

## John Innes (incorrectly Innis)

March 17 1863 - January 13 1941

**Ontario Society of Artists (elected 1904)**  
**B.C. Society of Fine Arts (Member 1921 - 1922)**  
**B.C. Art League (Convenor, organizing committee 1920)**

John Innes was born in London, Ontario in 1863, the son of George Mignon and Elizabeth Ann (Clarke) Innes. He died in Vancouver in 1941, after a long and distinguished career as an artist, author, illustrator, cartoonist, publisher, and correspondent. His artwork was published extensively throughout North America for many years, and during his employment in New York City for the Hearst publishing company.

He was an early and important artist in British Columbia history, arriving here in the early 1880s after surveying for the Canadian Pacific Railway then under construction. He served in the Boer War with the Second Canadian Mounted Rifles, awarded a medal and three clasps.

He painted and worked as a commercial artist in Vancouver from 1913 until his death in 1941, in addition to his fine art painting career. He had a one-man exhibition at the Hotel Vancouver in 1915, showing sixteen canvasses in an exhibition titled "Chunks of the Western Epic". This exhibition also traveled to Montreal, Leipzig, and London. He also exhibited a show titled "The Epic of Transportation".

He exhibited with B.C. Society of Fine Arts in September 1921, the Ontario Society of Artists, the Royal Canadian Academy, and at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis. He designed posters for the 1919 Victory Loan campaign in British Columbia.

Innes was a major contributor to the 1918 and 1919 issues of *The Gold Stripe*, published in Vancouver to honor the men who fought in "The Great War". In addition to his many pen & ink illustrations in the two volumes, there is a short biography of Innes titled "John Innes - Author, Artist, Soldier, Cowboy". The article includes a photograph of Innes.

In 1920 Innes was a founding member of the B.C. Art League. He was listed as a member of the B.C. Society of Fine Arts for only two years, 1921 and 1922. He showed work in the *B.C. Artists* annual exhibitions in 1932 and 1938. In 1926 Innes contributed two pen and ink drawings to the limited edition publication *Chinook Days*, by Tom McInnes.

Beginning in early 1926 Innes illustrated a series of captioned drawings titled "*The Romance of British Columbia*" that was published as a serial in Vancouver newspapers. The series was sponsored by Shelly's Bread, the three illustrations below show some of their advertisements in the Vancouver School Board publication "*School Days*" in February, March, and April 1926.

—“A graceful canoe, hewn from a single log and manned by stalwart Haida Indians came out to meet the ship.”

### Romance - Legends - Adventure!

FROM back in those days before the white man came and only the beat of Tom-Toms vibrated across the still waters of Burrard Inlet; when giant war canoes plied the waters where now you see the majestic liners of the Pacific, and wigwams stood where now is a thriving city.

What boy or girl hasn't at some time walked through Stanley Park or in the woods nearer home and pictured the days when full blooded Indians stalked those trails to hunt or raid their enemies?

Who hasn't been thrilled by the legends of Pauline Johnson or those wonderful stories of Crossing the Rockies, The Cariboo Trail, The Gold Rush and other adventures of the Pioneers of this Province.

All these incidents and some never before recorded will be beautifully pictured for you by B. C.'s famous Historical Artist, John Innes, in a wonderful new series which will shortly be commencing in your daily paper, called

### THE ROMANCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1774—1926

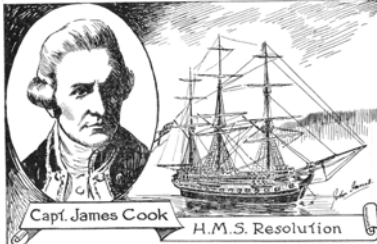
WATCH FOR THEM READ THEM CLIP THEM

Learn more of the Romance of this wonderful Province you live in; take them to school, paste them in your history book and ask your teacher to tell you more about those pioneer days. Get the new "Report of British Columbia."

You'll Find Them Over the Name You Know So Well.



WHOLEY PRINTING CO., LTD., 405 BIKER ST., VANCOUVER.




WATCH THE PAPERS CAREFULLY FOR THE NEW SHELLY SERIES

### The Romance of British Columbia

Thrilling and interesting tales of discovery and adventure from the pioneer days of this Province. There will be about 60 pictures — clip them and keep them to get a complete series.

That wheaty flavor

You'll Find Them Easily Over the Familiar Signature.



WHOLEY PRINTING CO., LTD., 405 BIKER ST., VANCOUVER.



### The Romance of British Columbia No. 1

THE earliest record of what is now part of British Columbia, we owe to the Spanish. In the year 1774, A.D., Don Juan Perez, commanding the corvette "Santiago," reached the coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands. Here, he tells us, a graceful canoe, evidently hewn from one log, came out to the ship. It was manned by natives (Haidas). The Spanish commander made presents to these natives.

IN knowing better your province, know also the delights of products from her leading bakery. Ask your grocer for 4X, or 'phone Shelly's.

BREAD CAKES COOKIES MACAROONS

Reprinted at the request of pupils of the Lord Nelson School. Keep a lookout in the papers to make sure you don't miss any of the series.

WHOLEY PRINTING CO., LTD., 405 BIKER ST., VANCOUVER.

By 1928 Innes had found a sponsor who provided the funding that enable him to complete his art epic, partially displayed earlier in "Chunks of the Western Epic", that resulted in reproductions of the series being used as illustrations for *The Epic of Western Canada* published in 1928, and for *From Trail to Trail - the Epic of Transportation*, published in 1930. Innes had a solo exhibition of eight paintings at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1933. Following the exhibition the paintings were hung at the University of British Columbia.

*The Epic of Western Canada* was exhibited in Vancouver, Montreal, Leipzig, and London, England.

In 1932 he was a signatory to an agreement to boycott the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa for their exhibition and purchase policies related to Canadian artists.

He also showed work in the *B.C. Artists Christmas* exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1933.

In 1936 Innes provided an extensive range of illustrations for the school reader *The King's Wish*, the third volume of the *Far Horizons* series published by J.M. Dent & Sons of Toronto. He provided one full page colour frontispiece entitled "White Cloud", seven full page and one half page pen and ink drawings, and over forty page header and page break pen and ink drawings. A number of chapter and page footer drawings in the book may be by Innes or by others. The wide range of subject matter illustrated by Innes show him to be an accomplished master of pen and ink drawing, *Fairies Dancing Just Before Going to Sleep for the Winter* is an excellent example of his work.



In *The King's Wish* Innes alternately signed his drawings in full as "John Innes", usually underlined, or with a monogram. The monogram is a black capital I, in a white field surrounded by an outline that is somewhat shield shaped, flat on top and pointed at the bottom. This stands out when signed on white areas of a drawing, alternately the inner white field and the capital I stand out when signed in a black or shaded area of a drawing.

## Exhibitions

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	LOCATION
1915	Chunks of the Western Epic	Hotel Vancouver
1933 November 14 - 26	Eight Paintings	<u>Vancouver Art Gallery</u>

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	ARTWORK
1932 Oct. 5 - 30	<u>VAG</u> <u>1st Annual B.C. Artists</u>	Children of Immensity
1933 Dec. 1 - 17	<u>VAG</u> <u>B.C. Artists Christmas Exhibition</u>	(oil painting - English Bay) (oil painting) (oil painting)
1946 July 2 - 28	<u>VAG</u> <u>Jubilee Exhibition</u>	June 24th 1792, Martinez Claiming the Pacific Northwest for Spain Old Red Cart The Covered Wagon

## References - MONOGRAPHS

Refer to BIBLIO.

## References - GROUP EXHIBITIONS

**100 YEARS OF B.C. ART** (refer to VAG58)

**4th BURNABY NATIONAL PRINT SHOW** (refer to BAG67)

## References - GENERAL

### THE GOLD STRIPE - VOLUME ONE

1918, Christmas. Published by the Amputation Club of B.C., Vancouver  
216 pages (including text, advertisements and photographs)  
Heavily illustrated by many early Vancouver artists.

### THE GOLD STRIPE - VOLUME TWO

1919, May. Published by the Amputation Club of B.C., Vancouver  
220 pages (including text, advertisements and photographs)  
Heavily illustrated by many early Vancouver artists.

**CHINOOK DAYS**, by Tom McInnes (author of *Roundabout Rhymes*)

1926; illustrated by Josiah Smith (9 drawings) and **John Innes** (2 drawings).  
1,000 copies printed for the opening of Grouse Mountain Highway and Scenic Resort.

**WHO'S WHO IN NORTHWEST ART** edited by Marion Brymner Appleton

*"A Directory of Persons in the Pacific Northwest Working in the Media of Painting, Sculpture, Graphic Arts, and Handicrafts"*.

1941; published by Frank McCaffrey, Seattle Washington.  
Short reference to Innes.

**EARLY PAINTERS & ENGRAVERS IN CANADA** by J. Russell Harper

1970 (reprinted 1972, 1976, 1981); University of Toronto Press  
ISBN 0-8020-1630-8; 376 pages; includes extensive list of abbreviations & bibliography  
Includes references to Innes.

**CREATIVE CANADA - VOLUME ONE**, by University of Toronto Press

1971; ISBN 0-8020-3262-1  
"A biographical dictionary of twentieth-century creative and performing artists."  
Includes full column of information about Innes

**THE MOUNTAINS AND THE SKY** by Lorne E. Render

1974, Glenbow-Alberta Institute; published by McClelland and Stewart West  
ISBN 0-7712-1001-2; 224 pages, illustrated throughout in colour and b&w  
Includes biographical information on Innes and one of his paintings illustrated

**ROYAL CANADIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS - Exhibitions and Members 1880 - 1979**

1981, Evelyn de R. McMann, University of Toronto Press, ISBN 0-8020-2366-5  
Definitive list of Academy members, includes a list of all exhibited paintings.

## **INNES, John**

1989, *A Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, Volume 2, G - Jackson, 3rd Ed.  
Colin S. Macdonald, Canadian Paperbacks. ISBN 0-919554-04-0

## **A NEW CLASS OF ART - The Artist's Print in Canadian Art, 1877 - 1920**

1996, Rosemary L. Tovell, ISBN 0-88884-655-X; published by National Gallery of Canada  
Technically an exhibition catalogue of travelling show, but has extensive information.  
Illustrated; includes endnotes; list of works; selected references; index  
An excellent overview of an important period of Canadian printmaking  
Includes information on Innes with one etching illustrated

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX OF ARTISTS IN CANADA**

2003, Evelyn de R. McMann, University of Toronto Press, ISBN 0-8020-2790-3  
250 pages; 9 pages of *works cited* referenced to 8,800 artists  
9 references listed for Innes, including CC1, Harper, M, and RCA listed above.

## **VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY - B.C. ARTISTS FILES** (refer to VPL)

### **Clippings**

"John Innis (sic) and J.P. McConnell, two well-known journalists from Toronto, are in the West. ...  
From "(untitled)" by (unknown)  
*News-Advertiser*, July 1, 1905

"The committees which will be recommended to the League were named as follows:  
Organization Committee: John Innes (convenor) ..."  
From "B.C. Art League Committees Are Active" by (unknown)  
*Western Woman's Weekly*, October 9, 1920

"In the person of John Innis (sic), British Columbia has a unique and interesting artist. Innis was born in Quebec, and in his younger days spent many years in the West as a cowpuncher and bronco buster, taking part in the stirring life of pioneer days on the prairies. Later, when a newspaper artist in Toronto, he found time to produce a portfolio of prints depicting the life of the bronco. Settled now for the past twenty years in Vancouver, he has devoted his time to painting colourful records of pioneering days on the coast. A series of his mural paintings, dealing with discovery and settlement of the Province of British Columbia, has been placed in the library of the University of British Columbia."  
From *Canadian Landscape Painters*, Albert H. Robson; page 190  
The Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1932

"... the 118 artists who have signed the agreement to date ... include ... John Innes ... "  
From "Canadian Artists Unite to Boycott National Gallery," by The Canadian Press  
*Montreal Gazette*, December 8, 1932

"A series of eight paintings depicting scenes in the early history of British Columbia" commissioned by the Hudson's Bay Company "through the efforts of the Native Sons of B.C. Post No. 2."  
by (unknown), *News Herald*, November 17 1933

"Many other well-known artists are represented, including ... John Innes ... " (more)  
From "Bargains in Art"  
*Vancouver Sun*, December 1, 1933

Obituary, *Vancouver Province*, January 13 1941

**Artist - Native of London, Dies.**

by John Bruce Cowan, *The London Free Press*, January 14 1941

**John Innes - Rugged Individualist In Art of The New World**

by John Bruce Cowan, *Vancouver Province*, April 6 1945

**John Innes - Painter of the West**

by John Bruce Cowan, *The London Free Press*, April 1 1967

[Home](#)   [Copyright 2007 - 2014](#)