

## **HISTORICAL MAPS COMMITTEE, ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN MAP LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES: ITS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

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In 1976, when the Association decided to print historical reproductions of original maps showing all or a portion of Canada, it was a brave undertaking. Many individuals played a role in the fruition of this project but most significantly Serge Sauer, Ed Dahl and Cheryl Woods. It is an arduous and time-consuming process to choose from the original maps and views, prepare for printing, find sponsors and sell the products. What follows is a brief history of a committee's activities and its remarkable success.

The first mention of this committee is in the minutes of the 6th annual business meeting held on Wednesday, August 30, 1972 at the Public (now National) Archives of Canada. Under the subheading of Other Business there is a reference to 'Production of Facsimilies': "Ted Layng suggested that the Association [of Canadian Map Libraries] set up a committee to investigate the possibility of producing facsimilies of old maps for sale. A committee made up of Ed Dahl as Chairman, Betty May, Karen Lochhead, Frances Woodward, Ted Layng, Len Gotsellig was set up. The group would explore the possibility of producing and selling at a profit, facsimilies of old maps on behalf of the Association." (*Minutes of the 6th Annual Business Meeting* number 6, 1972, p.5).

In the minutes of the 7th annual business meeting, there is a report by Ed Dahl, then chair, recommending "that the ACML not get involved in such an undertaking at this time." (*Minutes of the 7th Annual Business Meeting* volume 7, number 1, June 1973, p.23). There were political ramifications that ACML would be duplicating a similar project of the Public Archives of Canada. It was also thought that printing costs would be too high for ACML to make any profits.

There is no mention of facsimiles again until October 1976, when Serge Sauer (Map Library, University of Western Ontario) as chair of the committee stated that "the goal of this committee, as seen by the Committee chairman, is to perpetuate and popularize the rich Canadian cartographic heritage. The financial side of this operation should be such, that the Association would be able to recover all investment in printing and, perhaps, make a modest profit." (*ACML Bulletin* 22, October 1972, pp.17-18). Thus, in 1976, the first reproduction map was printed with 500 hand-numbered copies and was sold for \$2.00. Map #1 was "A New Map of the World with the Latest Discoveries" (1794) by Samuel Dunn from *A New Atlas of the Mundane System...*, published by R. Laurie and J. Whittle, in London. The facsimile was printed on the occasion of the Tenth Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Map Libraries in London, Ontario, June 13-17, 1976. The committee planned to produce 2-4 maps during the next year and a list of maps suitable for reproduction was to be presented to the executive by the committee for future consideration. Serge Sauer remarked "If successful, the production of facsimile maps of Canadian content will greatly stimulate interest in rare Canadian maps and will place these reproductions in the hands of Canadian and foreign scholars, librarians and collectors. This is not an easy task. It is a challenge which ACML cannot by-pass or overlook." (*ACML Bulletin* 22, October 1972, pp.17-18). The Historical Maps Committee members at that time were Ed Dahl, Barbara Farrell, Thomas Nagy, Frances Woodward and Serge Sauer, as chair.

By the fall of 1978, 27 maps had been printed and this project had become the foremost fundraiser for ACML. "A number of experts in various fields of Canadian historical cartography were

invited to serve as Consultants to the Committee. The Consultant's role is to provide broad guidance and advice in selection of historical periods, authors and individual maps which, in their opinion, deserved to be high on the Committee's list of priorities. It is hoped that Consultants will provide critical comments about material produced, while at the same time serving as good-will ambassadors with the rest of the cartographic community in Canada and abroad. As of April 1979, Betty Kidd, Norman Nicholson, Richard Ruggles, and Coolie Verner were the Consultants of the Historical Maps Committee." (*ACML Bulletin* 30, March 1979, p.38). For the next few years, sales of 5,000 maps per year and print runs of 8 or more maps were common. By 1980, 50 different maps had been printed and a portfolio produced to encase them.

To assist with the printing cost, sponsorship of each map was sought. Institutional (provincial and city archives, university map libraries), individual and commercial sponsors had their names printed on maps and received 100 copies of the particular map they supported. Some maps were sponsored to coincide with the location of the annual conference, a special birthday or book launch. The majority of the original maps that were reproduced are held in the National Archives of Canada, and some are in other institutional and private collections. The overwhelming success of the project was such that yet another 50 maps were printed by 1982 to complete portfolio II which included maps #51-100.

Serge Sauer retired as chair of the committee in 1984, and Ed Dahl at the National Archives of Canada took over. Ed completed portfolio III in 1986, which brought the total of printed maps to 125. The fourth portfolio was begun in 1988 by Ed, who published maps #126-135 and selected several of the maps which appeared subsequently. In 1991, the project moved from Ottawa back to London. Maps #136-150 were produced at the University of Western Ontario with Cheryl Woods (Map Curator) as chair. After completing portfolio IV in 1994, Cheryl recommended to the ACMLA executive that they pause to consider if further production of maps within this project was the direction to be taken.

In 1996, Cheryl proposed the introduction of a new type of historical reproduction in a larger format than the 17" x 22" of the previous series. The idea of bird's-eye views of Canadian cities printed in colour and measuring 22" x 28" was accepted by the executive and production began immediately. The first view in this new series was St. John's, Newfoundland dated 1879. For the next 6 years, 2 views were printed each year for a total of 12 by 2001. The public's response to this product was favourable, and by 2003 the 500 copies of the St. John's view had sold out.

Adequate publicizing of the map series has always been a problem – one can never do too much advertising. In 1982 and 1983, publication booklets were printed, listing each of the 100 maps and picturing a few. Then in 1992 and 1995, pamphlets were printed showing each of the map images with their title, author and date. The creation of the ACMLA website in 1995 gave a boost to the historical maps sales because each map was scanned and reproduced as a thumbnail image on the site. The maps and views can be seen at <http://www.acmla.org> with pricing and ordering information.

In mid-2001, Cheryl resigned as chair of the committee after serving 10 years. She has stayed on the committee in an advisory capacity for future production and historical research. Gordon Beck at Lloyd Reeds Map Collection, McMaster University, took over as distributor of the historical maps in the fall of 2001. Production was halted for a few years while a reorganization of the historical maps committee was undertaken. However, 2 bird's-eye views will be printed in the spring of 2004 – Calgary and Ottawa.

Since the project began in 1976, 81,000 maps and views have been printed. Sales totalling over \$200,000 have nicely filled the Association's publications coffers. Of the 150 maps and 12 views printed, 42 have sold out.

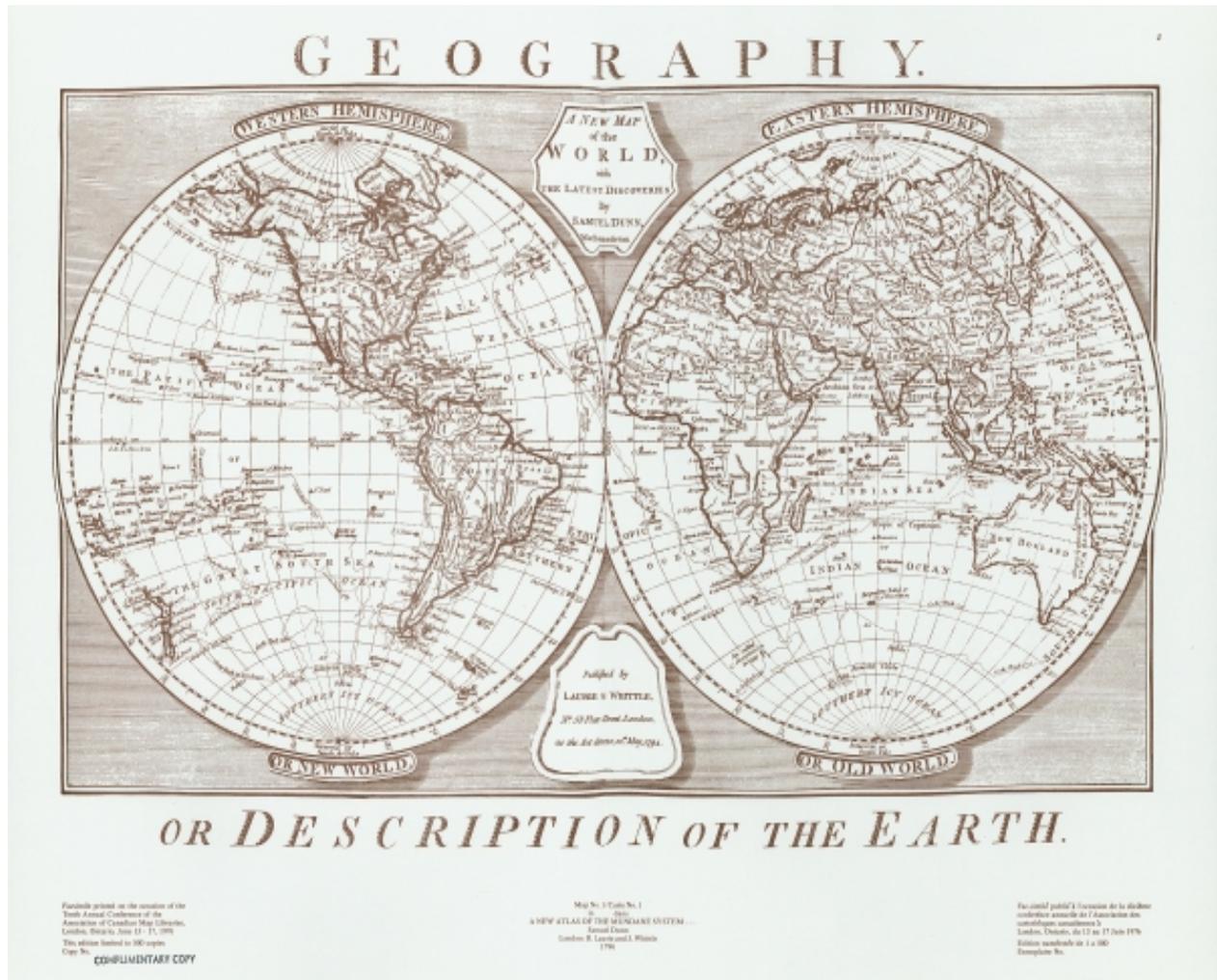
Most of the printing of these maps was done by the Graphics Services department at the University of Western Ontario. The bird's-eye views series has been printed by Aylmer Express, of Aylmer, Ontario.

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The ACMLA map series stands out as the largest set of single-sheet historical reproductions ever published in Canada, and one of the most extensive series of reproductions in the world. It has a broad geographic coverage and historical depth. Many of the maps would not otherwise be seen by the public. The 18th and 19th century maps are the periods of greatest interest to sponsoring institutions and commercial dealers. These important maps, some relatively unknown and practically unavailable as originals, have made their way into private homes, classrooms, archives, museums, municipal offices and, of course, academic and public libraries.

Last but not least, this monumental project has popularized worldwide the impressive Canadian cartographic heritage. This series has also

brought attention to the Association in general and to its other publications. Over the 28 years that ACMLA has been printing its maps, they have received a wide acclaim in numerous letters and reviews. In *Cartographica* (vol. 18, no. 4, 1981, p.118) the following appears: "Without any grants whatever from the agencies so often relied upon to advance research, the Association of Canadian Map Libraries has quietly gone ahead with determination, imagination and resourcefulness to give Canada and the world a quality product in the field of historical cartography..." The committee's aim "...to preserve and popularize cartographic Canadiana..." has been achieved and, we sincerely hope these noble efforts will continue for many years to come.



*Samuel Dunn's New Map of the World, ACMLA's very first facsimile publication.*