

God of Gods: A Canadian Play

A Project by Deanna Bowen

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Art Museum at the University of Toronto

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

Selected Biographies

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Carroll Aikins (1888-1967)

- Fourth artistic director of the Hart House Theatre
- Related to politicians including the Honourable C. C. Colby, Sir James Cox Aikins, John Somerset Aikins
- Associated with the “Little Theatre” movement in Canada and the USA

W.J. Alexander (1855-1944)

- Alumnus of University of Toronto. Chair of the English Department at the University of Toronto, 1889–1926
- Namesake of University College’s *W.J. Alexander Lecture in English Literature*

Marius Barbeau (1883-1969)

- Anthropologist, ethnologist, folklorist, ethnomusicologist
- Collector of thousands of artifacts, songs and folk tales from Indigenous peoples of the Americas and French Canadians
- Worked with Juliette Gaultier de la Vérendrye, A.Y. Jackson, Emily Carr, W. Langdon Kihn, and Ernest MacMillan
- Mounted the exhibition of *Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, December 1927; and Art Gallery of Toronto (now the Art Gallery of Ontario) in 1928
- Companion of the Order of Canada, 1967

Hugh Poynter Bell (1872-1961)

- Secretary-Treasurer for Hart House, 1921–23
- Music editor and art critic for *The Montreal Daily* 1923–1949
- Contributed weekly columns for *The Montreal Daily Herald* until 1959
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891)

- Russian spiritualist, author. Co-founded Theosophy in 1875
- Author of *The Secret Doctrine, the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*, 1888
- See Grainger, Brett. "The Secret." *The Walrus*, 12 Oct. 2009, <https://thewalrus.ca/the-secret/> for a focused discussion about theosophy and the Group of Seven
- Also, Fiehrer, Thomas. "Strangers in Paradise: Ideography, Metageography, and Theosophy in Modern Discourses on Colonialism." *Histoire Sociale / Social History*, Nov. 1997 hssh.journals.yorku.ca, <https://hssh.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/hssh/article/view/4708>.

Augustus Bridle (1868-1952)

- University of Toronto alumnus, critic, writer, editor
- Associate Editor 1908–16, Editor 1916–20 of *The Canadian Courier*
- Music critic, book reviewer, and film and drama editor at the Toronto Daily Star 1922–1952
- Author of *Sons of Canada: Short Studies of Characteristic Canadians*, 1916; *The Story of the Club*, 1945
- Member of the Mendelssohn Choir
- Referred to as 'Perpetual Grand Secretary' of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Bertram Brooker (1888-1955)

- Visual artist, novelist, poet, screenwriter, playwright, essayist, copywriter, graphic designer, and advertising executive
- Worked for the *Winnipeg Tribune*, *Regina Leader-Post*, and *Winnipeg Free Press*
- Wrote the syndicated column "The Seven Arts," published in several Southam newspapers including the *Calgary Herald* and the *Ottawa Citizen* 1928–1930
- Editor of *The Yearbook of the Arts in Canada*, 1929
- Solo exhibition of abstract paintings at Hart House, 1931
- Awarded the Governor General's Award for Fiction for *Think of the Earth*, 1936
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Franz Boas (1858-1942)

- Anthropologist, considered the founder of modern anthropology and father of American Anthropology, as well as the creator of salvage anthropology
- Early fieldwork in 1883 among the Inuit of Baffin Island
- Columbia University Professor, 1899–1942
- Boas' students included Marius Barbeau, Margaret Mead, Edward Sapir, Zora Neale Hurston

Duncan Campbell Scott (1862-1947)

- Poet, playwright, short story-writer, amateur photographer
- Deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913–1932. Best known for supervising Canada's Residential Schools and advocating the assimilation of First Nations people
- His one-act play, *Pierre*, was performed at Hart House Theatre in 1920–1921 and published in Vincent Massey's *Canadian Plays from Hart House Theatre* in 1926
- Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1899; honorary degree of Doctor of Letters, University of Toronto, 1922; honorary Doctor of Laws, Queen's University, 1939
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Britton B. Cooke (1890-1923)

- Reporter for *The Globe* and *The Toronto Star*
- Editor, writer of Canadian edition *Collier's Weekly*; also wrote for *Maclean's Magazine*
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Charles Barry Cleveland (1880-1934)

- Architect
- Superintendent for important Canadian buildings including the Sun Life Building in Montreal, the Toronto Art Gallery, and Trinity College campus at the University of Toronto
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Frederick Coates (1890-1965)

- Emigrated to Canada in 1913. Enlisted as a private in the No. 2 Canadian Army Medical Corps as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1916. Sculpted plaster models of soldiers' faces for doctors who used these models to reconstruct faces disfigured by war injuries
- Hart House Theatre Art Director 1922–23 and 1929–30
- Taught model making at the School of Architecture at the University 1931–1962
- Bequeathed his Scarborough Bluffs property "Sherwood" to the University of Toronto in trust for the establishment of a scholarship at the Faculty of Architecture
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Timothy Eaton (1834-1907)

- Founder of the T. Eaton Co. Ltd.
- Timothy Eaton Memorial Church named after him
- In an effort to create a newspaper committed to the Liberal party, Eaton financed the takeover of the *Evening Star* in 1899 with other Toronto businessmen including George Albertus Cox and Walter Edward Hart Massey

Oscar Pelham Edgar (1871-1948)

- Alumnus of the University of Toronto. Student of English Professor W.J. Alexander
- Head of the Department of French at Victoria College, 1901–1910
- Transferred to the Department of English in 1938 and served as department Head for twenty-eight years
- Created the Canadian Authors Foundation in 1931
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Barker Fairley (1887-1986)

- Painter, critic, scholar of German literature
- Faculty at the University of Alberta 1910–1915; taught in the German Department at the University of Toronto 1915–1957
- Prominent critical champion of his contemporaries and friends, the Group of Seven
- Founded the left-wing literary, cultural and political publication *The Canadian Forum* in 1920
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Bertram Forsythe (1887-1927)

- Actor, playwright, scholar, and second director of the Hart House Theatre 1921–1925
- Produced Carroll Aikins' *The God of Gods*, 1922
- Forsythe's *Castles in the Air* was staged in Hart House Theatre 1923–1924
- Formed the Margret Eaton Theatre in 1925, taught at the school in 1925–1926
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Juliette Gaultier de la Vérendrye (1888-1972)

- Mezzo-soprano, ethnomusicologist, and violinist
- Professional career largely based on recitals of Acadian, Inuit, and Indian folk music she collected and arranged
- Social and professional connections to W. Langdon Kihn, Arthur Lismer, composer Marion Bauer, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, the National Museum of Canada, and anthropologists Marius Barbeau and Diamond Jenness
- Gaultier frequently borrowed clothing for performances from the archives of the National Museum (now the Canadian Museum of History) via Barbeau and Jenness

Melvin Ormond Hammond (1876-1934)

- Journalist, author, editor, and photographer
- Worked at *Toronto Globe*, political reporter at Queen's Park
- Author of *Painting and Sculpture in Canada*, 1931
- Member of the Toronto Camera Club, Canadian Literary Club, the Ontario Historical Society, the Canadian Historical Society and the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto.

Lawren Harris (1885-1970)

- Canadian painter, founder of The Group of Seven with J.E.H. MacDonald
- Studied at the St. Andrew's College at the University of Toronto
- Son of Thomas Morgan Harris, heir to the Massey-Harris Co. Ltd fortune
- Commercial illustrator for *Harper's Magazine*, *MacLean's Magazine*, 1908-11
- Prominent member of the *International Theosophical Society*
- Companion of the Order of Canada, 1969
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (1900-)

- Women's charitable organization based in Canada
- The I.O.D.E. provides scholarships, bursaries, prizes and awards, and other philanthropic and educational projects across Canada
- The IODE infamously discouraged the immigration of non-white immigrants in 1911, when the Edmonton chapter of the IODE petitioned the minister of the interior, Frank Oliver, to ban Black immigrants to Western Canada.

W. Langdon Kihn (1898-1957)

- Painter and illustrator. Specialized in portraits of American Indians
- Lifelong career documenting Indigenous communities in the United States and Canada, through commissions from Canadian and American Railroad companies
- Illustrated books by Marius Barbeau including *Indian Days in the Canadian Rockies*, *The Downfall Of Temlaham*, and *Indian Days on the Western Prairies*

Arthur Lismer (1885-1969)

- Painter, member of the Group of Seven
- President of the Victoria College of Art (now NSCAD University), 1916-1919
- First artistic director of the Hart House Theatre, 1919-1921
- Supervisor of Education at the Art Gallery of Toronto (now the Art Gallery of Ontario) 1927-38, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1941-67
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

J.E.H. MacDonald (1873-1932)

- Painter, founder of The Group of Seven with fellow theosophist Lawren Harris
- Member of the Ontario Society of Artists and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts
- Taught at the Ontario College of Art, 1921 and was Principal, 1929-1932
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Isabel Ecclestone MacKay (1875–1928)

- Canadian writer, poet, and playwright active in the Vancouver's Little Theatre movement
- *The Second Lie* was mounted at Hart House Theatre in 1920, featuring Vincent Massey performing in a lead role
- *The Last Cache* was first presented at Hart House Theatre during Carroll Aikin's tenure as Artistic Director in 1927
- Anthologized in Massey's *Canadian Plays from Hart House Theatre*
- Her writing (*Treasure, Initials Only*) received awards from the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in 1926 and 1928 respectively
- Received the 1929 Governor-General's Award for drama

Ernest MacMillan (1893–1973)

- Orchestral conductor, composer, organist
- Organist-choirmaster at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, 1919–1925
- Dean of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music 1927–1952
- Recorded and notated music of Nass River Indigenous communities in northern British Columbia with Marius Barbeau in 1927
- Member of the first Canada Council 1957–63; awarded Canada Council Medal in 1964 and Companion of the Order of Canada in 1971
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Vincent Massey (1887–1967)

- University of Toronto alumnus. Businessman, politician, diplomat, patron of the arts, and benefactor of Hart House
- Canada's first Canadian born Governor General, 1952–59
- Chair of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (Massey Commission), founded in 1949
- The Massey Commission led to the establishment of the National Library of Canada, 1953, and the Canada Council for the Encouragement of the Arts, Letters, Humanities, and Social Sciences, 1957
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Jesse Edgar Middleton (1872–1960)

- Writer and music critic for *The Mail and Empire*, and *Saturday Night*
- Choirmaster of *Centennial Methodist Church* and member of the *Mendelssohn Choir*
- Author of *The Province of Ontario: a History, 1615–1927* and *The Municipality of Toronto: a History*
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Roy Mitchell (1884–1944)

- Alumnus of the University of Toronto. Journalist, technician, and theatre theoretician
- Founder of the Players Club, 1919 and first artistic director of Hart House Theatre, University of Toronto
- Avid Theosophist and founder of the *Blavatsky Institute of Canada* in the early 1920s, which published several of his lectures on Theosophy, as well as his 1923 book *Theosophy in Action*
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Nass River

- The Nass River is a river in northern British Columbia
- The Nisga'a people are the original occupants of the Nass River Valley
- Nisga'a territory was declared Crown land when British Columbia joined Canada in 1871
- Nisga'a people were pushed off their traditional lands and forced to occupy reserves around the Nass River after the declaration

George Agnew Reid (1860–1947)

- Artist, architect, educator and administrator.
- Elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1889
- Principal of the Central Ontario School of Art and Design (later OCAD University) 1912–1918
- A key player in obtaining permanent funding and staff for the National Gallery in Ottawa
- Played a critical role in the establishment of the Art Gallery of Toronto (now the Art Gallery of Ontario)
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

William Southam (1843-1932)

- Canadian newspaper publisher, founder of Southam Inc. and former owner of the *Hamilton Spectator*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Calgary Herald*, *Edmonton Journal*, *Winnipeg Tribune*, *Windsor Star*, and *The Montreal Gazette*
- William Southam Journalism Fellowship at Massey College named after Southam
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Thunder Cloud (1856–1916?)

- Born Dominique La Plante in Alberta. Also known as James Night Rider
- Member of the Blackfoot Tribe
- Model for many prominent twentieth-century artists, including painters Sir John Lavery, W. Langford Kihn, Emmanuel Hahn, Frederick Remington, Edwin Abbey, John Sargent, Howard Pyle, F.D. Millet, George Agnew Reid (see *The Coming of the White Man*), and photographer Melvin O. Hammond

Stanley Turner (1883–1953)

- Draughtsman, illustrator, cartographer and artist.
- Studied with George A. Reid and J. W. Beatty at the Ontario College of Art
- Elected an Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, 1930
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Frederick Varley (1881–1969)

- Painter, member of the Group of Seven
- Worked with Arthur Lismer, Thom Thompson and Frank Carmichael at Grip Ltd.
- Known for his portraits of Alice (1925) and Vincent Massey (1920) that are part of the Hart House Art Collection
- Head of the Department of Drawing and Painting, School of Decorative and Applied Arts, Vancouver, 1926–1933
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Sir Byron Edmund Walker (1848–1924)

- Banker. President of Canadian Bank of Commerce, 1907–1924
- Chairman, Bankers' Section of the Toronto Board of Trade, 1891–92
- Vice President, Canadian Bankers Association, 1893; President 1894–95
- Fellow of the Institute of Bankers of England and the Royal Economic Society of England
- Member of Board of Governors, Toronto Conservatory of Music, 1917–1924
- Honorary President, Mendelssohn Choir, 1900–1924
- Patron who helped found the University of Toronto, the Champlain Society, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Toronto (now the Art Gallery of Ontario), and the National Gallery of Canada
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto

Dr. Healey Willan, C.C. (1880 - 1968)

- Composer, organist and teacher
- Professor of Music at the University of Toronto 1937–1950
- Music director of Hart House Theatre 1919–1925
- Companion of the Order of Canada in 1967
- Member of The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto