story of the children from the

Tsimshian village of Kitkatla who capture and mistreat a crow after a game of playing hunters. The Chief of the Heavens, upset by the crow's mistreatment, showers the village with a storm, until the people promise to change. A valuable lesson is learned, and a promise is made to pass on the story of the flood along with a Peace Dancer performance to be held at every potlach. The print "**Prayers**" was selected for the Collection; it captures the moment when the people of the village are sitting in a boat, seeking refuge from the storm and praying to the Chief of the Heavens.

—Jennifer Yan and Sephora Henderson

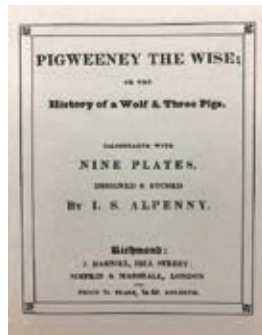
## MEMORIALS

**We mourn the passing of:**

**Jean Laundry**  
**John B. Lawson**  
**Colin McGregor**  
**Joyce Sowby**



### **Joanne Schott: One of a Kind, a Treasure**



The Toronto Public Library community has lost one of its unsung heroes. Joanne Schott, the former Children's Literature Specialist at Boys and Girls House, died in September 2021.

Joanne began working at the Toronto Public Library in the 1970s. First she was assigned to the Parkdale Library under the leadership of the legendary Rita Cox. Not long after, Joanne became the Children's Literature Specialist at Boys and Girls House, the first Toronto public library exclusively for children. In her position as Children's Literature Specialist, Joanne chaired the Boys and Girls Book Selection Committee of TPL. In other words, she shaped the children's book collection for the city of Toronto. Most of us don't think of the big picture. But imagine, Joanne Schott directly influenced the reading habits of the children of Toronto for decades. And Joanne wanted only the best for the children; she led the B&G Book Selection Committee wisely and with her own brand of wry humour. She offered practical, historical, and philosophical insights. To sit on the committee with Joanne was to receive a graduate education in children's literature.

If you ask people who knew and worked with Joanne to describe her, a few words consistently come

up: unassuming, self-effacing, modest, knowledgeable, brilliant, witty, mischievous. She was all of these and more: she was unselfish with her time and knowledge of children's literature.

Joanne did have an unassuming presence. She had a very deliberate way of speaking, neither too fast nor too slow, but just right. Underneath her dry and professorial tone was a lilt of something else: Mischief? She used an economy of words, her insights were piercing, but delivered with kindness and care. Behind her trifocals, her grey-blue eyes never judged and often sparkled. Those of us who knew Joanne well relished her witty and on-point observations.

At Boys and Girls House, Joanne's expansive book knowledge was legendary and much sought after. Other children's librarians, writers, storytellers, teachers, and students of the literature visited B&G House to avail themselves of Joanne's unique service. She had an uncanny ability to find a book even with little information about it. And she was always available to children and their parents and ready to give a book recommendation.

Becoming a public librarian was a second career for Joanne. She was born in Sacramento, California, on May 9, 1933. The only child of a barkeeper and his wife, Joanne had an active imagination. She attended high school in the city and went on to attend Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles. She majored in physical sciences, particularly chemistry, and mathematics. After graduating in 1956, Joanne taught high school in LA. Married in 1958, Joanne and her husband, Bill Graham, moved to Toronto in 1960 so that Bill could study for his PhD at the University of Toronto. Eventually Joanne went back to school and graduated from the University of Toronto Faculty of Library Science in 1970.

Joanne had four children. Her household was chock full of books and reading. Her favourite books were the Moomintroll series by Tove Jansson. The entire Graham family loved them too. The children played for hours in their own imagined Moominland, no doubt with their mother's approval.

Beyond the public library, the Book Selection Committee, and her home, Joanne influenced the community at large. She wrote a regular column, called "International Bookshelf," for *Quill & Quire* in the early 1990s.

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As the Children's Literature Specialist at Boys and Girls House, Joanne influenced the burgeoning Canadian children's literature community. Peter Carver, reflecting on her influence on his own career first at the Canadian Children's Book Centre, later as a teacher of aspiring writers, then as editor at Red Deer Press, remembers that while he was working at the CCBC, he asked Joanne what books he should read from around the world. Joanne asked: "What do you want, popular books, or do you want literature?" Peter says, "The conversations we had were seminal, and vital to me."

Peter continues: "How many other individuals did Joanne imbue with knowledge of children's literature from around the world? We'll never know, because librarians aren't in the business of keeping track of the hundreds—maybe thousands—of individuals they encounter over the years. There isn't time for them to chart where the knowledge they offer ends up, and how it affects those who learn and grow and enrich others with that knowledge. But we do know that there is immense value to the quiet contributions of people like Joanne Schott, super librarians who share their knowledge so generously. We are all in her debt. Thank you, Joanne."

Those of us whom Joanne nurtured, mentored, and laughed with can only add, "Thank you, Joanne Schott. You are one of a kind, a treasure, and you will be missed."

—Theo Heras

### **Judith "Billie" Wilder: Wonderful Friend**

Although her birth certificate stated Judith as her name, she was christened "Billie" (because her parents thought she was going to be a boy) and was affectionately called Billie throughout her life. Judith "Billie" Ryrie Wilder was a great supporter of and friend to the Osborne Collection. She will be sadly missed by the Friends with her passing on July 17, 2021.

Billie was born in 1928 in Toronto to Edward William Bickle and Helen Ryrie Bickle and had a half-brother, Thomas. She attended Havergal College followed by McGill University. Interested in pursuing a career in journalism, she enrolled in Lorne Greene's Academy of Radio Arts. Soon afterwards, however, she met her future husband, William Wilder, to whom she was married for over sixty-six years. According to her daughter, Martha Wilder, Billie was his "chief

business advisor" and trusted support throughout his distinguished business career. Martha also says Billie was a voracious reader; her favourite book was *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier. She read a lot of memoirs and biographies, but not a lot of fiction. As for children's books, Billie loved the English classics: stories by A. A. Milne, books like *The Wind in the Willows* and Victorian books such as *The Secret Garden*. She also loved the Madeline series by Ludwig Bemelmans.

As a philanthropist, Billie consistently supported the arts, education, health care, and social services over many years and made transformative gifts to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. The surrounding area of the E.W. Bickle Centre (part of University Health Network's Toronto Rehab Centre, which helps people overcome the challenges of injury, illness, or age-related health concerns, and is named after Billie's father) will soon be complemented by the Billie Wilder Therapy Gardens.

Jane Dobell, Osborne Collection supporter, Friends member-at-large emerita, and childhood friend of Billie's, says: "I've known her since preschool or kindergarten. Billie was extraordinarily generous, a huge supporter to arts (she gave generously to the Toronto Symphony) and medical institutions, but she was a very modest and quiet person. Our parents were friends. I had two older brothers, so I was looking for a female friend, and she was an only child. We read many books together in our childhood, and we were read to as children, so she considered the Osborne a 'good thing.' She was a kind of Girl Scout; she gave to the Osborne as a sort of commemoration of our friendship."

According to Martha, Billie, in addition to her involvement with the Osborne, also spent her time on the board at Trent University, volunteered at the AGO, and was involved with CJRT radio in the early days. "I think she volunteered for a variety of reasons (like many people), to contribute to society, to learn, to meet new people, and be part of a community. Although Mom had a 'good ear,' she did not play an instrument. I am not sure who her favourite composer was—she listened to a variety of them—perhaps Rachmaninoff." Billie also enjoyed gardening and was active in tennis and skiing as well as fishing in Georgian Bay and sailing in Passamaquoddy Bay. Martha adds, "Mom did collect children's chairs and there are ten scattered throughout her home."

According to Leslie McGrath, former head of the Osborne, “Billie was a wonderful friend to the Osborne Collection. Whether we were trying to start an online catalogue, acquire special materials, or enhance conservation, Billie was there to help. Her generosity was as large as it was quiet and understated; Billie never wanted a fuss and preferred to have a quiet laugh with friends rather than formal recognition. I treasured Billie’s visits to Osborne; these were annual for many years (and before my time had been more frequent, including helping the Friends with special events and with merchandise), then rarer as Billie’s health became more fragile. Each year, if Billie could, she came to choose Christmas cards, lighting up the room with her beautiful smile, and offering cheer and encouragement to the staff. Billie loved books and music, and was deeply knowledgeable about both. We were delighted

when Billie accepted the tribute of an Osborne exhibition in her honour, *She Shall Have Music Wherever She Goes*, bringing together music-themed books and fine art, with an opening reception provided by the Friends. This was a memorable evening that Billie and her family enjoyed together. Billie was a philanthropist who supported many worthy causes, and we were honoured to be one of these. She will be deeply missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing her.”

Billie will be sadly missed by the Friends of the Osborne Collection and her family: her three surviving children (spouses): Martha; Tom (Sylvie); Andrew (Lori); and five grandchildren: Elle (Jeff), Mac, Justin, Neal, Meaghan (Jordan); and one adorable great-grandchild, Charlie. Sadly, son Bill passed away shortly after Billie’s death.

—Karri Yano

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## CONSERVATION UPDATE: MARGARET BLOY GRAHAM’S MOCK-UPS

The Osborne Collection holds a number of dummy books created by illustrator Margaret Bloy Graham. She used these books in the beginning stages of book design and as mock-ups for the final editions. The dummy books in the Osborne Collection include those from well-known works like *Harry the Dirty Dog* and other books in the Harry series.

All of the books feature extensive use of rubber cement that has oxidized, yellowed, and become embrittled, resulting in adhesive failure. Bindings, illustrations, and text held in place using rubber cement have since become detached and vulnerable to loss and physical damage. Conservation treatment was needed to address this failure and ensure safe access while preventing further damage.

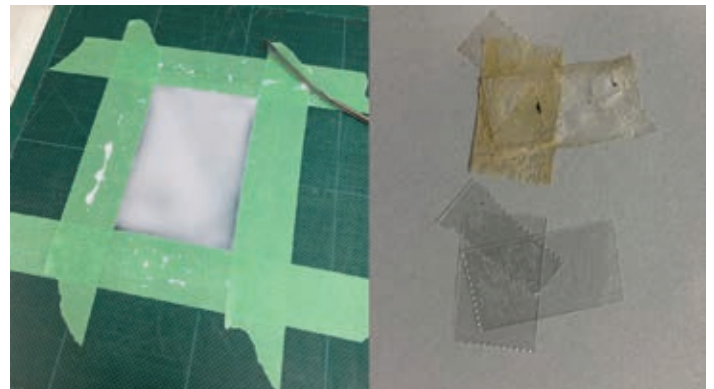


A split page from *No Roses for Harry* before and after treatment.

Tears were repaired, losses were filled, and splits were mended, but most of the work involved re-adhering elements to the page. Where materials were originally pasted directly to the page, adhesive residue was

mechanically reduced with a scalpel and then tiny microdots of tacky, flexible acrylic adhesive were applied and dried under pressure.

Special consideration was given to the use of tape in these dummy books. Tape is routinely removed in conservation treatments because it is considered an unstable method of repair: adhesives leave disfiguring stains and often become embrittled and fail. Items that were previously held in place with tape are often hinged back into place with wheat starch paste and Japanese paper, but a different approach was chosen for these dummy books. In order to maintain the original look, feeling, and function of the dummy book as preparatory material, new stable “tape” was made to re-adhere items.



(Left) Adhesive applied to a sheet of polyester before drying; (right) new tape that recreates the same size and layout of the old failed tape.



A spread from *Harry and the Lady Next Door* before treatment.

Conservation-grade acrylic adhesive was brushed out onto thin sheets of polyester and left to dry. The sheets were then cut into strips according to the width of the original tape pieces. Each piece of replacement tape was cut to the exact size of the piece it replaced using a tape



A spread from *Harry and the Lady Next Door* after treatment.

dispenser to recreate the torn edge. This new “tape” was adhered with a tacking iron. The result faithfully recreates the original function, retaining the different steps of edits and additions in Graham’s creative process.

—Emily White

“SPRING” INTO THE COLLECTION!

With these delightful spring-themed books ...

There are many wonderful books about spring and Easter in the digital archive, available to view online as pdfs. Follow these steps to see these and other books and ephemera in greater detail: go to [torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://torontopubliclibrary.ca) → eBooks & Online Content → Digital Archive → Advanced Search → enter title or subject → select the Osborne from the drop-down menu under “Collections” → Search.



## AMAZING ABECEDARIUMS: SIX ALPHABET BOOKS FROM 1672 TO 2010

Learning the alphabet may be “as easy as ABC,” but there are many creative ways to teach it. From traditional rhymes to innovative contemporary texts, alphabet books are an ever-expanding genre of children’s literature. The Osborne has a collection of alphabet books (also called “abecedariums”) dating from the 17th century to the present.

### ***Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (1672)**

This was one of the first children’s picture books published in Europe. First published in what is now Germany, this Latin textbook’s title in English is *The Visible World in Pictures*. It teaches Latin words for nature, commerce, human biology, and more. The book teaches letter sounds through animal noises, some of which might sound strange to modern readers, with phrases like “Lamb blaiteth” and “Grasshopper chirpeth.” Osborne’s copy is an English edition from 1672. The English translator admitted that the German phrases did not always easily translate to English. This explains the confusing phrase “[t]he Crow cryeth” representing A.



The alphabet portion of *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*.

### ***The History of Apple Pie* (1808)**

In the 19th century, the popularity of illustrated alphabet books expanded rapidly. New printing technology made illustrated books easier and cheaper to produce. The market for children’s books also grew. Middle-class parents were eager to supply their children with books. *The History of Apple Pie* was an early example of this new demand for alphabet books.

The book teaches the alphabet through a relatable narrative about craving apple pie. (At the time, the word *history* was also used to mean *story*.) A hungry set of

siblings approach the pie and bite, cry, and dance their way through the alphabet. The text comes from an old alphabet rhyme, first written down in 1671.



Three pages from *The History of Apple Pie*.

### ***An Illustrated Comic Alphabet* (1859)**

By Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon (1826–1874), this is the earliest known Canadian picture book. Originally from England, Howard-Gibbon lived in Sarnia, Ontario, when she created the book. Howard-Gibbon’s alphabet illustrations were never published during her lifetime. She gave the pen-and-ink illustrations to her friend Martha Poussette in 1865. In the 1960s, Howard-Gibbon’s illustrations were donated to the Osborne and in 1966, Osborne published a reproduction of the art from *An Illustrated Comic Alphabet*.

Howard-Gibbon’s book uses the “A was an Archer” rhyme, which first appeared in print in the early 18th century. Over the centuries many illustrators put their unique spin on it. Howard-Gibbon’s characters have childlike faces and proportions, contrasting with the adult-themes, such as in “D was a Drunkard, with a red face” and “G was a Gamester, and he had ill luck.” “D was a drunkard” was removed in some later versions of the rhyme.



Pages from *An Illustrated Comic Alphabet*.

## Alphabet Book (1968)

*Alphabet Book* features illustrations by elementary school students from Kettle Point First Nation. Working with their teacher Anne Wyse, 36 students between the ages of five and eight contributed. The book reflects the students' diverse interests, ranging from turtles and ice cream to lesser yellowlegs (a bird) and Zorro.



*The Alphabet Book.*

## The Eclectic Abecedarium (1983)



*Gorey's Eclectic Abecedarium.*

Measuring just 3.5 cm long, this is Osborne's smallest alphabet book and was created by Edward Gorey, "the granddaddy of Goth." *The Eclectic Abecedarium* is a

parody of 19th-century moral education poetry. Gorey's alphabet couplets give off-beat advice, loosely featuring letters of the alphabet.

## Lii Yiiiboo Nayaapiwak lii Swer: L'alfabet di Michif / Owls See Clearly at Night: A Michif Alphabet (2010)

Julie Flett's dual-language alphabet book features text in Michif (the language of the Métis people, with roots in French, Cree, and other Indigenous languages). Michif is endangered, and Flett's alphabet book is part of efforts to celebrate and preserve it. Like English, Michif uses the Latin alphabet, but with some differences. There are no Q or X sounds in Michif, so this book features a 24-letter alphabet. It includes words important to Métis culture, like G for "La Galet" (*bannock* in English) and V for "Li Vyaloon" (*fiddle* in English).



*Lii Yiiiboo Nayaapiwak lii Swer.* A snowy owl appears throughout the book.

—Myrna Scully-Ashton

## PINOCCHIO: A FAIRY TALE FOR TODAY

I think the most valuable fairy tale for today is *Pinocchio*. Not just because we are approaching an election, and calling out political exaggerations and untruths has always been linked with the name of the wooden puppet-hero whose nose grew with each lie he told. More importantly, *Pinocchio* is a cautionary tale against the greatest danger of today: being manipulated. Collodi set out to teach readers that shady messages enticing them to self-indulgence and naughtiness are told by those who wish to gain control over them and use them for their own dark ends. Pinocchio learns this the hard way, causing grief to his friends and pain to himself, before he is able



finally to think independently and look out for others. In doing so he is transformed from a wooden puppet into a real, live boy. Like the Cat and the Fox in this fairy tale, the puppet-masters and trolls of the public stage and the internet, foreign and domestic, have endless deceptive messages and traps for the unwary. Just think what they have accomplished through misleading the naïve for their own purposes! I hope parents are still giving their children *Pinocchio* to read. It conveys a message that is needed today more urgently than ever, besides being an engrossing story in its own right.

—Leslie McGrath

## The Origin of Our Gryphon

Maurice Sendak was a Life Member of the Friends. His connection spanned three collection heads' tenures: Judith St. John's, Margaret Crawford Maloney's, and mine. I recall with delight his cheerful call giving permission to use the gryphon logo he had drawn for Osborne in 1979. Our gryphon is witty and benevolent despite its fierce appearance. Gryphons are known for guarding treasure and are emblems of valour and magnanimity (Pseudodoxia Epidemica III in Brewer's). It was the Sendak gryphon on our letterhead that caught J. K. Rowling's eye, causing her to read the invitation to visit, which she did in 2000. We owe a great deal to Maurice Sendak for creating such an evocative, inspirational logo.

—Leslie McGrath

## OUT AND ABOUT

### Margaret Wise Brown, Radical

See *The New Yorker* of January 31, 2022, for an article on Margaret Wise Brown, "The Radical Woman Behind Goodnight Moon," by Anna Holmes. Pick up the magazine at a bookstore or read it in the library. It's also online: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/02/07/the-radical-woman-behind-goodnight-moon>.

### Original Book Art for Sale

Canadian Children's Book Centre has an online gallery where you can buy original art by current Canadian book illustrators. Take a look: <https://thepicturebookgallery.com/>.



You are invited to send ideas for articles as well as general comments or questions to: [FriendsOsborne@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsOsborne@gmail.com).

To join the Friends, renew your membership, donate, or learn more about what we do, visit [www.osbornecollection.ca/](http://www.osbornecollection.ca/).

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