

Georgetown painter remembered -

Frank C. Black had an artist's zest for living

By JOHN SOMMER
Herald Special

Frank C. Black, the fine, old painter, who had lived in this town for 36 years, died a year ago on May 12, at the Georgetown District Memorial Hospital. Let me tell you something about him.

He was born 1893 in England and came to Toronto, by way of Bermuda, in 1911. His ancestors were boatbuilders. He inherited his sense of craftsmanship from them. In Toronto he apprenticed at a commercial art house and eventually worked for MacLean's Publishers.

He enlisted with the 48th Highlanders in 1915 and was sent to the battlefields in France where millions of young men lost their lives. Frank almost lost his. He was wounded twice, the second time so severely that he was in hospitals for about two years from February 1918 to December 1920. To the day he died his body sheltered the souvenirs of war: steel pieces close to his heart, that could have killed him at any time.

But instead of slowing him down this threat added zest to his life. Whenever he had saved some money he used it to pursue his goal to become a painter. During the Twenties he took courses at the Ontario College of Art and at the Arts Student's League in New York City. His living he made by returning to MacLean's after the war. He married in 1930 but the first years of Frank's and Lillian's married life were hard years, depression years, with Frank barely managing as a free-lance commercial artist.

However, serious painting was

never far from his mind. For two summers, in the Thirties, he went to Massachusetts to paint with Emiel Gruppe and Stanley Woodward, two acknowledged masters of marine painting. In 1938 he got a job on a newspaper in Bermuda and the Blacks had four glorious years there, years that left many traces in Frank's subsequent work.

When the Blacks returned to Toronto in 1942 the Bryant Press became Frank's employer and he stayed there to 1955, which was the year he retired. Before that, in 1952, the Blacks bought a house in Georgetown, the house they would live in for 36 years.

During his years in Toronto, Frank had come in touch with many of the artists there. Arthur Lismer, for instance, was his teacher at the Ontario College of Art, and D.M. Paterson and Nicholas Hornyansky were his friends. Others, like Casson, he met through his work at the Bryant Press or at exhibitions of the Ontario Society of Artists and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, in which he took part.

In Georgetown, he missed the company of these people but he soon assembled a new circle of friends and pupils. Dorothy Stone became a close friend and the Palette and Pencil Club, which he started, gave him the opportunity to develop his considerable talents for teaching.

When I came to Georgetown in 1962 Frank Black was soon pointed out to me. In those days I was more at home with the work of artists of my own generation but I learned to appreciate what Frank had to give,

he was such an honest man, and I became very fond of his company and his work. He was generous with his time and he loved to talk. Even his serious pronouncements had a humorous quality.

"I am a landscape painter," he once said to me, "but the way things are going around here, a few more years and no landscape will

be left to paint." He was critical of the rapacious greed that leads to the ravishment of the countryside and he was, at times, saddened that the world had become such a war-like place during his lifetime.

He and his wife lived modestly, surrounded by Frank's paintings. They hated all waste and never owned a car. They loved to travel

and Frank always came back from a trip with drawings and sketches to make paintings from.

We have almost forgotten how to honor people like Frank. In our society the biggest noise-makers usually get the biggest attention.

He was an example in more than one way. I hope that the people of Georgetown will never forget him.

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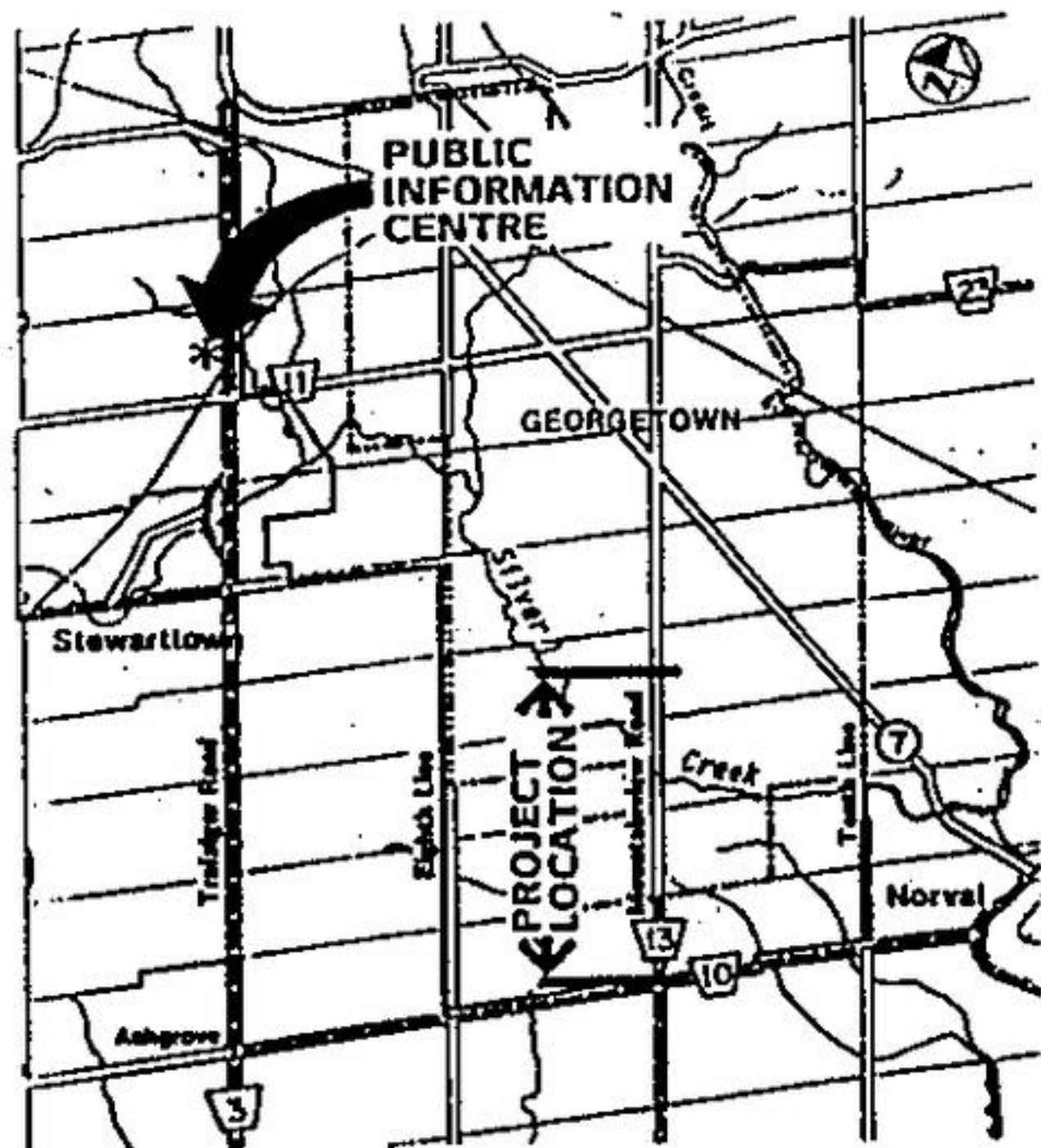
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Public Information Centre Mountainview Road

The Region of Halton is undertaking a Preliminary Design Study for Mountainview Road (Regional Road 13) through the Silver Creek Valley area. The following public information centre is being held to provide area residents with an opportunity to review alternative improvement plans:



Wednesday, May 24, 1989

4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
in the Committee Room at the
Town of Halton Hills Administration Building
Trafalgar Road
(North of Maple Avenue)

Members of the public are invited to drop in at their convenience and discuss the study with representatives from the Region and their consultant. If you require any additional information regarding this study, please contact:

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