

## HISTORY OF THE ART GALLERY OF NORTHUMBERLAND

In attempting to offer a brief summary of the early years of the Art Gallery, two features will mark it which might be unacceptable in a formal history: it will be personal, and it will be anecdotal.

I arrived in Cobourg in May of 1959 on my return from moving about in the Far East where I had been since the latter part of 1958. Perhaps it is hindsight that suggests that the Town may have been in a slow wave of transition difficult to define; there were many pointers towards this, but more especially for me was the fact that the library had become, only recently, the Cobourg Public Library operating under the Public Libraries Act of the Province, and that I was the first professional librarian to be appointed. Miss Josephine Rayner, who succeeded Miss Roberts, had been in charge until my arrival just prior to which, I think, Mrs. Dick had become Head of the Junior Library.

Unless one had seen it, it would be difficult to visualize what the old building on King Street West was like. To say the delapidation was severe would be a masterpiece of understatement; making an assessment of it in 1960, an engineer remarked casually that it was difficult to determine exactly what supported the whole facade. The larger room on the right on entering, was the Senior Library containing fiction and non-fiction; the room on the left was the Junior Library the back part of which was a cavern that became the "office". The floor at the rear of the "office" was hazardous; loose floor-boards provided for the unwary an unexpected trap-door to the damp oubliette beneath. Each room was furnished with an oil space-heater, the one in the Junior Library being lit only in the afternoon so that for the remainder of the day in the "office" I wore an overcoat and kept my feet in a deep cardboard box. Later, someone lent me a fur coat to cover my knees. All in all, it was a curious mise en scene for a cultural centre.

One curious recollection about my arrival remains with me. While the collection was small, the non-fiction being non-existent in many areas while reference material was unknown, there were some excellent things in it. But by way of making the transition to being a Public Library, some "expert" had been dispatched from Toronto to "weed out the useless material" in Cobourg which was then exposed for sale on trays outside; from the useless material I extracted either eleven or seventeen - I forget which - first editions, most of which went into the beginnings of the rare books collection. Later, more than one perceptive resident warmly expressed his real gratefulness to the expert.

This diffuse little preamble is not really a digression, but rather an adumbration of the situation which evoked the outlines of a policy. But there was something else. Apart from the obviously considerable group of interesting and civilized people in the neighbourhood - rarely among the more visible - there seemed to be an appreciable number of university undergraduates coming and going, another collegiate institute was in the offing, a great quantity of requests of all kinds which we could not meet began to pour into the Library - all this was revealing and at times uncomfortable.

The idea of an art gallery was but one aspect of a larger whole never presented in its entirety although discussed informally. Statistics declared that Cobourg served a fairly large area-population which, for certain services at least, was constrained to look outside its own borders. In a small town, even in a large one, a library is a natural hub from which a considerable range of resources radiate; great universities have always been dependant, often founded, upon their libraries. The thing imagined was not an emasculated version of the community colleges which were soon to burgeon, but (and to many, nowadays, it may sound somewhat grandiose and irrelevant) rather a meeting place of modest scope where the humanities might flourish. It was, if you like, a rather vague concept.

But not so vague that plans remained perfumed intentions. First, there was a collection of books to be built that included an efficient reference department with an efficient staff, that reflected the needs of the community, and that community reflected diverse tastes and, not infrequently, demanding standards of scholarship. This was not a small task. Yet books are always, directly or indirectly, related to audio-visual experience which provides contrast or amplification, or both. To see: to hear - not simply to "read-about". Four areas for immediate development appeared salient; here they are in no order of precedence. 1. A collection of recorded music with, at times, concerts in the Library based on them. 2. Periodic exhibitions of artefacts of historical and cultural importance. 3. An art gallery. 4. Courses of lectures on a wide variety of subjects to be determined by public needs and interests.

The lectures faded quickly after about half a dozen. The record collection lives and grows, but I think we attempted only four concerts. I was wonderfully unsuccessful in selling these wares. But the exhibitions lasted at least three or four years if I recollect rightly, and

usually they were magnificent for they came - ninety per cent of them - from the Royal Ontario Museum. We were the only Library in the Province to have this privilege; from the day I sought it, the Curators were wonderfully kind and co-operative. The only relics of this endeavour are the two ROM display cases still in the Library.

The Art Gallery continues, of course, although now fully divorced from its parent body. In later years I was amused to hear, from time to time, of "a group of citizens who felt the need for a centre to be devoted to the exhibition and study of the visual arts" who had sponsored it. The phrase appears in a "Brief from the Cobourg Public Library and Art Gallery" dated July 1967, which was submitted by the Board to the Province of Ontario Council for the Arts. I believe it states further, that the Gallery was founded in 1961. The authors of all this cannot have consulted the records with sufficient care, for the latter are quite explicit about the Gallery's foundation which took place without the midwifery of "a group of citizens".

On being created a Public Library under the Public Libraries Act, the Board operating it becomes a legal entity being responsible for keeping Minutes of its transactions and for presenting annual reports of them to the appropriate Department in the Ministry of Education. Any Minute of the Board's meetings, therefore, is a legal statement of what takes place under its jurisdiction. In 1959 the Board, the first one under the new dispensation and the one which appointed me, was remarkable in a quiet and understated way. The Board of any institution changes its total personality with its changing personnel; this one was fresh and open to experiment, pleasantly casual even when asking searching questions, generous when considering different points of view, and it had a merciful sense of humour. I remember most of those who served on it during 1959 and 1960; Mrs. L.A. Verney, Mrs. A. Field, Mrs. R. Gardiner, Mr. Gordon King, Mr. Grant Sine, Mr. Alan McConvey - the most able of Treasurers - and the Chairman, Mr. Harry R. Deyman. Miss Helen Rayner acted as Secretary to the Board and, as the servant of the Board, I attended all its meetings.

During these early years, it would be impossible to overrate the good fortune the Library enjoyed in the Chairmanship of the late Judge Deyman, and to him and not less to his wife, the Gallery owes a continuing debt.

It was, of course, under the aegis of the Cobourg Public Library Board that the Art Gallery was established. It began operation in a decidedly muted key. The Minutes dated the 5th May 1960, states that "Mr. Barnett ... reported ... that he was painting a small room at the rear of the building, which he would use for showing reproductions of pictures". A month later, in the Minutes of the 9th June 1960, "He [Mr. Barnett] reported ... that on Wednesday, June 15th from 4:30 to 5:00 Members of the Board would have an opportunity to see the first display in Cobourg's new art gallery". On the 15th September 1960, the Minutes record that "The Chief Librarian ... 5.(c) ... advised the Board that book, museum, and Art Gallery displays had continued without interruption during the summer, interest in all three having been well maintained". And in the Chief Librarian's Report for 1960 still, I presume, in the Library's archives, it is stated in paragraph 4 that "The year 1960 ... has seen the opening of the new art gallery ... for the four summer months ... it cannot be opened in the winter as it is unheated. This venture met with immediate and sustained support". In the same section a recommendation is made that in 1961 " ... the Art Gallery exhibits should be widened and publicized, perhaps with an initial purchase of one or two original works ... ". It will be found, too, that in the statistical summary of the Report, it is repeated that the Art Gallery had four exhibitions.

On the 9th June 1960, therefore, members of the Board had the opportunity to see the first display in "Cobourg's new art gallery". This grand designation was applied to a room at the back of the Senior Library on King street, shaped roughly like a wedge of cheese and measuring, I think, about twenty feet long by eight feet at its widest end in which was a door leading to a small lavatory. For years the room had been a "catch-all" for a quite unimaginable array of discards, more often than not having little relationship to the Library; everything was coated with years of dust. All the books were scrutinized, of course, and not a few were catalogued and added to the collection. The job went quickly considering what was needed; wall-board had to be applied and several repairs made before it was painted in a warm, neutral tone. Our colleague and caretaker, Mr. Alec Gorman, was most generous in helping me with the transformation, and it was he who brought on his shoulder - from the Baptist Church, I believe - a strip of discarded coco-matting for the floor. It was a determined rust colour; decoratively it was our piece

de resistance.

Ludicrous as it may appear today, remembered or forgotten, at the time it seemed an achievement and a milestone. On the afternoon it was opened to the members of the Board - there was sherry and some small-chop to go with it - the first exhibition had been mounted: a group of quite nice reproductions from the Sienese School. Why? Simply because they were available. There were about a dozen of them I imagine, although I have forgotten the exact number, and they were unframed. Very shortly after the opening, the Gallery began to house the Library's small group of books on the arts which was just beginning to grow; the exhibitions from the Royal Ontario Museum had become a regular feature by this time. Furthermore, I do remember the second Gallery exhibition; it was a small collection of fabrics, mostly of Persian and Damascene provenance but including one or two oriental and Italian pieces - even now I would say they were rather fine.

That the Board took the establishment of the Gallery seriously was never in doubt. After a report about the ROM display of Islamic pottery in the Library, there follows 5.(f) in the Minutes of the 4th May 1961: "The Chief Librarian then reminded the Board of its decision to apply the five hundred dollars (\$500.00) allocated for the purpose of 1) a record collection, and 2) the establishment of a permanent art collection. He submitted that two committees be formed of a purely advisory capacity, the first to assist in the selection of [sic] the purchase of musical recordings, the second in the selection for purchase of works of art; he advised that neither committee should have any powers of decision or jurisdiction.

"After a thorough discussion of the recommendation, the Board un-animously agreed to the proposal of Mr. Sine seconded by Mr. McConvey, that it should proceed to the implementation of its decision made at the beginning of the year by the setting-up of these committees immediately; and that while personnel might change from time to time, the following ladies and gentlemen should be approached to serve on them in the first instance.

...

Art Committee - Mrs. H.R. Deyman  
Mrs. L.A. Verney  
Mr. Charles A. Hagen

"The Board directed that the Chief Librarian should sit on each committee as the servant of the Board".

At the Board meeting on the 8th June 1961, the acceptance of office by the proposed members of the Art Committee, was recorded. Recorded, too, in 4.(f) is the first Gallery display of the year - four Japanese prints of very fine quality, I remember, two of them being admirable kabuki specimens; and the Chief Librarian announced that Mr. Paavo Airola had agreed to exhibit some of his work during that summer. In 4.(g) the Chief Librarian acted as spokesman for the Art Committee (Mrs. Verney being abroad) strongly recommending that Mrs. David Dick should be co-opted to serve on it. Furthermore "... the Chief Librarian stated that ... after a very full discussion of the policy to be recommended to the Board, the Committee as a whole had visited Mr. Airola a second time. The Committee had decided that the initial purchases might well be the work of Canadian artists ... after searching discussion and careful assessment of each painting, the Committee had unanimously decided to recommend to the Board for immediate purchase ... the two canvases on display at the meeting ... on the proposal of the Mayor [an ex officio member of the Board] seconded by Mr. King, the Board agreed to the immediate purchase of both the paintings for the sum of three hundred dollars". It is of interest, too, that this was the first occasion on which the question of insurance arose, the Chairman and the Treasurer undertaking to arrange it for this first purchase. Pending new Library premises, the paintings were to be housed in the Mayor's office. Finally, "Mr. McConvey proposed that a publicity committee should be set up to deal especially with the new services offered by the Board in the Art and music collection ... he further proposed that Mrs. Verney should be in charge of this committee".

From the Art Gallery's very beginning in 1960, therefore, the legal record of the Minutes makes it quite clear that the Board knew exactly what it was about. From the time of the first exhibition for the members on the 15th of June in 1960, the Board was concerned with policy, with the means of implementing it, with financial provision, with insurance, with publicity. And, furthermore, it should be observed that from the very beginning, too, it was the Board which showed a quick and continuing awareness of the place of public support in the Gallery's development, and how to enlist it; the Art Committee was an earnest of this awareness, being created by the Board to report and to recommend, but having no powers to decide or to legislate.

Setting down so modest an account as this of the Gallery's formative years by constant recourse to the Board Minutes, may seem slightly jejune, yet by doing so one is constrained to follow the narrow way of fact and so escape the pitfalls of fiction and the personal flights of fancy which are a common enough rash upon the foundation of any successful institution. There was, in fact, nothing arid or dreary about the growth of the Gallery; there was, of course, as is always the case, a great deal of private discussion and weighing of pros and cons before any proposals were made formally. When the Gallery was first mooted, I had already had frequent meetings with the Deymans; these continued, needless to say, indeed increased as time went on, always with a grateful lack of heavy weather. But at Board meetings participation was as general as it was continuing; even in the few excerpts quoted from the Minutes, it is quite evident that different members were willing to make proposals and accept responsibility.

It is now the fourteenth of September 1961. In Minute 6 of the Board record, "Mrs. Verney presented a report for the Art Advisory Committee which was received with enthusiasm and satisfaction by the Board. She announced the purchase of two oil paintings by the late Sir Frank Brangwyn, R.A., their selection having been made and their purchase having been arranged by Mrs. David Dick. Mrs. Verney asked that the Chief Librarian should give a short resume of Sir Frank's work. The Board was entirely satisfied with the work of the Committee. Mr. King, in the name of the Board, requested the Secretary to write to Mrs. Dick thanking her for her work in London as a member of the Art Advisory Committee.

"Mrs. Verney then presented a recommendation from the Committee dealing with the formation of an Auxiliary for the implementation of the Committee's project. It was so worded that all matters of policy, purchase, and direct advisory personnel to the Board, should remain under the aegis of the Board.

"The Board discussed the Recommendation in detail, and after some emendation it was accepted ... its final form to be filed with the Minutes of the next statutory meeting ...".

It should be observed in passing that these first four paintings for the permanent collection, represented the acceptance and realization of the recommendation made in the Report of 1960 that in the following year - 1961 - " ... the Art Gallery exhibits should be widened and

publicized, perhaps with an initial purchase of one or two original works ...". And further observed that the Board was solely responsible for all decisions, for the actual purchase out of the funds which it administered, for insurance, and for their exhibition in the Art Gallery. Payments are duly included in the financial statements appended to the Minutes.

At the October meeting of 1961 - on the 12th - it is recorded 2. Mr. King stated that the insurance of the four paintings had been arranged ... 5.(b) [the Chief Librarian reports] The Art Gallery exhibition for October is the four initial purchases for the permanent collection. 6.(a) Mrs. Verney presented the re-drafted recommendation for the formation of the Cobourg Public Library Art Gallery Auxiliary which Mrs. Verney stated had been approved by the Chairman. On the proposal of Mrs. Gardiner seconded by Mr. Sine, the new draft was approved by the Board ... the Secretary being directed to file a copy with the Minutes ... " Among matters dealt with in this appended draft, that of suggested membership fees was included - three dollars for one person and five for a family. "The net proceeds", the draft continues, "of all Auxiliary fund raising would be transferred to the Board Treasurer and earmarked for the purchase of works of art". Another section declares that "The suggested method of forming such an Auxiliary would be to invite citizens whom the Art Advisory Committee feels would be interested, to a simple social gathering, at which Mr. Barnett might explain the ground work which must be laid in order that, one day, we may have a collection in which the whole of Cobourg may take pride ..."

It was in Minute 6 of the meeting on the 9th of November in 1961, that after a report from the Art Advisory Committee was recorded, presented by Mrs. Verney, " ... The Board decided to direct its Committee to give official publication of its activities by announcing them through the already established channel of the public notices in the Library and by any other public means willing to advertise it, while at the same time continuing to issue personal invitations as opportunity arose according to the practice of all such auxiliaries in the initial stages of their formation. ... The Board further directed its Committee to consider early 1962 as a suitable time for the first gathering of interested people". Which was indeed done, for at the first meeting in 1962 - on the 10th of January - "3. ... Mrs. Verney advised the



Board that its Art Advisory Committee had arranged for the first public meeting authorized by the Board as a preamble to the formation of the Cobourg Public Library Art Gallery Auxiliary to be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H.R. Deyman on Sunday, 28th January at 4:30 p. m.

The Committee expressed the hope that all Board members would attend". Next month, on the 14th of February, Minute 9 states that " ... Mrs. Verney reported on behalf of the Cobourg Public Library Art Gallery Auxiliary, that seventy-five people had been present to establish the Auxiliary and that ninety-five paid-up members had provided \$277.00".

This was all accomplished, then, within less than two years of the establishment of the Gallery in the early summer of 1960. Each well considered step was duly recorded by the Board. It may seem to have been insistent in maintaining its authority and jurisdiction over its advisory personnel and any funds collected, but I remember perfectly clearly why this was so; apart from the simple fact that until 1960 there had been no attempt by anyone to create an art gallery, the truth is that there was no more obviously available legal entity than the Board, under which the Art Gallery at that time could come into being and function. And, of course, without the Board there were no premises, there was no money for their rehabilitation even if the work cost nothing, and no money for the original purchases. Without the Board there was no Advisory Committee and there was no Auxiliary: both were formed by, and remained instruments of, the Board during these years. I have spoken of the frequent discussions I had with the Deymans prior to the taking of these steps; looking back, I am astonished that so little was left to chance. What might have appeared, at one moment, and still appear, only casual and agreeable such as the afternoon coffee parties at the Deymans to establish the Auxiliary, and at the next merely pedestrian such as the presentation of ideas to be worked into acceptable proposals, was indeed very carefully designed and watchfully carried out.

Two more purchases were recorded on the 12th of September in 1962. In Minute 6, Mrs. Verney asked me to give a formal description of them as a record, although it is stated that each Board member had had an opportunity to inspect them. One was by Marthe Rakine (Fountain in the Park), and the other by Peter Haworth (Riviere au Renard). The record continues: "The Board noted there was a sum of ... (\$250.00) still at its disposal for further acquisitions during the current year ...

consideration was even now being given [by the Art Advisory Committee] to its final recommendations for 1962". At the November meeting, the Board gave its opinion " ... that donations ... could be carried from one year to the next".

Not only had the Board established the Gallery in 1960, then dealt with acquisitions and their insurance, sponsored an Art Advisory Committee being careful to appoint its personnel, and charged that Committee with the task of forming an Auxiliary to enlist public support, by 1962 its maturity and sense of responsibility as the governing body of the Art Gallery was evident in seeking from its Committee an enunciation of a "purchasing policy". This was duly presented at the December meeting of that year - a copy of it is still appended to the Minutes of the 13th. There were to be two main groups in the collection according to the proposal, both including all media, and in the first group devoted to the " ... work of Canadian artists ... all acquisitions [were] to be as fully representative of the artists involved as may be, and not simply studies or sketches for future works". Apparently the Board was perfectly able to distinguish between a collection of unsigned studio sketches - valuable as they often are - and works worthy of a gallery with some credibility as such. The second section was to contain " ... other than Canadian works of art ... purchased for comparative purposes, or because they relate to or 'fill out' the main section ... " The value of a single agent is allowed, yet there must remain to the Board " ... complete freedom to purchase in any market and to seek advice in any quarter". Finally comes the recommendation of " ... a five-six-month purchasing plan ... " suggesting an immediate example of such action as " ... the Board would do well to acquire one or two works within the lithograph-woodcut-etching field, and one or two oil paintings".

All this is, at the least, a recognizable awareness on the part of the Board of what it was about, and while opinions and value judgments today may be diverse, it might well be submitted (and quite dispassionately) that the Board's accomplishment was something more than minimal.

A coffee party, at the Deymans of course, was held on the 27th of January in 1963, and in the February Minutes (of the 13th) the happy results are recorded. An acute, if somewhat unexpected, observation is made at the end of Minute 2: " ... Considering the usual pattern of immediately falling interest in the support of such projects, the Board

remarked with satisfaction on this admirable achievement". How right that particular Board was. In passing it may be noted that in February 1963, the Board decided to purchase the Library's present building, but the ensuing involvements did not halt the continuing growth of the Gallery, for at the April meeting the Board sanctioned the purchase of Grant McDonald's Seated Woman. Nevertheless, the years 1963 and 1964 were assuredly years of on-going planning in preparation for the transition to the new location which finally took place between (and including) two Wednesdays, the 13th to the 22nd of July in 1964. Mr. Deyman was appointed to the Bench, and so his resignation came in September 1963: this was a blow that the library and the Art Gallery could ill afford. But of course the re-design of the interior and rehabilitation of the fabric of the new building, gathered speed; one of its main attractions from the beginning was the quite beautifully proportioned auditorium which was to become, of course, the Art Gallery - a far cry from its predecessor of 1960. Purchases for it continued; in the Minutes of the 19th of February in 1964, Mrs. Verney on behalf of the Art Advisory Committee recommended the acquisition of two coloured etchings, one by Shirley Wales and the other by David Partridge. At that meeting, too, the Board expressed the hope that the Auxiliary would hold another reception. Much basic, essential, work was being carried out in these years, which passed quite unsung perhaps because it was carried out so unassumingly; Mrs. F.L. Lawson, who had succeeded Mr. McConvey as Treasurer, had that thankless and unremitting task, and equally persistent and unflagging was the dedication of Mr. Christie Leonard of the Building Committee who was, in fact, quite indispensable.

During the latter part of 1964, from September to November, there are several references to on-going arrangements - correspondence with Mrs. Deyman, plans for another fund-raising coffee party, reminders to the Board of the money potentially available for acquisitions, and the co-opting of new members to the Art Advisory Committee. Over all such business the Board maintained a lively surveillance, and there were no plans formulated and carried out without its permission and under its authority. The first gathering in the new premises of the Art Gallery, another coffee party the Board had suggested, was held before the rehabilitation took place; the existing collection was on exhibition and, considering the state of the surroundings, it was not unimpressive,

making it quite clear even to the less imaginative, what it was to become. I have a very vivid recollection of the sweeping and dusting which Mr. Gorman and I did by way of preparation - we were filthy from head to foot - and it took me hours to hang all the pieces. It is recorded in the Minutes of the 17th of February in 1965, that I asked for immediate rehabilitation of the old auditorium, enumerating specific areas of need such as wall treatment and lighting; "9. ... Mr. McCaig proposed and Mrs. Field seconded that the Board request the Property Committee to consult with ... about the rehabilitation of the Auditorium, the plans for rehabilitation to be submitted in a sequence of priorities".

At the same meeting, after giving the results of the January gathering, in the name of the Art Gallery Auxiliary Mrs. Verney " ... requested that money raised by the Auxiliary should be in a separate account for the Cobourg Public Library Art Gallery Auxiliary, the signing officers to be the same as the Board". At the March meeting Mr. Leonard gave a progress report about tenders for the work to be done in the Gallery, and in the April records it is learned that the electrical installation was proceeding. Mrs. Verney drew attention to the temporary display of the new coloured etchings by David Blackwood, and announced " ... that paintings to the value of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) would be given ... by Mrs. John F. Leeson in memory of her father, Dr. F.P. Lloyd".

In May the Board, in committee, was able to inspect the transformation of the old auditorium as it proceeded; it was also at that meeting of the Board that I announced my resignation, to take effect at the end of September, 1965.

It is astonishing how aggressively vital the Art Gallery was. In one month alone - it was June - there are five references to it in the Minutes. "2. The partitions and doors for the upper rooms of the Art Gallery had been put in hand ... 5. ... the Chairman asked the Chief Librarian in the absence of Mrs. Verney, to report on the recommendations of the Art Advisory Committee. The Chief Librarian submitted the two paintings offered by Mrs. J.F. Leeson ... one by Goodridge Roberts and the other by William Roberts: the Board's acceptance was unanimous ... The Art Advisory Committee submitted for the Board's consideration a painting by Molly Bobak - The Tea Party - ... the Board unanimously agreed to the purchase. 6. e) The Board was reminded [by the Chief

Librarian in his monthly report] that plans would have to be made for the opening of the Art Gallery. 7. The Art Gallery was nearing completion, Mr. Leonard told the Board ... it was open for inspection by the Board".

When I left the Library in September of 1965, the last thought I had was of returning. Yet I did so in late 1967. It would be agreeable to relate that the motive for doing so was highly praiseworthy; far from it - it was for money. To say the money, even for those days, was basic, is a euphemism acceptable to few employees today, but circumstances pushed salary considerations into second place. Accepting the Board's invitation to return had little to do with the Library or Art Gallery, but at that time Cobourg appeared to me the best centre in which to meet my own commitments. Most people would agree that returning to a previously held position is unwise; certainly before doing so I paused, but not long enough. I remained one full year, two or three months in the preceding one, and the early part of 1969, resigning finally in May of the latter year.

The Board, predictably, had changed in personnel and, no less predictably, so had its character. Happily I was to work a great deal with Mr. Leonard, for immediately on arrival I undertook the re-designing of the non-fiction and reference departments. An enormous bonus on my return was to find that Mr. Kolisnyk was in charge of all the exhibitions in the Art Gallery, and generously he consented to remain on; under his guidance, I imagine, the exhibitions have never been bettered. And it was a sustained quality. At the very first Board meeting I attended in October of 1967, Art Gallery business is minuted, including the seeking of a ruling about catering in it. More important "A gift of \$500.00 was reported from Mrs. John Leeson for further purchases ... for the Art Gallery ..." It was at the next meeting on the 15th of November that "5. d) submission was made that the rooms above the Art Gallery on the balcony floor should be cleared ... to provide adequate storage and showing area for the permanent collection ..."

The place of the Art Gallery as a well established institution was certainly recognized, for at the January meeting of the Board in 1968, I declared that I had accepted an invitation to attend a conference of Art Gallery Directors of Canada.

I began this brief account of the Art Gallery's beginnings by saying that it might be anecdotal and personal, but that it must be set

out primarily on the basis of recorded fact rather than on that of cultivated memories and stirring visions of personal achievement. Minutes of Board meetings can be dreary reading: they are also incontrovertible. And the record, in this case, is enunciated step by perceptible step, from the foundation of the Art Gallery by the Board in 1960 to the transfer of its operation to the Auxiliary, which was also a creation of the Board, in 1969. To speculate whether or not there would ever have been a such-and-such without a so-and-so seems an idle and tiresome exercise to me, but one thing I do know is that the Cobourg Public Library Board of the years 1959 to 1963 - and I speak only of it and assuredly of no other - was responsible for building a splendid library out of very little, and an art gallery out of nothing.

G.R. Barnett