



Archives

T. M. Martin

Suggested citation:

UNSPECIFIED T. M. Martin. Documentation. OCAD University. (Unpublished) Available at <https://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/4579/>

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J. M. Martin
WYCHWOOD PARK

The passing of Thomas Mauer Martin last week in his 96th year closes the career of one of Canada's most remarkable pioneer artists. He was vigorous and active almost to the end, laying down his brushes a few weeks ago leaving the vast quantity of work of his busy life to give forth his message as the philosopher lover of Canadian forests fields and gardens.

Whatever estimate may now be made of his work now or in the future he will be revered for his sincerity, his liberal spirit and for the fact that he loved Canada and worked indefatigably to represent in his pictures all he felt about it and where ^{his} vision led him.

While Mr Martin claimed to have been mainly self taught his experience as a mechanical draughtsman undoubtedly gave him much of his technical facility and made him a rapid worker. In his early life in London he was in touch with the art of the time, and was especially influenced by Turner whose pictures were the sensation of the exhibition of the Royal Academy. The influence of Turner however, has shown but little in his work as he was not inclined towards imitation of any particular style, and those who know his work can very readily identify it.

To appreciate the true pioneer spirit in Mr Martin one has only to note a few phases of his life experiences. Coming to Canada with his young wife to take up farming in 1862 he went to a homestead near Huntsville and after building a house and doing some clearing it

was to find that the land was so rocky and swampy as to be practically worthless. The farm was abandoned, house and all and although the transition is obscure he is next found in Toronto on a small farm at York Mills and has begun his career as an artist. From that time the story of his life is woven into all art movements up to the organization of the Royal Canadian Academy in 1880.

He was earlier the president of the first organization of artists in Toronto, afterwards one of the Charter members of the Ontario Society of Artists besides being a moving spirit in its administration since a great part of its history since its foundation in 1872. For a time he took an active part in art education in the Province and was Director of Government Art Schools.

These activities show how intensely Mr. Martin threw himself into everything connected with the art life of Canada, and how much he did as a painter at the time Paul Kane and Kuegheff were still at work.

He was a prodigious worker with his brush, and searched everywhere for subjects to paint. In 1887 shortly after the C.P.R. was opened, ~~the company~~ ^{the company} with a view to making its scenic effects as well known as possible, Martin, Osburn, Matthews, Bell-Smith and others took advantage of ~~the opportunity~~ and vied with each other in their efforts to do justice to the splendor of the Rocky Mountains and other picturesque points on the road. Mr. Martin's later life was passed in surroundings happily suited to his tastes with a studio and 4 or 5 pictures attached to his residence where he worked with his pictures and among his flowers.

Page 708