

# THE SCOTS CANADIAN

Issue XVIII

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Spring 2004

## John McDermott to receive 2004 Scot of the Year Award

On Tuesday, April 6, our annual Tartan Day dinner will once again be held at Casa Loma and this year we are proud to announce that famous singer/songwriter John McDermott will be the recipient of our "Scot of the Year 2004" award.

Internationally acclaimed chef John Higgins, formerly of Buckingham Palace, will be approving the bill o' fare for the event, so with good food, dancing, entertainment plus the chance to meet John McDermott in person it will indeed be a



*John McDermott during rehearsals*

night to remember. Casa Loma is a magnificent setting for a function like this so please ensure that you book into plenty of time. As in the past, tickets are priced at \$150 per person.

"Legend" is not a title John McDermott would readily embrace, but his accomplishments have indeed become legendary in recording industry lore.

McDermott calls Toronto home, but he has also found a home as an international recording star, and is known as much for his successful musical career as for his campaigning for veterans' causes.

The ninth of 12 children from a traditional Glasgow Irish family who emigrated from Scotland to Canada in the 1960s, McDermott's musical roots are equal parts Scottish and Irish.

McDermott was discovered quite by chance, while, as a circulation sales representative for the Toronto Sun, he gave an impromptu rendition of "Danny Boy" at a company party. Executives in attendance helped fund McDermott's first album, *Danny Boy*, originally recorded as a personal 50th anniversary tribute for his parents. The album eventually found its way into the hands of EMI Music Canada.

The outcome of that fateful performance has catapulted him into a musical career that, not even 10 years later, includes nine full-length albums, three Canadian platinum records, five Juno nominations and a solid international touring schedule.

McDermott's songs showcase his innate understanding and facility with traditional folk melodies as well as more contemporary styling. He is a new generation of musical storyteller in the great Celtic tradition, somehow combining the majesty of legendary Irish tenor John McCormack, the lyrical sense of Robert Burns, the charm of Dean Martin, and the everyman quality of Pete Seeger. Underneath it all is the driving desire to chronicle the many facets of universal human experience.

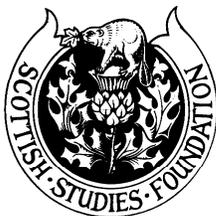
In the USA, McDermott's success has provided him with the ability to express his commitment to veterans' causes, which have always occupied a central place in his life and have been an important theme in his music. In recognition of this commitment, McDermott was awarded one of the United States' highest accolades: the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's "Bob Hope Award."

Especially important to McDermott are the legions of homeless veterans in big cities and small towns from coast to coast. His concern is borne out through innovative projects such as McDermott House, a transitional housing cooperative for veterans in Washington, D.C., and more recently, the Hope McDermott Day Program Center in Boston, Mass.

For more information on the Tartan Day event, please contact Duncan Campbell at 416-633-8974 or Nola Crewe at 416-466-0311.

### *Scots Wha Hae*

*a desire to nurture and preserve  
their heritage in Canada  
are invited to join*



#### THE SCOTTISH STUDIES FOUNDATION

*a charitable organization  
dedicated to actively supporting the  
Scottish Studies Program  
at*

*The University of Guelph*

Charitable registration  
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## From the Chair

Dear Fellow Members,

On behalf of the Board of the Scottish Studies Foundation, I would like to thank you all for your wonderful encouragement and support during the past year. Each and every membership fee and every donation is important to us, not only to complete our fundraising commitments towards the endowed Chair of Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph but to finance the Scottish Office there, and to assist students with travel and other means of conducting research crucial to their studies.

As you can see from the photographs on the adjacent page, our year got off to a good start with our first fundraiser of 2004 – the Burns Night at the Granite Club in Toronto.

As usual, Gordon Hepburn and Duncan Campbell did a magnificent job of organizing the event and I would like to thank them and all the Granite Club staff who worked hard to make it a success. I also want to let all of you who were unable to attend know that you were given a vigorous round of applause for your wonderful support of our cause.

Incidentally, you may be interested to learn that the Granite Club has strong Scottish connections. Apparently it was established back in 1875, when five prominent Toronto Scots-Canadians were looking to find an economical venue for their curling club.

With regard to establishing the Chair of Scottish Studies, Jacqueline Murray (Dean,

College of Arts) has been keeping me up-to-date on the University's search for a suitable candidate. As previously mentioned, last July the University began advertising widely in Canada, the USA, UK, Australia and Europe.

In January the process of narrowing down the candidates began and it is anticipated that we shall have all the short-listed candidates in Canada for on-campus visits sometime in March. Once the actual schedule has been firmed up, an invitation will be sent to Foundation members inviting you to meet the candidates at Guelph and attend the public presentations.

And now a surprise – an offer you can't refuse! I have a small number of books (old and new) which you are welcome to have. Just drop me a line c/o the Foundation and I will send them to you free of charge but keep in mind availability will be on a first come first served basis. The lucky recipients will be listed in the next edition of the newsletter.

Until next time, take care and thanks again for your support.

Sincerely  
David Hunter

Here is the first set of books available:

Campey, Lucille H., The Silver Chief, Toronto, 2003, Natural Heritage Books

Corbett, John, McLure J. Derrick, Stuart-Smith, Jane, The Edinburgh Companion to Scots, Edinburgh 2003, Edinburgh University Press

MacGregor, Alasdair Alpin, The Highlands Of Scotland in Pictures, London 1947, Odhams Press

Mahood, Linda, Policing, gender, class and family-Britain, 1850-1940, UCL Press

Sir Walter Scott, J.M. Barrie et al, Scottish Short Stories, London 1963, Oxford University Press

Service, Robert, The Spell of the Yukon, New York, 1907, Barse & Hopkins



### SCOTTISH STUDIES PROGRAM

Have you ever thought about tracing your family history and don't know where to start?

Find out at

### SCOTTISH FAMILY HISTORY DAY

Saturday, April 24 2004

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

At the University of Guelph's  
Humber Campus, Toronto  
Room 127

Sessions will be led by Jane MacNamara, Member of the Ontario Genealogical Society and will cover how to get started, how to examine old records, how to understand the terminology, and how to use information on inheritance and related documents.

Information package and morning tea and coffee will be provided.

Cost \$30.00 (\$25 for Scottish Studies Foundation members)

Everyone is welcome to attend and join in this voyage of discovery.

The University of Guelph-Humber is located on the north campus of Humber College, on the south-west corner of Finch Avenue and Highway 27.

For registration please go to [www.uoguelph.ca/scottish](http://www.uoguelph.ca/scottish) and click on Scottish Family History Day.

OR

Call or e-mail the Scottish Studies Office for further information:  
[scottish@uoguelph.ca](mailto:scottish@uoguelph.ca)

Tel: 519 824 4120 Ext: 53209



Andrew Bonnell and Stephanie Hill (Scottish Studies M.A. students), Deborah Maskens (Senior Manager, College of Arts Advancement), Gordon Hepburn (SSF Governor) and Jacqueline Murray (Dean, College of Arts)



The pipes and drums of the 48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders



The arrival of the haggis



Serious whisky nosing



Folk singer Danielle Bourre



Sam Lochran gives the address to the Haggis



The Gay Gordons



MC Gordon Hepburn and prize winner Wendy Evans



Peter Fyvie gives the toast to the lassies  
 ← and Daisy White replies  
 →



The Selkirk Grace given by Wayne McLeod  
 →



## Burns Night 2004

# When the men spoke Gaelic again

by Joan Carmichael

*The story of Donald Morrison, the Megantic outlaw of the late nineteenth century, has been recounted by different writers and produced for television by both CBC and BBC. This is the version that was told to me by my grandmother, Louise MacIver Scott who was a little girl in Galson, Quebec in 1888. The story is related at two levels - it is her recollection of the events of the time coloured by stories told by others as she was growing up and also, it is her sorrow at the loss of her mother tongue, Gaelic. She continued to speak Gaelic to her old friends and to her sister, Effie until Effie's death in 1955. After that, there was no one left to talk to. She taught her grandchildren a few phrases and they, in turn, passed them on to their children but when she died in 1984, the language died with her.*

When Louise MacIver was five years old she heard the men start speaking Gaelic again. At that time, they usually spoke English to each other because, one hundred years ago in Compton County in Quebec, it was the important language. "English is good for business," Pappa said. Louise didn't understand. When you are a little girl, buying grain for the cattle at the feed store and settling the mortgage with the Eastern Townships Bank was not important.

Her older sisters, May and Effie went to school and they had learned English there. Now, even at home, they spoke in English to each other and Louise couldn't understand them so she felt left out. She knew she would have to learn English when she went to the Beurla sgoil (English school) next year but she didn't want to. Why couldn't everyone talk Gaelic like they did twenty years ago when Mamma and Pappa came here from the Isle of Lewis in Scotland?

Mamma still spoke Gaelic, of course, but she was busy with the new baby and the farm work so she had little time for her. It was good to hear the men talking Gaelic again and she wanted to hear what they said.



Donald Morrison

The five men on MacIver's piazza (covered porch) were talking in Gaelic one warm summer evening and they were very solemn. If Louise sat very still behind the big rocking chair, no one would notice her and the, "A' dol cadal, lughachailleag" ("Get to bed, little one") from Pappa would be postponed. The men were talking to Donald Morrison, something bad was happening and she listened to the words. Louise knew all about Domhnall (Donald), of course.

Everyone in Compton County knew about him. He had just come back from the West where he'd been for seven years, since before she was born. He had gone to make his fortune in the mountains that were bigger than the Megantic hills and further away than Sherbrooke. Louise had never even been the thirty miles to Sherbrooke but Effie and May had once gone there with Pappa in the wagon to buy sugar.

Donald had come back from Montana, maybe that was near Sherbrooke. It must be a wonderful place because Danny, her big brother would listen to Donald's tales of the Wild West and wished he could go there someday too.

Then there was Morag but everyone called her Marion now. Morag McKinnon was going to marry Donald when he came home. She had been waiting all this time, waiting for him for seven years. Everyone said how pretty she was. They said her eyes were Highland blue and that she was a boidheach chaileag (a pretty girl). Louise liked to go to McKinnon's and listen to Morag/Marion play the piano. She played and sang the old songs as she waited for her love and now he had come back to marry her.

But Donald wasn't very happy that night when he talked to the men. He was telling them again how hard he had worked out west and how he had sent all his money back home to pay off the mortgage on the family homestead. Louise didn't understand that but she heard how his father hadn't kept the receipts and something had happened to the money and now the Morrison's had no home.

This was a bad thing, a very bad thing. The men were all very serious. Uncle John Graham never ever laughed or even smiled

but Pappa liked to laugh and make jokes - now they were all serious. It was a sad thing for the Morrison's not to have a home but she knew everyone would help find a place for them. Hadn't the minister at the Presbyterian Church prayed for the Morrisons?

What was really strange to Louise was that a French family had moved into the Morrison's home. As different as the English were, the French were even more so. There weren't many French families in Compton, there were some over Winslow way, so she heard, but they didn't go to her Church or to the Primary school. Danny said their church was full of statues and they prayed to a God who was a Lady and Mamma said to stay away from them because they were different.

Louise had heard that sometimes they spoke English but that it sounded funny and they never spoke Gaelic so she was afraid of them. When she went to bed that night she thought about the French people.

Effie and May woke her early the next morning and they were talking to her excitedly in Gaelic again. Someone had burned down Morrison's barn during the

## The Megantic Outlaw

*Donald Morrison, son of Scottish immigrant Murdo Morrison, hired a lawyer in 1888 to challenge the terms of a mortgage his illiterate father took out against the family farm. The lawyer was in cahoots with the moneylender, named McAulay, and the Morrisons were bilked out of their farm.*

*During the supposedly legal takeover, the Morrison farmhouse and barn burned down, and McAulay hired gunslinger Lucius "Jack" Warren as a "special constable" for the sole purpose of arresting Donald Morrison for arson. Warren challenged young Morrison and when they met face to face on the street that afternoon, Donald Morrison shot and killed Warren.*

*Morrison was hunted by detectives, police, jail guards, and soldiers, who held on to the hope that justice might somehow, someday prevail. Sympathetic friends harbored Morrison for nearly a year, but he was captured in an ambush and made to stand trial.*

*He was sentenced to 18 years hard labour. His friends and supporters were shocked. With no fight left in him, Morrison chose to succumb to starvation and died in hospital June 19, 1894 - four days after a recommendation for his release claimed that he was no longer a threat to authority. The hunt for Donald Morrison remains one of the longest and most extensive manhunts in Canadian history.*



*Louise MacIver Scott with her daughter in 1908*

night and had shot at the French family! The Duquette's, the French family, weren't hurt but people were saying Donald Morrison had done this for revenge. They said he did it because his family couldn't live there and because he was sad.

Now the men talked more and were even more serious. The sheriff from Lake Megantic wanted to talk to Donald but no one could find him. He was in hiding. Now Louise couldn't stay with Pappa and the men on the piazza on the long summer evenings. They shooed her away. They had private talk, Pappa said. This made her wonder what was happening and made her even more curious.

Late in the evening when the men moved into the summer kitchen to get away from the mosquitoes, she could hear them talking when she lay on the cot in the spare room where she was allowed to sleep on hot summer nights. She could peep through the black iron heat grill on the floor and she could hear the men when they talked about Donald.

The wood burning stove wasn't on in the summer and only the smoke from Uncle John Graham's pipe drifted up through the grill. They talked in MacIver's kitchen many nights and Louise heard how the police were looking for Donald but could never find where he was hiding. One night, Louise thought she could hear Donald's voice but that couldn't be because she knew no one could hide in her house. She could always find Effie and May when they played hide and seek. No one could hide in her house.

One day she heard how the police had offered a reward for Donald but how no one would claim it. Besides, the sheriff was a good friend of the Morrisons. Louise

wondered how they could get the reward if no one could find him. Still she was sure that she sometimes heard Donald's voice late at night.

Then one night the men sounded upset. They were talking about how Jack Warren had said he would find Donald and turn him in. Jack Warren's name was really Lucius but everyone called him Jack. Louise didn't know much about him but Mamma didn't like him because he was a whisky smuggler.

Then it was June 22, 1888 and the family had gone to Lingwick for the annual Church supper. Everyone was eating at the long tables set up on the grass when young D.L. McRitchie arrived in a great hurry in his father's buggy. Louise could see how hot the horse was and she thought Pappa would scold him for making the horse gallop the way the boys liked to.

But young D.L. was so excited he shouted out the news before anyone could say anything to him, "Donald Morrison has shot Jack Warren! Jack Warren is dead!" This was terrible! Mamma and the other women and the children began to cry and the men all talked at once. She had never heard the men, her father, her uncles, all those Scottish farmers talking at once. They weren't talkers those men. Sometimes they would sit for hours without saying a word. Now they were all talking at once and now Louise somehow knew that no one would ever find Donald Morrison.

They said he had gone to hide at the Bog. At night she lay in her cot in the spare room and thought about the Bog. All the stories told on long winter evenings about the monsters from Scotland came back to her now. She thought about the story of Each-uisage, the water-horse of the Isle of Lewis who could turn itself into a woman and deceive the unwary. If you offered it hospitality you might be murdered for your trouble. Donald was living in the Bog and what if the Each-uisage were to murder him there? That he had murdered Jack Warren was not her concern. Murder was a dreadful thing but hadn't the minister prayed for Donald at the church on Sunday. Surely our Domhnall was not bad.

Louise never saw him again after the shooting but for nine months Donald was not captured. Danny said that he was staying in different houses in the countryside. Nights get glé fhuar (very cold) in September in the Eastern Townships and it is good to be indoors at night anyway because of the Each-uisage. One night after she had gone to bed, she thought she heard Pappa's voice, "Cò as a thàinig sibh? A bheil thu sgith?" (Where did you come from? Are you tired?)

The next day she asked Pappa, "Am b'e?" ("Was it he?") Pappa took her aside and made her promise never to tell anyone what she heard. "What goes on in the home is the

family's private business. You must never speak of this."

Louise never forgot his words. Years later when she had children of her own, she would tell them the same thing.

Some days she would see poor Morag. She looked very sad those days. She never laughed or played the piano any more. She sat with the women at night knitting or mending and Louise would see her at church praying and praying. The minister prayed for Donald every Sunday at the morning and again at the evening service. Louise thought Donald must be getting to be a very holy man and that he must be covered by God's protection with all those prayers.

At Sunday dinner one night late in winter, Pappa told the family how the government of Honoré Mercier had offered an even bigger reward for Donald. He said that they would now pay three thousand dollars for the capture of Donald Morrison. Everyone gasped. That was more money than a farmer would make in a year but Pappa said no one would come forward to claim the money by telling where Donald was. No one in Galson or Gould or Lingwick or Scotstown or any of the other villages in Compton County would turn in one of their own.

However, the Caledonian Society had raised money and they promised they would pay Donald's legal support if he turned himself in. The children cried. He was their hero now and they didn't want him to give himself up to the police. But he finally did. He came forward one day and surrendered. Pappa said it was better this way but his trial lasted eight days and after that he was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to eighteen years of hard labour.

The men talked English after that and Louise never heard much more about Donald Morrison. She found out years later that he had been sent to prison at St. Vincent de Paul in Montreal and had died five years later of consumption (tuberculosis).

Morag was always called Marion now and she lived and worked at home and got old. Louise spoke English now and the fear of the Each-uisage was forgotten and only Mamma and the women spoke Gaelic. Even at church there was one service in English now and one in Gaelic every Sunday.

Louise thought maybe everyone in all of Quebec must be speaking English now and that made her a little sad.

*Joan Carmichael resides in Pointe Claire, Quebec and describes herself as a "Computer Wise Woman and Grandma." This story was written in November 1986 and was dedicated to her mother, Irene Scott Dow, on her eightieth birthday - August 24, 1987.*

# No fuss when he came here

by David Hunter

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Robert Service's arrival in Whitehorse. His stay there was really quite short (from 1904 to 1912) but the poems he wrote during that brief period resounded throughout the globe and put the Yukon on the literary map. I do hope that the following hypothetical biographical "conversations" will give you a sense of his life and times.

"I remember his parents well. His father was a Scot with a good job at the bank. His mother, Emily, came from a well-to-do distillery family. It was freezing cold the day he was born back in 1874. Mind you, it was January after all."

*Neighbour, Preston, Lancashire, 1876*

"Aye, he came here to Kilwinning when he was five -- to stay with his aunts. Great wee boy he was -- had us in stitches at his first poem, and him only six years old. I remember the words of it well:

God bless the cakes and bless the jam;  
Bless the cheese and cold boiled ham;  
Bless the scones Aunt Jeannie makes,  
And save us all from belly-aches. Amen"

*Minister, Kilwinning Kirk, 1880*

"The faither, mither and bairns came up frae England and wee Robert's aunts brought him through frae Kilwinning. The mither didnae like Glasgow at a' but wee Robbie had a rare old time tae himsel.' Real wee rascal. Went tae Hillhead Academy so he did. Didnae take ony nonsense frae naebody."

*Cleaning lady, Glasgow, 1894*



Robert Service in 1912

"I liked working with him here at the bank. Always on time and he knew the business. His dad's a banker you know. But I aye thought he was a dreamer ... reading books and that. Kept talking about going to the wild west. Mind you we had great times together. He was a right laugh. Loved the music halls. Said he'd like to go on stage himself."

*Colleague, Commercial Bank of Scotland, 1888*

"Mmm seems to me there was a Robert Service here some years ago. I have his file here. Let's see ... studying English Language and Literature, came 4<sup>th</sup> in a class of 200. Oh, here's one of his essays -- on Ophelia from Hamlet I believe. And here's my writing down at the bottom ...

*"This is a perverse and obscene bit of work, unworthy of a student of this class."* Now I remember. Didn't see him on campus after that. Wonder what became of him?"

*Lecturer, University of Glasgow, 1894*

"Yep. Saw him on the train leaving Montreal. Had this "Buffalo Bill" outfit he said his dad gave him. Sold it to buy food. Said he was heading west."

*Conductor, Canadian Pacific, 1896*

"Had him on this farm for six months. Milked cows, picked rocks, weeded turnips, made hay, cut wood, plucked apples, gathered harvest, tended horses. Don't know what he did in his spare time though."

*Farmer, Cowichan Valley, BC, 1896*

"Came here 'cos it's lonesome. Loves the cattle. I got 20 head you know. Didn't even know how to bake him up a loaf of bread. Does now. Gave him my ol' banjo. Plays it good too. Not many who'd listen to an old geezer's tales but he did. Think I gave him a hankerin' for California."

*Hank, Rancher BC, 1897*

"Bumped into him near LA. He was a Scot like me and the funny thing was we both had the same last name. He'd been on the road like. All skin and bone -- sad shape. Had a guitar though and played it well. Got it from a girl in one of these houses you're no supposed to go to. Seems he was the

## The men that don't fit in

There's a race of men that don't fit in,  
A race that can't stay still;  
So they break the hearts of kith and kin,  
And they roam the world at will.  
They range the field and they rove the flood,  
And they climb the mountain's crest;  
Theirs is the curse of the gypsy blood,  
And they don't know how to rest.

If they just went straight they might go far;  
They are strong and brave and true;  
But they're always tired of the things that are,  
And they want the strange and new.  
They say: "Could I find my proper groove,  
What a deep mark I would make!"  
So they chop and change, and each fresh move  
Is only a fresh mistake.

And each forgets, as he strips and runs  
With a brilliant, fitful pace,  
It's the steady, quiet, plodding ones  
Who win in the lifelong race.  
And each forgets that his youth has fled,  
Forgets that his prime is past,  
Till he stands one day, with a hope that's dead,  
In the glare of the truth at last.

He has failed, he has failed; he has missed his chance;

He has just done things by half.

Life's been a jolly good joke on him,

And now is the time to laugh.

Ha, ha! He is one of the Legion Lost;

He was never meant to win;

He's a rolling stone, and it's bred in the bone;

He's a man who won't fit in.

gardener or something. Since then he'd been at the fruit picking and down the mines"

*Fellow Scot, LA County, 1900*

"Jolly interesting chap. I met him on the pier in Seattle. Said he was going to cross over to Victoria. Showed me an old newspaper article about the Gold Rush. He seemed rather intrigued by it and by one sentence he read out obviously meant something to him... *"No doubt another Bret Harte will arise and sing of it in colourful verse."* Of course, Mr Harte's stories and poems of the American West are still very much in demand here in the United States you know.

*English Gent, Seattle, 1903*

"He did say he was looking to become a teacher but between you and me I think he flunked the exam. I told him to go get a job at the Canadian Bank of Commerce -- they're looking for staff. Last I heard he was up north somewhere."

*Friend, Victoria BC, 1903*



At the Big Cascade, Yukon, 1911

"I first saw him performing at a church concert – singing, playing the guitar, reciting poetry -- you know Kipling and that type of stuff. I told him he should write something about life up here. Something that would mean more to us folks."

*Editor, Whitehorse Star, 1905*

"Yes he did come to me with suggestions for our concerts but I really felt that his material was totally out of keeping with our church policy. Quite honestly I thought a man in his position at the bank could have come up with something a bit more refined than *The Shooting of Dan McGrew*. I really don't know what the world is coming to."

*Vicar, Anglican Church, Whitehorse, 1905*

"Actually he's read me some of his work and I find some of it quite moving. I think he's a bit of a loner – goes in for long solitary walks by the river and in the woods. I'm sure this place has touched him in some way."

*Girlfriend, Dawson, 1908*

"Well I've been here for five years and it's always been church printing we do – hymn books, sermons, pamphlets -- that type of thing. So when that guy from the Yukon sends us stuff to do, the boys in the print-shop love it. That book we did, you know, *Songs of a Sourdough*, hey it was like a breath of fresh air. Sure blew the cobwebs outa this place, And guess what, I've just been told I got to get 1,700 more copies out"

*Foreman, Methodist Printers, Toronto, 1909*

"There was no fuss when he came here to this town – sure was when he left!"

*Barber, Whitehorse, 1912*

"He's taking painting lessons here but he's really a writer – always scribbling away. Spends a lot of time in cafes -- quite the Bohemian now. Rumour has it that he's taken quite a shine to that girl he was here with last night -- Germaine Bourgoine's her name."

*Fellow artist, Latin Quarter, Paris, 1913*

"I was at their wedding. Germaine looked absolutely radiant and Robert as handsome as ever. And what a wonderful home they have. I think his books have done very well. Lancieux is such a quaint village too. Just a year ago, we were all so happy. Sad to think that this war might take it all away."

*Wedding guest, Lancieux, France, 1913*

"Yes, I know who you mean. Seems he was with one of your newspapers before he came to us. War correspondent, would it be the Toronto Star? Thought so. Need more volunteers like him."

*Doctor, Ambulance Corps of the American Red Cross, 1915*

"I see lots of famous people here but I was really pleased meet see him – I'm from Nanaimo up in Canada. He's been coming over here on and off for years now -- since the mid-20s. That was before the talkies. They tell me he'll be in a flick with Marlene Dietrich soon."

*Cameraman, Hollywood, 1940*

"Mais ouis. The house of Monsieur Service it was damaged during the war. But he and his family were in America fortunately. I have heard he wrote very nasty things about Hitler. But he has paid me to build it up again and so it is my hope that we will see him here soon."

*Building contractor, Lancieux, France, 1946*

"People came from all over the world. Canadians, Americans, British and, of course, all the friends he had here in France. He was very well known as you can imagine. He looked frail when I saw him during the summer in Monte Carlo. It was a heart attack that did it."

*Mourner at funeral, Lancieux, 1958*

"Aye we are a' like the flo'ers of the forest. They maun wither awa' but the word lives on."

*Scots Minister at funeral, Lancieux, 1958*

I wanted the gold, and I sought it,  
I scrabbled and mucked like a slave.  
Was it famine or scurvy -- I fought it;  
I hurled my youth into a grave.  
I wanted the gold, and I got it --  
Came out with a fortune last fall --  
Yet somehow life's not what I thought it,  
And somehow the gold isn't all.

No! There's the land. (Have you seen it?)  
It's the cussedest land that I know,  
From the big, dizzy mountains that screen it  
To the deep, deathlike valleys below.  
Some say God was tired when He made it;  
Some say it's a fine land to shun;  
Maybe; but there's some as would trade it  
For no land on earth -- and I'm one.

There's a land where the mountains are  
nameless,  
And the rivers all run God knows where;  
There are lives that are erring and aimless,  
And deaths that just hang by a hair;  
There are hardships that nobody reckons;  
There are valleys unpeopled and still;  
There's a land – oh, it beckons and beckons,  
And I want to go back and I will.

There's gold, and it's haunting and haunting;  
It's luring me on as of old;  
Yet it isn't the gold that I'm wanting  
So much as just finding the gold.  
It's the great, big, broad land 'way up  
yonder,  
It's the forests where silence has lease;  
It's the beauty that thrills me with wonder,  
It's the stillness that fills me with peace.

*Extracts from: The spell of the Yukon*



Log cabin near Dawson where his second volume of verse was composed.