



July 20, 2007

“Where is Muriel E. Newton-White?”



Muriel as a child



Muriel June 2007

Most folks in the Temiskaming area have heard of Muriel E. Newton-White and all of her accomplishments. The children in the area know her as their Sunday school teacher or as Aunty Muriel. When I first met Muriel fifteen years ago at an art event at the Englehart museum I had no idea that one day we would be exhibiting together.

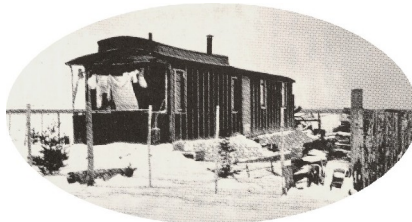
Several years later Muriel called and asked if I would be interested in being one of the guest artists to take part in her Art Exhibition at the Legion Hall in Charlton. Of course I was honored to have the opportunity to exhibit with Muriel. We continued to have an annual art show at the Legion along with other guest artists for a few years after that. We still visited occasionally and on one of my recent visits with Muriel I met her brother Ralph, very nice fellow. During my visit I spoke to them about doing a feature story on Muriel in my column for a local news papers. Muriel said, “It will be delightful to read about myself since I have forgotten so much about myself” and proceeded to give me one of her lovely smiles.



Muriel Newton-White was born in 1928, approximately six years after the devastating fire of 1922. Her family members were from England and eventually move to Robillard Township in Charlton. Muriel's mother and father met, married and had two children; Ralph and Muriel. To find out more about the Attwaters and the Newton-Whites and the Streetcar in the cow pasture near Moose Farm, read Muriel Newton-White's book "The Cold Wind in the Winter."



Muriel's Family Photo



The Streetcar



Muriel's Family Photo

Muriel has always enjoyed drawing; as a child she drew all the time. Her schooling days were done through the Department of Education Correspondence Courses. Later at the age of 17, she received a scholarship which enabled her to spend four years at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto of which she graduated in 1949. While attending art school in Toronto, Muriel also took Sunday school lessons from the Sisters of St. John while boarding with them she became an associate of their order. She occasionally visited the convent.

Once Muriel completed her art education and returned to Charlton she kept herself busy with teaching, sign painting, card-designing, as well as sketching & painting. She later lived in Haileybury for a number of years and in 1975 moved to Englehart area where she continued to work at her lettering and illuminating, writing and illustrating children's books. She has also enjoyed devoting her time to the Anglican Church where she designed bulletins with her unique calligraphy technique and prepare lessons for Sunday school children. Muriel enjoyed working with the children.

In partnership with long time friend, Janet Saunders, Muriel & Janet designed "Faith Greeting Cards." Muriel also painted many wall paintings; one of those wall paintings was restored in 1997, titled "All Things Bright & Beautiful" which is now proudly displayed at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Haileybury. Another fabulous wall painting is at the Englehart Library which was done in partnership with two other local artists; Rob Moir and Sally Lawrence. In recognitions for her outstanding contributions in the community, Muriel received the degree of Doctorate of Canon Law award from



Thorneloe, University in Sudbury. To help further her artistic career Muriel received a number of Ontario Arts Council grants.

Today, Muriel E. Newton-White is an accomplished artist and is well deserving of our respect and support for the artist she has become. She has held numerous solo exhibitions in Galleries such as; Englehart & Area Museum, Timmins Museum and National Exhibition Center and Temiskaming Art Gallery in Haileybury. The Little Gallery in Haileybury exhibited and sold Muriel's paintings for a number of years. She has also had special invitational shows at churches and schools throughout Northern Ontario. With her paint and brush Muriel has captured moments in time; whether they are in oil, acrylic, watercolour and other Media; Muriel's paintings will be around for many years to come even though those moments in time have long disappeared. By sharing her wonderful gift, Muriel has assured our beautiful landscapes of Northern Ontario will be remembered for generations to come. Her paintings continue to adorn multiple walls of private, corporate and government collections throughout Canada and abroad. I have included a few samples of her work.



Acrylic



Oil 1951



Watercolour

The Englehart Historical Museum has a wonderful collection of Muriel's paintings for your viewing pleasure, which date back to her childhood as well as many family artifacts she and her brother Ralph have donated. They are displayed in various parts of the museum.

Today, Muriel E. Newton-White's paintings can be viewed and purchased at Canvas & Clay in New Liskeard and at Lakeview Signs & Stain Glass Shop, Cobalt.

Not only is Muriel Newton-White accomplished in painting but she is also a published author of numerous books for children and adults. One such book is; "How to Draw Backhouses," a humorous as well as a wonderful *How to Book*. "The Cold Wind in the Winter" as I mentioned earlier, tells of her life in the streetcar and the book contains many wonderful drawings by Muriel as a child and family photos.



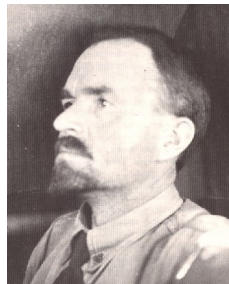
The sequel to “The Cold Wind in the Winter” titled, “The Pleasant Summer Sun” is another wonderful book to read. She is best known for her book (*a must read*) titled, “Backhouses of the North” which has sold well over 100,000 copies since its publication in 1972. *I found it to be very amusing and witty.*

Let’s not forget her delightful children’s books. Muriel once said, “The secret to writing for children is to write it for you and for the child you were and still are inside.” Books such as: Adventures of the Sparrow Family, Houses for Mouses, The Land of Long Shadows, Pumpkin Pussycat, Mouse Tales of Temiskaming and many more fantastic children’s books. Her books are published by the Cobalt Book Store and are available there as well. You can also go to your local library and ask for other books by Muriel Newton-White.

Her father, E. Newton-White also had a few books published. “Hurt Not the Earth” printed by Ryerson Press and the other book; “Gillmor of Algoma Archdeacon and Tramp” printed by Charters Publishing Company Ltd.



Muriel & Ralph Childhood



Mr. E. Newton-White



Ralph & Muriel June 2007

For a while now, folks have asked me if I know where Muriel is and how she is doing. A few years ago Muriel became very ill and was not able to care for herself. She is much better today and well looked after but still not strong enough to be on her own. She has a lot of wonderful friends and family members helping her get through the rough times when they arise.

As for the where; Muriel is now living at Extendicare Tri-Town, in Haileybury. She did admit to me that she misses her freedom occasionally but realizes how very lucky she is and how she does appreciate all the tender loving care she is getting at Extendicare.



I am certain there is a lot more to Muriel Newton-White and all of her accomplishments. Someone should write a book on her as this is just a drop in the bucket I am sure. I simply wanted to let folks know she is alive and well. As for those who have not heard of Muriel, look for her books and paintings and see for yourselves all that she has achieved. As for me, knowing Muriel has indeed enriched my life as I am certain she has enriched others out there. How can you not be touched by her sweet smile?

Anyone wishing to write Muriel send letters to:
C/O Extendicare Tri-Town,
To: Muriel Newton-White, 143 Bruce Street, Haileybury ON, P0 J 1K0.

I am sure she would love to hear from you but please don't expect a reply as it is difficult for her to write.

Hope you enjoyed my story on Muriel as much as I enjoyed writing it.
Stay well dear Muriel.

Till next time, have a safe summer.

Alice Sawicki signing off,