

Forster's "Homecoming" at the Helson Gallery

Several portraits by Norval-born J. W. L. Forster from as far away as Stratford have found their way back home.

Until Feb. 28, 2016, Forster portraits, and pictures of local sites associated with the Forster family, will be included in an exhibit at the Helson Gallery entitled "Our Community and Our Collection."

According to the National Gallery of Canada, John Wycliffe Lowes Forster was a Canadian portrait painter who was born in Norval in 1850.

He began his artistic training in Toronto in 1869 as an apprentice to the portrait painter John Wesley Bridgman (1833-1902).

In 1871 he was awarded first prize in the amateur class at the annual fair of Upper Canada Agricultural Society for his portrait of Bridgman.

Forster also with Canadian landscape painter Charles Stuart Millard, and in Paris with Gustave Boulanger, William Adolph Bouguereau, Tony Robert-Fleury, and Carolus-Duran.

Upon returning to Canada in 1883, Forster set up his own studio in Toronto, became a member of the Ontario Society of Artists and the Royal Canadian Academy, and quickly gained acclaim for his portraits of notable people, including Bliss Carmen, Timothy Eaton, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Queen.

Throughout his life, Forster was a strong supporter of the work of the United Church.

As a delegate to the World's Sunday School Convention in Tokyo in 1920, he was commissioned to paint the portrait of the Emperor and Empress of Japan.



Several portraits from Norval born J.W.L. Forster have found their way back home, including Sir Isaac Brock, above, and Elizabeth Clarke, left, of Norval.
Submitted Photos

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