

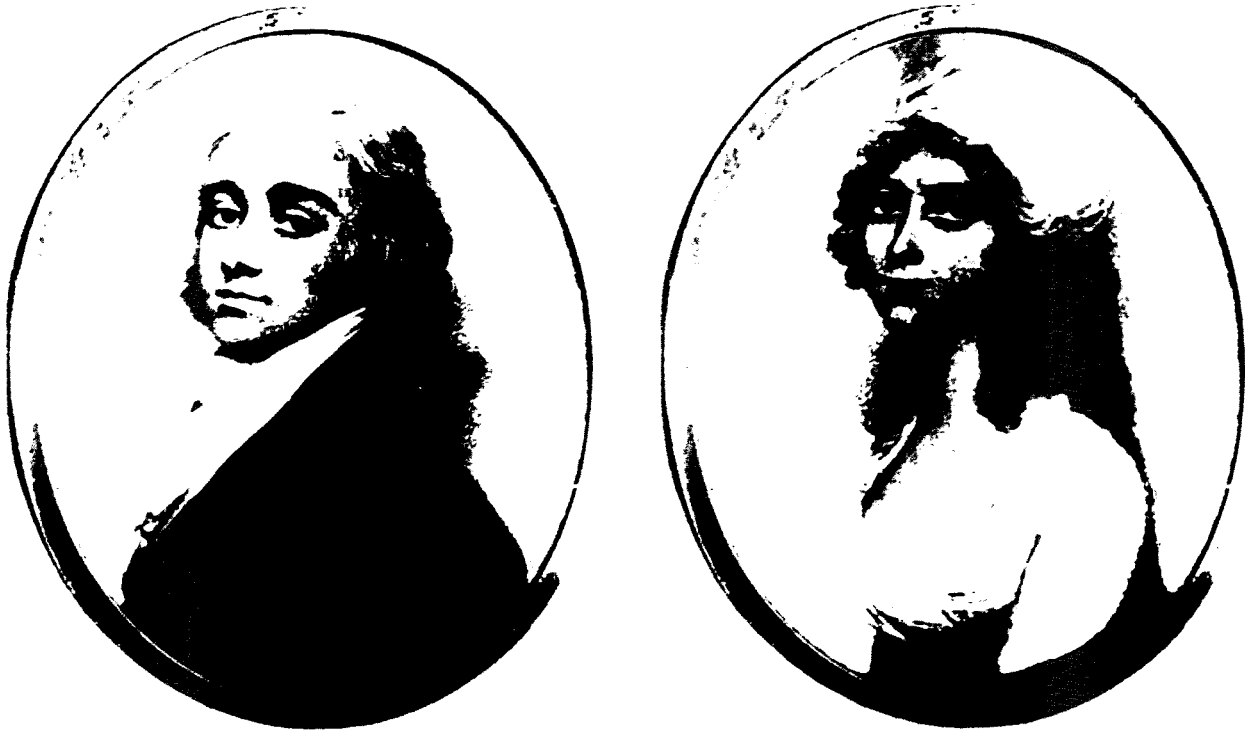


# *73 Walmer Rd*

## *Heritage Background*

- *Built in approximately 1906*
- *Lived in by Marian Boulton and her family until 1920*
- *Lived by George Wrong 1920-1948 (who started department of Canadian History Art at U of T)*

**ADDITIONAL CHAPTER X  
WILLIAM BOULTBEE AND HIS WIFE FRANCES ANN APLEYARD AND THEIR  
DESCENDANTS**



**WILLIAM AND FRANCES ANN BOULTBEE**

William, born in 1774, was the fourth son of Joseph Boulton of Baxterley and Catherine Dabbs (see Chapter V). A few letters have survived, written in 1792, 1793 and 1794 by the parents to William, and the letters indicate that William was contemplating marriage to a Miss Walker, whose guardian was Thomas Ainslie, the Collector of Customs at Quebec City, Canada. Mr. Ainslie did not approve, and the marriage did not occur. William then courted Miss Frances Ann Appleyard the daughter of Robert Appleyard and his wife Frances of Holborn, part of London. William and Frances were married September 17, 1795 at St. Andrew's Church, Holborn, and resided at 43 Bishopsgate, London, for the first year of their marriage. By 1797 they were in Surrey, and by 1804 in Clay Hill, Beckenham, Kent. Their family consisted of four sons, **Felix, Alfred, Horatio** and **Washington**, and two daughters, **Frances** and **Rosalind**.

William's father died in 1806 leaving him £35,000 as his share of a very large estate. It is assumed that William continued to work, although at what occupation in those years is not known. The Industrial Revolution was occurring, living costs were rising, and people were questioning the actions of politicians. By 1828, William was engaged in the Reform Movement of the Whig Party, not as an elected member, but rather as a working volunteer and organizer. He continued in this role until at least 1843, meeting and corresponding with other reformists. A few of these letters have survived of which the most interesting is one from Daniel O'Connell of Dublin, who in May 1839 wrote to William, in part:-

*These Reform Principles principles I should like to see worked out:*

*1st. Moral force -- that of opinion, peaceable co-operation -- and none other.*

- 2nd. *Household suffrage, including all married lodgers -- and all journeymen having served a regular apprenticeship.*
- 3rd. *The Ballot.*
- 4th. *Triennial parliaments.*
- 5th. *Freedom of Conscience.*
- 6th. *Freedom of Commerce.*
- 7th. *Representation diminished in number -- and fixed to districts of equal population.*

Unfortunately, William did not see these principles enacted in his lifetime. Similar principles were presented to parliament in July 1839 and were defeated 237 to 48. Subsequently, a Reform meeting in Birmingham was attacked by the police, and some leaders of the movement were jailed. There is no record of William's involvement in this particular meeting.

There is an interesting *Reformist* anecdote written by the Reverend James Boulton (JB) in 1889 about William:

*In reference to this William, I have a recollection of his calling at Salford Vicarage one day at about dinner time, I was but a bit of a boy [about 1839]. He was on horseback, and did not come in, but talked to my father at the front door. When he had gone I remember father said that he [William] was the only Radical that ever bore the name of Boulton, and he came from Birmingham.*

William was the sales person for a Nail Works in Birmingham operated by a Clement Scholefield, and in an 1837 letter to his son in Canada, William mentioned that he was hoping to be transferred to the finances at the Works. By the 1830s, nails were being manufactured in quantity by machinery in urban centres, rather than one at a time in family shops in rural areas.

Some time in 1847, William emigrated to Canada to be with his son Washington. William was 73 years of age, and it is assumed that his wife Frances had died previous to the trip. William died in Ancaster Township, Canada West in 1850 and was buried in St. John's Churchyard in Ancaster village. (*Canada West* from 1841 until 1867 was the name of present-day *Ontario*. *Canada East* was the present-day *Québec*, and the two areas together were known as Canada.)

#### *Editorial Note:*

The descendants of William and Frances were the first Boultons to emigrate to Canada, and it is interesting to consider what prompted such an undertaking. The parents were living comfortably in Birmingham, and had managed to provide an education for each of their six children. There was money in the family left from father Joseph's estate, yet there must have been some unrest to prompt five of the children to try their fortunes in America, four to Canada, and one, Horatio, to Mexico. The sixth child, Alfred, died in England at age 17.

The family's move to Canada began in 1834, and our assumption is that the economy of Britain at that time played a part in their decision. In industry, many changes were occurring with the introduction of factories in urban centres, the invention of the steam engine, and the resulting swing in population from rural areas to cities. The Town of Birmingham became the manufacturing City of Birmingham. In politics, the Reform Bill was approved in 1832, and in a small way, it passed some control of Parliament from the hereditary aristocracy to the businessman. A few years earlier, the old Navigation Acts had been repealed. The old acts had prevented foreign ships from entering British harbours, and the repeal of the acts encouraged greater trade with other nations. It also brought to an end the monopoly of the Honourable East India Company in 1833, and therefore, the loss of employment for Felix Boulton, the first English member of our family to emigrate to Canada. Felix had sailed on the Company's ships for 24 years.

The economy of England may have had a minor effect on Felix to emigrate. The wealth of the nation was increasing steadily due to the use of new machinery in the factories, favourable trade with other nations, and masses of workers in the cities to produce the goods. However, the wealth was distributed to the middle and upper classes of the population, to the great expense of the lower class. The lower class in their misery were becoming violent in order to survive, and brutal crimes were becoming more common. Felix and Mary, who were middle class in education and income, but were aware of working men's miseries through William's Reform activities, may have wondered how their five children would fare in a society that was changing so dramatically.

These are two assumptions as to why they chose to emigrate. The source for these thoughts, and William's involvement in the Reform Movement, is the book *An Introduction to the Industrial and Social History of England* by Edward P. Cheyney.

The children of William & Frances Ann were:-

1. **Felix**, born 1796 in London, married in 1823 Mrs. Mary Nesbitt (née Samuel) in Clifford, Herefordshire, died 1838 in Ancaster Township, Upper Canada (now Ontario).  
For further details of his life [click here](#).  
For details of his house "Thornvale" [click here](#).  
For the descendants of Felix and Mary, [click here](#).
2. **Frances Ann**, born 1797 in Brixton Hill, Surrey, died 1849 in Ancaster Township, Canada West (now Ontario). She did not marry.
3. **Alfred**, born 1799 in Brixton Hill, Surrey, died 1817.
4. **Horatio**, born 1801 at Norwood, Surrey, died 1849 in Mexico. He did not marry.  
For further details of his life, [click here](#).
5. **Rosalind**, born 1804 at Clay Hill, Kent, married her cousin Richard Moore Boulton of Barnwell, Rutland in 1848, died 1874 and is buried at Barnwell. She spent about five years in Canada before her marriage.  
For further details of her life, [click here](#).
6. **Washington**, born 1806 at Clay Hill, Kent, married Elizabeth Sophia Bourne at Port Stanley, Ontario in 1850, died 1875 at sea.  
For further details of his life, [click here](#).  
For the descendants of Washington and Eliza, [click here](#).

### Section 1: The descendants of Felix and Mary Boulton (mainly in Ontario)

The children of Felix and Mary Boulton were:-

[Generations are denoted by type of symbol I (1st), I (2nd), i (3rd), A (4th), a (5th) and l (6th). A bold type listing indicates a person who at birth or adoption was a Boulton. Ed.]

1. **Mary Anne**, born August 3, 1826 at Broadmeadow, in the Parish of Clifford. Did not marry. Died July 11, 1859 at Newmarket, Canada West (now Ontario) and was buried in Eagle Street Cemetery, Newmarket. There is a stained glass window memorial to Mary Anne in St. George's Church, Georgetown, Ontario.
2. **Alfred**, born March 5, 1828 at Bittern Cottage, near Southampton. Married Caroline Augusta Hamilton on June 17, 1857. Died December 29, 1901.  
For further details of his life, [click here](#).
  1. **Reginald**, born 1858, married Margaret Gordo Tisdale in 1890, died August 23, 1913 and is buried in St. James' Cemetery, Toronto. Listed in Toronto directories for 1882 to 1902 as a barrister, and in 1889 with Boulton & Boulton (his father and himself). Listed in 1908 to 1910 as a barrister, self-employed.

Reginald & Margaret had twin daughters:

- i. **Barbara Araminta Frances**, born 1902, died 1989.
- ii. **Margaret Gwendoline Constance**, born 1902, died 1995.

Barbara and Margaret lived together all their lives. During 1942 and 1943, they lived in Toronto and worked as clerks and stenographers. Subsequently, they moved to Simcoe, Ontario to take care of their widowed mother.

II. **Frank**, born 1861, married Sarah Kellogg in 1910, died 1917.

III. **Alfred Ernest**, born 1864. Did not marry. An architect and artist. Died 1928.

For further details on his life, [click here](#).

IV. **Horatio Clarence**, born 1866. Did not marry. A barrister and a realtor.

For further details on his life, [click here](#).

V. **Constance Mary**, born 1868. Did not marry. An artist. A painting by her of her brother Reginald has come down through the family to the Canadian Editor. Died 1897.

VI. **Catherine Marie**, born 1872. Died 1872.

3. **Francis ("Frank") Appleyard**, born February 28, 1830. Did not marry. Died in 1854.

4. **William**, born March 15, 1832 at Exeter, Devon. Married Marian Mulock on December 12, 1866 at Madras, India. Died November 5, 1902 in Toronto, Canada.

For further details of his life, [click here](#).



**THE FAMILY OF MRS. MARIAN BOULTBEE**

(photo about August 1878)

The children: **Marian (Missie) Alfred Rosamond Horace Will Mulock (Thumbby)**

I. **Marian**, born 1867, died 1871 in India.

II. **Alfred**, born 1869 in India. Married Edith Hannaford in 1896. Died 1916.

For biography [click here](#).

Alfred & Edith had five sons and one daughter, of whom four sons reached maturity. See photo below:-



**Thomas Edward (Ned), William Turner (Bill), Norman Michael, John Henry (Jack), June 1927.**

- i. **Felix Hannaford**, born 1898, died 1902. (for photo [click here](#).)
- ii. **Norman Michael**, born 1900. In 1917 and 1918, Michael was a clerk at the Standard Bank in Toronto. He was a ledger keeper at the Bank from 1919 to 1922. He married Grace Tamblyn in 1921. In 1923, he was a bookkeeper at Myers Lumber Company, Toronto, and then left Toronto until 1933, when he was a salesman at Giles, Rice & Peters, a General Motors car dealership in Toronto. During the difficult Depression years, he worked with various companies. From 1937 to 1940, he was with British American Oil Company as a service station operator. He died in 1945. Grace is alive and well at age 95

Michael & Grace had two children:-

- A. **Gordon Alfred**, born 1922, married Elsie Lilian Fynamore in 1945. Gordon was employed by Northern Electric Company at Toronto for approximately seven years, and then moved to Bell Telephone at Brantford, Ontario responsible for maintenance at the main office. He retired from Bell in 1981.

Gordon and Elsie have a son and a daughter:-

- a. **Paul Gordon**, born 1951, married Glynis Wilson in 1984. Both are employed at the College in Red Deer, Alberta, Paul as librarian, and Glynis as a teacher. Both are involved in theatrics, writing, and art. Paul has prepared and published two bibliographies, the first for the Bahamas, where

he lived and taught in the 1970s, and the second for the Turks and Caicos Islands. He will be preparing a third bibliography, this one on the Cayman Islands. Paul is the librarian and keeper of duplicate records of the Boulton family history for the 21st century. He may not undertake genealogical research, but as a professional librarian, he would make available to a family historian further duplicate copies of whatever documents of our family that he holds.

b. **Jane Elizabeth**, born 1959, married Gerald Hooker in 1983. She is a library-technician, first at Richmond Hill, Ontario, Public Library, and now at the Cambridge, Ontario, Public Library.

B. **Constance Edith**, born 1927. Connie was a teacher and librarian at Rawlinson Public School in the City of York in Metro Toronto. During the school year 1965/66, she was on an exchange teaching arrangement in England. In 1970, she moved to Arlington Senior Public School as librarian. She retired in 1981, and is living with her mother in Metro Toronto.

iii. **William Turner**, known as Bill, born 1903, married Mabel Campbell, of Lindsay, Ontario in 1925. From 1921 to 1924, he worked as a clerk at various Toronto branches of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Bill and his brother Jack moved to Chicago in the mid-twenties and were able to secure positions in that city. Eventually, Bill was employed for 41 years at the Continental Bank and Trust Company. He became an officer of the Bank where he traded Federal Funds with other U.S. banks that needed large sums of money quickly. He was an active member in the Men's Garden Club of Villa Park, Illinois. Bill and Mabel had a summer cottage on Four Mile Lake near Lindsay, Ontario. Bill created fine wood furniture for his home and his cottage. He died in 1987 at Elmhurst, Illinois, and Mabel died in 1990 at Elmhurst.

They had one daughter:-

A. **Dorothy Aileen**, born 1926, married Lynden George Schaeferle. They had four sons, William born 1955, James born 1957, David born 1960 died in 1994, and Michael born 1962. She died a week after the birth of her fourth son.

iv. **Constance Fanny**, born 1905, died October 13, 1909.

v. **John Henry**, known as Jack, was born in 1906. He was a Trust Officer at the Continental Bank & Trust Company in Chicago. He was employed at the Bank from shortly after the time of his arrival in Chicago in the mid-twenties until his death in 1939. He married Beatrice Woodhouse in 1927.

Jack and Beatrice had two sons and one daughter:-

A. **Donald Edward**, born 1928, married Nancy Elizabeth Meredith in 1952. He died 1992.

For biography [click here](#).

Donald and Nancy had one daughter and two sons:-

a. **Nancy Jan**, born 1954, married Dean Oatman in 1977 and they have two children -- Benjamin Ryan born 1980, and Amber Michele born 1982.

b. **Meredith Reid**, born 1956, married Shari Harrison in 1976.

They have two children:-

1. **Kristoffer Shawn**, born 1977

2. **Lisa Marie**, adopted, born 1977

c. **Calvin Wayne**, born 1957, married Vicki Carson in 1979. They were divorced in 1993.

B. **Marian Elizabeth**, born 1932, married Elmer Theodore Ernst in 1952. They have 2 sons and 1 daughter -- Richard born 1953, died 1972, Jeffrey born in 1955 married Ann Harding in 1984, and Caryn born in 1957 married George Bulovsky in 1989 and they have two sons Andrew Theodore born 1992 and Matthew Richard born

1994.

C. **Robert Henry** born in 1935, lived for 8 days.

vi. **Thomas Edward**, known as Ned, born 1910, married Helene Pattison in 1939. He died 1984. From 1935 to 1939, he was a salesman with J.R. Mooney & Co., Toronto, stock brokers. During the war years, he worked at Victory Aircraft in the Toronto area. In 1946, he began a career with Wm. McGill & Co., coal merchants, as their Assistant General Manager. He rose to General Manager in 1951, and President from 1954 to 1956. In 1958, he was Office Manager of Carnes Manufacturing, and from 1961 to 1965, he was Office Manager of Filter & Heating Supplies Company. His final position began in 1966 as Office Manager of Thornhill Golf & Country Club, north of Toronto.

Ned & Helene had two daughters and one son:-

A. **Susan Edith**, born 1941, married Bruce Wilkinson, she died 1990. They had three sons -- Mark born 1962, Glen born 1965, and Kevin born 1968.

B. **John Arthur**, known as Jack, born 1943, was educated at the University of Toronto. In 1977, he was appointed a partner in the firm of Coopers & Lybrand, Chartered Accountants. Subsequently, he joined Hollinger Inc., an international media firm, as the Vice-President for Finance. He coauthored a book *The Indexed Security Investment Plan Explained*.

He married (1) Eleanor Moore in 1968, and had one son and one daughter:-

a. **Paul Keith**, born 1976.

b. **Leslie Elizabeth**, born 1979.

John Arthur married (2) Sharon Whitby, and had one son:-

c. **Michael**, born 1987.

C. **Patricia Anne**, born 1946, was a school teacher in Toronto in 1967 and 1968. She married (1) Gary Thornton November 11, 1966 who died February 3, 1985 at Georgetown, Ontario. They adopted two sons, Jay and Bradley. Patricia married (2) Richard William Jones in 1994.

III. **Ethel**, born 1871, died 1871 in India.

~~IV.~~ **Marian**, known as *Missie*, born 1872 at Koonar, India. Married Dr. Longfield-Smith in 1900 at Bridgetown, Barbados. They had two daughters, Joyce (1902 - 1908) and Rosamond, known as Robbie, (1904 - 1994). Marian died as the result of an accident in July 1905 at Fontanelle, Barbados. Rosamond studied art in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, graduating in 1930. She had exhibited her paintings in Chicago, New York, and Berlin. In her 70s, she lived and exhibited her paintings in New York City, but the City was not kind to her. After being mugged, and burglarized, she was advised by her doctor to go home, and make her Will. She returned to her previous home in Babson Park, Florida, and spoke to her half-sister Eleanor Longfield-Smith, a writer and a poet, who was kind enough to offer her a spare room for as long as she chose. The offer was accepted, and Rosamond was able to continue with her artwork and exhibited annually at the nearby Library. A very pleasant experience occurred in 1985, when the grandson of a friend of the family discovered a painting in his grandmother's attic signed by Alfred Ernest Boulton. Rosamond recognized the painting as one that had been in her parent's home when she was young, but had been sold after the death of her father. A colour photograph of the painting has been given by Rosamond to the Editors.

V. **Will Mulock**, known as *Thumby*, born 1873 in India. Married Margaret Amy Douglas in 1899. Died 1912.

For biography [click here](#).

Thumby and Amy had one daughter and five sons. For a photograph of Amy and the children, see below.

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THE FAMILY OF MRS. AMY (DOUGLAS) BOULTBEE, AND  
THE FAMILY OF HER PARENTS, MR. & MRS. CHARLES DOUGLAS

Charles Douglas Boultee	Robert Keith Douglas	Louie (Ripley) Douglas	John Campbell Douglas
Vera (Daniels) Douglas holding Katherine Grace Douglas (child of JCD)	Charles Irvine Douglas holding Paul Nicholas Berkshire Boultee	Margaret Elizabeth (Holmested) Douglas	Margaret Amy (Douglas) Boultee Nurse holding Evelyn Douglas (child of JCD)
William Stair Boultee	Elizabeth Marian Boultee Frank Cruikshank Boultee	Katherine (Kitty) Douglas (Hallowes) (child of RKD) Thomas Field Boultee	Archibald Douglas (child of RKD)

- i. **Charles Douglas**, born 1900, married Mary Carmen Killaly in 1943. He died in 1979. His elementary education was at The Wyck, Brighton, England until 1912. His subsequent education was at Ridley College, St. Catharines, Ontario, and at the Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario. When he was 21, he asked his Uncle Jack Douglas for a job at his Ranch in Argentina. The uncle taught him basic Spanish so that he could learn the tricks-of-the-trade. Charles could already ride a horse. Now, he was qualified to go out to farms and buy skins for his uncle's hide business. In 1929, he was a stock broker at Ussher Son & Company, Toronto, and 1932 to 1936 was a salesman at Eaton's Department Store in Toronto. Charles was an officer in the Royal Canadian Artillery in World War II. After the War and up to 1957, he was a real estate agent with R.B.Rice & Sons in Toronto. From 1963 to 1968, he worked with the Ontario Government. In 1955, he and Mary bought Cressy Manor in Prince Edward County, Ontario and operated it as a summer guest house until 1961. In 1976, Charles bought a house in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where he and Mary lived for two years.

There is a lovely story of Charles as remembered by the Reverend Michael Boultee and his wife Ann of Dawlish, England, when they were on a visit to Toronto in the mid 1960s: *Charles owned a very beautiful old Armstrong Siddeley motor car that was his pride and joy, but Charles at age 60+, was no longer capable of driving with confidence on the Queen Elizabeth II Highway! I seldom remember being so scared in a car. Many of us in Ontario also have fond memories of Charles and his beautiful old Armstrong-*

**"The Beaver" Canada's History Magazine** by Christopher Moore

A Century of Historians | Domesticating the West | Canadians: Missing from Empire  
Conrad Black's Franklin Roosevelt | Baboons, Scholars, and Parliamentarians

**A CENTURY OF HISTORIANS**

(first published in The Beaver February/March 2000)

George MacKinnon Wrong, English Canada's leading historian in 1900, took snuff, not because he liked it, but because he liked the social implications of it. He was a fastidious dresser, kept a good table. He had married into the socially impeccable Blakes of Toronto. He was an ordained Anglican minister who doubted that the soul could be harmed by too much luxury. His History Club met in the homes of his wealthy and influential friends, and it taught promising students that a command of history could go hand in hand with power itself. Wrong is often said to have founded the historical profession in Canada.

George Wrong ran the history department of the University of Toronto from its foundation (the first in English Canada) in 1894 until 1927. For a long time, everyone he hired came from Balliol College, Oxford. "What I want is a scholar and a gentleman, and if he knows any history, so much the better," he said. "I am afraid we are still a crude people."

George Wrong actually knew more about those crude people than his demeanour suggested. His parents and grandparents had been not very successful farmers in hardscrabble Elgin County, Ontario. His own college degree was from a low-church theological school, and he was never more than a summer visitor at his beloved Oxford. But Wrong's talents, work habits (he liked to rise early and get a day's work done before breakfast), and sense of God-given destiny, had carried him so far. He loved the country in which such things were possible.

For all his Anglophilia, Wrong was a proud, confident Canadian. He thrived in a time when a well-placed, forward-thinking Torontonionian could see Canada shedding its frontier crudity as it produced more men like him. He saw Canada taking its place in running the greatest empire the world had ever seen, and his satisfaction showed in his histories.

French-English relations? Wrong, who summered at the Blakes' country place at La Malbaie, Québec, wrote a local history, *A Canadian Manor and its Seigneurs*, and two volumes on *The Rise and Fall of New France*. He loved and valued French Canada and gave it an important place in his Canada, though mostly for the way its ancient traditions and folkloric way of life decorated the national scene.

Canadian-British relations? No problems intruded here. For Wrong, the British conquest had brought liberty to Canada, and the achievement of responsible government had made it secure.

Canadian political issues? Wrong was proud of his place in the moderate, dignified, successful Reform tradition of Ontario. He celebrated a creed that looked back to Robert Baldwin and came down through Wrong's father-in-law, Liberal leader Edward Blake, to Wilfrid Laurier's government. Here lay the bedrock of the George Wrong version of Canadian history: Canada's story was a story of successful political reform, of a steady movement toward greater self-

government, greater freedom.

No historian in the later course of the twentieth century would achieve a more calm, untroubled synthesis of Canadian history than George Wrong did right at the start. He was the historian for Laurier's world, for that bright promising moment at the dawn of the century when the twentieth century was going to belong to Canada, when sunny ways would melt all conflicts into harmony.

George Wrong was the first full-time professor of Canadian history, and his academic heirs have seen in him a break from the past, the first "real" historian of Canada. If we put aside the special pleading of the university departments, however, Wrong hardly seems a lonely prophet. Instead, he sits comfortably atop a throng of his contemporaries, simply the best-fed, best-tailored, and most eminent representative of an early flowering of historical story-telling in Canada.

We mostly assume today that Canadian culture was born sometime about 1970. Yet in the early years of this century, almost everyone in English Canada seems to have been writing, reading, and publishing. Many writers, editors, and publishers shared George Wrong's sense that a heroic past could inspire the present and help prepare the future.

There must have been an audience, for there were certainly publishers. In 1903 the Toronto publisher George Morang launched an ambitious twenty-volume series, *The Makers of Canada*. His competitor Robert Glasgow responded with *The Chronicles of Canada* in 32 handsome volumes, and the even more ambitious 23-volume anthology *Canada and its Provinces*. (Chronicles proved so successful that Glasgow moved south to launch *Chronicles of America* in fifty volumes.) Archivists, often supported by the new federal and provincial archives, published multi-volume selections of Loyalist claims, War of 1812 records, Confederation papers, and diplomatic and financial records. Historical essays and stories found steady markets in magazines like *Canadian Monthly*, *Dominion Illustrated*, and *The Week*.

And writers! "Down the lake came Chauncey rolling -- Isaac Chauncey, the broad-beamed old Yankee Commodore, sore as a baited bear from his last brush off Burlington with Sir James Lucas Yeo," wrote C.H.J. Snider, a Toronto sailor and folklorist and the Pierre Berton of his day, in 1913. In his collections of Canadian sea stories, Snider poured out that kind of heart-pounding adventure and salty nautical phrasing. He was just one of many writers seizing on the colourful, myth-making potential of the Canadian past.

Meanwhile, Sarah Curzon, a Toronto poet and woman's suffrage activist, "discovered" Laura Secord and made her a Canadian heroine. Agnes Machar of Kingston, Ontario, celebrated the noble pioneers in *Stories of New France* and *Stories from Canadian History*. Like many of their contemporaries, Machar and Curzon moved easily among fiction, poetry, and history. The moral lessons of Canadian history could be taught in novels or rhymed couplets as well as in essays; indeed, the historical novel stood at the centre of Canadian literary achievement. Gilbert Parker's *The Seats of the Mighty*, about the siege of Quebec, Charles G. D. Roberts's *Acadian Stories*, and Ralph Connor's *Glengarry Schooldays* and *Sky Pilot*, were popular bestsellers around the turn of the century. All drew contemporary moral lessons from the colourful Canadian past.

Most of the writing about history that Canada supported at the start of this century sheltered under the comfortable, reassuring nationalism that Wrong expressed so well. But it could accommodate points of view that George Wrong himself would not have welcomed. Gustavus Myers's muckraking *History of*

*Canadian Wealth* must have appalled him, and Sarah Curzon's linking of historical argument with feminism and woman's suffrage would have been almost equally alien.

Regions other than Toronto had their historians too. In 1911, Alwyn Bramley-Moore's *Canada and Her Colonies, or Home Rule for Alberta* sketched out a western-grievance history that foreshadowed Alberta Report's *Illustrated History of Alberta* of the 1990s. Judge Daniel Prowse's opinionated *History of Newfoundland* was a much more substantial piece of scholarship than anything George Wrong attempted. (Prowse and his big book have remained central to Newfoundland's sense of itself; they turn up as characters in *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, Wayne Johnson's recent novel of Joey Smallwood.) Even a centrally-produced collection like *Canada and its Provinces* emphasized provincial rights and made a virtue out of regional diversity.

Simply to know that so much writing and thinking about Canada was going on a full century ago might reassure those who worry about Canadian culture. One might think that the historical writers of that lively, ambitious period could stimulate and entertain anyone seeking an uplifting encounter with Canadian history in a time of national uncertainty.

Instead, to try to read George Wrong today is to realize why hardly anyone does. Wrong lived into the 1940s, but his sunny Edwardian take on the history of Canada never had a chance against the horrors of the First World War, the unsettling 'twenties, and the economic catastrophe of the 'thirties. His historical work, and that of his contemporaries, now seems quite unreadably quaint.

The bold confidence of those early writers now strikes us as simply bigoted. They all condescended to French Canada, and native peoples and racial minorities existed for them only in appalling stereotypes. Their blithe confidence that British people should rule the world, and that Canada had solved all its problems, makes us sceptical. They were so alarmingly eager to drive home every Victorian homily that they strike us as sentimental moralizers. Their overstuffed prose grates on us.

And often what they wrote was not good history. Their documentary base was often thin, so writer after writer repeated the same stories. We might expect no more from an amateur writer in a small town isolated from historical sources and writing for the newspapers -- which was essentially the situation of the prolific freelancer Agnes Machar of Kingston. But the histories of the respected, influential, professorial George Wrong are little different. Wrong had created a hierarchy of status and authority among the historians of his era and put university professors firmly atop the pyramid. But a matching hierarchy of talent can hardly be discerned....

... for the rest of this essay, with Chris's comments on Canada's contemporary historians, search out the February/march 2000 issue of *The Beaver*.

©Christopher Moore Editorial Ltd, 2000

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## **DOMESTICATING THE WEST**

(first published in the *Beaver* June/July 2003)

Who were the great builders who shaped and defined British Columbia around the time it joined Canada? James Douglas, pioneer governor? William Van Horne, railway builder? Amor de Cosmos, flamboyant premier?



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## Parks Canada Agency

### *Directory of Designations of National Historic Significance of Canada*

George MacKinnon Wrong National Historic Person of Canada

**Life span:** 1860-1948

St. Thomas, Ontario

---

**Designated:** 1950

**Plaque Status:** Plaqued in 1950

• **First professor of Modern History at University of Toronto (1895)**

Database last updated: 2004-01-05

Last Updated: 2003-11-27

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Date Published:  
August 2004

### George MacKinnon (George M.) Wrong (1860-1948)

Damien-Claude Bélanger  
Department of History  
McGill University

Historian and clergyman, was born Grovesend, Canada West. He was educated at the universities of Toronto, Oxford, and Berlin. The son of a failed Elgin County farmer, Wrong lived for a time with relatives in Toledo, Ohio. He returned to Canada as a teenager and found employment in a Toronto bookstore. Shortly thereafter, he converted to evangelical Anglicanism. In 1879 he enrolled in theology in the University of Toronto's low-church Wycliffe College and was ordained in the Anglican ministry in 1883. For the next nine years he was a lecturer in history and apologetics at Wycliffe College. His 1886 marriage to Sophia, the daughter of Edward Blake, leader of the Canadian Liberal Party and Chancellor of the University of Toronto, signalled his entry into high society. In 1894 he was appointed professor and head of the University of Toronto's Department of History, a position he would hold until his retirement in 1927. He was one of the founders of the Champlain Society. He also founded, in 1897, the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada*, and was the founding editor of its successor publication, the *Canadian Historical Review*, from 1920 to 1927. He was elected to the Royal Society of Canada in 1908. From 1914 to 1916 he co-edited the thirty-two-volume *Chronicles of Canada Series*. An anglophile and an imperialist - he was a founding member of the Round Table movement in Canada -, George M. Wrong played key role in the development of the historical profession in English-speaking Canada. His interest in Canadian-American relations found its expression in two books: *The United States and Canada: A Political Study* (1921) and *Canada and the American Revolution: The Disruption of the First British Empire* (1935). He attended the 1935 conference on Canadian-American relations organized by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.