Several favourite books to be revisited

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I'm currently writing a biography of George Henry Martin Johnson, Teyonhehkwen, a legendary Chief of Six Nations in the 19th century. Many of the records on Indigenous subjects in Canada have been digitized recently, in part because of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work, and this has been invaluable! I have now gone through tens of thousands of such documents online, which would have been impossible without Canada's central library and archives.

Q. How did reading as a young person influence you as a doctor and a historian?

They're two different solitudes: science and history, although they do come together in another interest of mine: the library? history of medicine. As a medical student one learns to take a patient's history and, after the physical examination, one interprets any lab and radiological findings. In challenging cases, the physician may even consult reference sources. In-

that being exposed to different writing styles and genres invariably improves one's own writing style. I've read a lot of history and non-fiction adventure/expedition books over the vears - Ernest Shackleton's South: The Endurance Expemind; more recently I've been influenced by Canadian historian Charlotte Gray, whose many works include biogra-Alexander Graham Bell, who was a good friend of 'my' Chief Johnson. Pierre Berton's output was truly remarkable - I once met him at a book launch and he freely admitted that he had three or four researchers - I wish I had those resources.

As I explained, the library has been invaluable for me personally; however, I was so impressed whenever I came into the library to use the microfilm reader, just how busy the library was: I would witness

process. But I'm convinced out books to take home; sometimes there was a librarian simply reading to a small group of children, while on other occasions a parent (or grandparent) would be sitting there quietly reading a story to his/her own child. And whenever I'm at the front desk I'm impressed at least one person who comes in regularly to the library just some the library provides a ref-soldier ancestors. uge - a pleasant, 'safe' place to escape from their little apartment or perhaps some social conflict.

Q. Do you have a favourite book that you keep coming Q. What is the value of a back to read again and again?

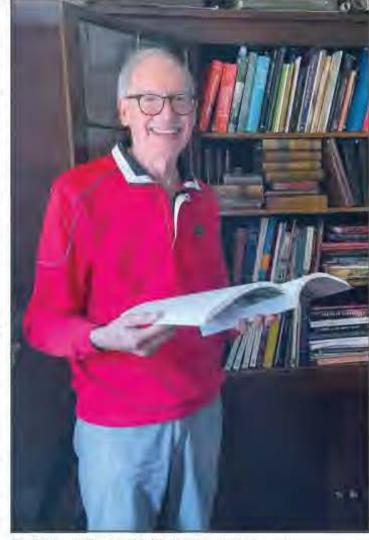
I'm sure for many, one's favourite book changes from decade to decade or genre to genre or simply evolves according to one's stage in life. There are books that on reading the last sentence, you sigh and think 'wow, that was the best plain Society. children of all ages coming ei- read yet.' Then you find other terpreting and writing history ther with their school class or books perhaps equally im- ed your work as an author? in many respects it a cimilar on their own excitedly nicking preceive and you conclude that

someday you will just have to go back and relive that special read. One that sticks with me is The Englishman's Boy by Guy Vanderhaeghe - I'll be coming back to it, someday. Also, All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr was wonderful, in part from my own perdition, 1914-1916 comes to by all the coming and going of spective as an ophthalmologist. folks of all ages. I also know of I really enjoyed Canadian author Alistair MacLeod's novel, No Great Mischief, although to use the computer. I'm fa- I was frankly disappointed to phies of Pauline Johnson and miliar with others who enjoy learn how little regard Generthe periodicals. No doubt, for al Wolfe had for my Scottish-

> One would be remiss if I didn't mention The Journal of Major John Norton 1816 with its remarkable narrative of Indigenous Peoples and the War of 1812, including many references to Niagara. I was fortunate to hold Norton's original manuscript in my hands in the library of Alnwick Castle, England, where it sat forgotten for 150 years until discovered by a researcher and published (and

Q. Has the library support-

event where I could talk and important resource to have an answer questions about my institution like a local library Vas they held an evening recent publication - such an that supports local writers



later reprinted) by the Cham- Dr. Richard Merritt with his books. (I. Andzans)