

XI

1957 - 1958

The Imperial Oil Mural

York had been two years planning the Imperial Oil mural for its new \$13,000,000 building at 111 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto. He had done numerous small studies and now his two large cartoons were ready to show to the Board of Directors. It is interesting how this assignment came about. Cleeve Horne had been engaged to direct the art work in the new building and he was convinced that York Wilson was the artist to paint the large mural at the entrance. The Board must have thought the same way, as Horne simply took three of Wilson's paintings to show the Board and they gave the okay to go ahead. Horne chose Sydney H. Watson to do a mural in the Boardroom and Oscar Cahen to do one in the Cafeteria.

It was arranged for the Board to come to Wilson's studio to see the cartoons. The dark-suited, Homburg-hatted Directors filed into the Wilson's entrance hall right on the agreed minute. They removed their Homburgs, folded and stacked their top coats and filed down the stairs to the studio. After exchanging greetings, York explained his mural. They listened carefully. A few words were said, a nod to each other of approval then their spokesman informed Wilson to go ahead. Then they filed out, picking up their coats, Homburgs and departed. It was all so efficient, not more than 20 minutes had elapsed. It makes such a difference when an intelligent group leaves the artist completely free. No wonder York excelled himself.

York planned to use vinyl acetate for his medium which he had tested as far as possible. The Imperial Oil mural was to be ever so much larger, 2 panels each 25 feet by 32 feet wide, and would take gallons of medium. He searched for the purest powdered colours in Canada but found them lacking, diluted with too much chalk. He found what he wanted in New

York and imported pure pigment in the various colours from Fitzandi and Sperle.

Imperial Oil's laboratory further tested all the materials as to durability, fading and so on. Each colour, in the medium, was subjected to constant brushing of the surface, simulating hundreds of years of wear. They were tested for fading, with bright sunlight and strong lights. The materials were finally approved by the laboratory. It was decided the new medium would outlast oils.

Working with the engineers, York had the two panels floating separately from the building: vibration, such as an earthquake, wouldn't crack the mural. An intricate breathing system on a grid behind the wall prevents condensation. York liked a rough surface and had the plasterer swirl his arm, covered with sacking, over the wet surface of specially prepared plaster.

He planned to place the various areas in his cartoons quickly by projecting the images on the wall at night and outlining the shapes with india ink. A special wide-angle lens was put on his Lica projector, and with a good cooling system, the glass slides could be left for long periods. Slides, in sections of the cartoons, had been made to be projected in their exact size.

The mural was to be in two sections, 25 feet by 32 feet, as one passed through the centre of the lobby to the bank of elevators. York engaged two assistants, Bob Paterson, an outstanding student from the Ontario College of Art (OCA) and recommended by the principal Sydney Watson. The other capable young artist, Jack Bechtel, a student of York's and teacher at the Doon School of Fine Art. While waiting to begin, they were practising painting in York's direction.

Imperial Oil engaged Crawley Films of Ottawa to film the making of a mural. Quentin Brown, the Director, came with his staff and big equipment to our house on Alcina Avenue, Toronto, covering the studio part of the

house with a huge tarpaulin to cut out all daylight. The film starts with York's two assistants descending the stairs into the studio. York explains his thinking on the mural, pointing out the various details in his large cartoons. York was then filmed at his desk surrounded by dozens of studies for the mural—The Story of Oil.

The Crawley film crew returned to the site of the mural for the first nightly projection of the cartoons on the mural wall. The huge scaffolding was in place, the work started while York and his two assistants outlined the various parts with large brushes and india ink.

The front of the building, which would eventually be covered with glass, was still open, making it a mighty cold operation at times and York wore his arctic parka. Workmen were everywhere around them, fortunately their work at first was high up on the scaffolding. York developed a camaraderie with the workmen, who watched every phase with great interest and much joking. One workman said, "You think you're Michelangelo." York replied, "I am, is there someone else using my name?" Cartoons began to appear in the Press, such as Michelangelo painting by numbers.

The Imperial Oil Annual Report for 1956 featured a photo, in colour, of the new sky-scraper and the three artists, the mural well along on the left half of the large cartoon. Unbelievable in price today, the building was to cost only \$13 million, then the tallest in Canada.

The duco painting Nocturne was shown with the OSA at the AGT and went to London; the Special Section "Fine Art from the Commonplace" was toured throughout Ontario by the AIO. The CNE planned a special exhibition to celebrate the Coronation and its own 75th anniversary—2000 invitations were sent and entry forms to professional artists across Canada. This was a change from a former method of a committee selecting the artists and works. Cleeve Horne was chairman of the jury of selection which would accept 100 works. The jury consisted of Lionel Thomas from Vancouver,

LeMoine Fitzgerald of Winnipeg, a later addition of the Group of Seven, Sydney Watson, Paul Duval and York Wilson. Another new policy, the CNE allocated \$1,500 to purchase works which were later given to smaller art galleries. The Albright Gallery of Buffalo displayed works by American artists to be hung in the Octagonal Gallery. York sent Carnival.

The Winnipeg Show had become an active, annual event and York sent New Growth which won the Green Blankstein & Russell Award. He sent Monmartre at Night to the N.G.'s Abstract Painting Exhibition—to the RCA one of his 'turned down' Salvation Army mural studies, Come Unto Me—to the MMFA Spring Exhibition Thou Preparent a Table, a study for the 23rd Psalm, a part of the Salvation Army mural.

The London Art Gallery mounted an exhibition, "Canadian Artists Abroad" which was toured by the N.G. York sent Indian Harbour '46 - Guanajuato '51 - Una Familia '52 and Dancers '55. A joint exhibition sponsored by the Globe and Mail and Grand & Toy of Canadian Art was shown and Wilson sent Fire Devastation. Bennington Heights Community Centre mounted a five-man show by Bayefsky, Hall, Hodgson, Wakefield and Wilson.

G&M, Lotta Dempsey: PAINTERS ON THE SPOT ...five well-known Canadian artists... Panel. At the opening five answered questions from the audience...

The MMFA in Montreal held a two-man exhibition, Phillip Surrey and York Wilson in their Gallery XII. Some of the paintings mentioned in reviews:

...Quebec Barns - Community - Reptile - Growing Forms - Bottles - Echo - Dynamics of a Play Pen - Fishes - Musician - Dancers - Fishing Village - Melon Market, Fez - Dancers - Nocturne.

THE WESTERN FAIR ART JUDGE SUGGESTS MANY CHANGES ...Weeks and months to come, we submit, should be filled with discussion of why the display was not bigger and better... any

suggestions and complaints have been filed in our memory, heard from various sources.

But we want to put down in black and white those of one particular person because we feel he has all the attributes for presenting constructive, valuable criticism. We can only trust that the Fine Arts Committee will think so also and act upon them.

He is York Wilson, OSA, currently working on murals in the new Imperial Oil headquarters building at Toronto and familiar with art exhibits throughout Canada as an exhibitor, judge and organizer. He was the judge for Western Fair art prizes this year and spent over three hours viewing the show.

These are his suggestions: 1. All art should be displayed in one building only, with all other displays - such as photography - eliminated. Separation in two buildings causes confusion and mixing exhibits cuts interest in all of them. 2. Send out invitations to artists throughout Western Ontario to submit paintings, Mr. Wilson urged. Prize money is high; there is no reason it should not attract artists, in the area. Then a jury should select paintings to be hung. Make it a tough show to enter and thus raise its prestige. The Fair comes at a good time of year for artists; they could use it as a trial ground for paintings they may want to enter in other national or international exhibits. The result would be an excellent exhibit by a much larger number of painters. 3. Purchase of one oil and one watercolor from the main art exhibit, to be hung in the Williams Memorial Art Museum, instead of presenting first and second prizes. This would be easier on the judge and much less humiliating to the artists. The purchased paintings would be those judged best by an outside adjudicator or jury. 4. Elimination of amateur art sections. They are confusing to the layman who does not understand why one painting is placed in the "professional or advanced" category and another in the "amateur" class. The Western Fair, Mr. Wilson submitted, is not the place for a display of paint-dabbling by people who are not studying art seriously with the intention of becoming "advanced" artists. And if so-called amateurs paint well, they should enter their work in the "advanced" class, or what would be the only class for all but students. 5. Establish a section for students, to include those studying art at any school or college, and throw it open to entrants from anywhere in Western Ontario. When a person is studying art he needs a chance for exhibition and judgement of outsiders. Western Fair could supply both. Fewer and larger prizes would be a big attraction. 6. Art Building should be plainly marked; a great cotton strip printed in blue and red would serve.

While we were in Mexico for the winter with York carrying on his

quest in painting, this poem arrived from the artist Fred Finley. Apparently the fumes were a problem.

January 15, 1956. 63 Warland Avenue, Toronto,

While trapped in sheets and pillow slip
Aboard your antiseptic ship,
You steer a course through charted ways
Towards the port of active days;
Please give a kindly thought or two
To those whom you persuaded to
Forsake tradition, make a play
With AYAF, Flexol, M.I.K.

You draw a picture clear and bright
A masterpiece in Vinylite;
You sang the siren song of hope
To many an unsuspecting dope;
You won us over one and all
With Acetone and Butanol.
Now toiling over masonite
With Duco, Thinner and Celite,
We scratch and scabble, rage and groan,
And Breathe the fumes of Acetone.

Please think of us, benighted souls,
Bewitched, besotted by the Ols,
Flex, Alcho, Carbit, Tolu, Xyl,
Steeped in V.M.C.H. the while
Reflect on what our fate will be
With M.I.K. and D.O.P.,
If you don't quickly reappear
To put us, once more, in the clear.

wishes Warmest regards and best
Sincerely yours, Fred
Finley

The Arts and Letters Club, January, 1957, Monthly Letter: ...for their Christmas dinner and Boar's Head Procession the Viking motif, courtesy of Walter Coucil, was featured. The decorations did not end with the rooms themselves, but with the aid of Earl Grey's grease

pencil and bits of assorted hair (some bright orange) and the well-organized costume cupboard, it looked for all the world as if members had just stepped out of the decorative Viking portraits. Led by Sir Ernest MacMillan at the piano, the entire company joined in "The First Noel" to bring the evening to a close.

York painted two canvases for the decorations, "Eric of the Bloody Ax" and "Stanisloos the Thirsty." That must have been quite an evening!

The focal point of a room in the magazine, Canadian Homes and Gardens is York Wilson's Moroccans and Bottles, and in a room designed by Simpsons for the September issue of Chatelaine is York Wilson's Monmartre. A nice bit of news came from the President of Imperial Oil, Jack White, to inform York that his painting, Mile 804, Alaska Highway, has been chosen as one of twelve paintings and pieces of sculpture to be exhibited in Geneva.

Toronto Telegram, Paul Duval: Early this week the vast foyer of Toronto's new Imperial Oil building was transformed into a motion picture studio.

Camera crews dollied their equipment around construction scaffolding. Floodlights threw eerie shadows across the unfinished structure. The time was 3 a.m., so there were few spectators.

The cameras were recording the launching of the largest painting ever to decorate a Canadian building. As the work progresses, it will be photographed step-by-step in color, to create a unique motion picture and art document.

Featured actor on the production will be Canadian artist, York Wilson, who designed the giant painting. The supporting cast will be his two assistants, artists Jack Bechtel, of Kitchener, and Bob Paterson, of Sudbury.

This filming represents the last stage of the most ambitious single art project ever undertaken in Canada.

Wilson's mural will dominate the entrance to the 19-story St. Clair Avenue structure. Sixty-four feet wide and twenty-one feet high, the entire design will be visible through the glass front to passers on the street.

The theme of the mural is to be the story of oil, from geological beginnings to its application in the atomic era.

To date, three years have been spent in the planning and designing of the painting.

In the summer of 1953, Imperial Oil decided it wanted a major work

of art to decorate its new structure, then on the blueprints. Wilson was called in and told he was to have free creative rein in both the selection of theme and treatment.

Since 1953, the artist has made countless drawings and studies of related material, from fossils to atomic fission. More than half a dozen full color designs were painted, each measuring 3 by 4 feet. By November, 1954, the final composition had been worked out and approved.

Wilson expects to have the actual painting completed on the walls of the building by early spring of next year, working full time with his two assistants.

The methods being used in creating the mural are the most modern available. Final design is being projected upon the wall, using Kodachrome slides taken from the scale drawings. Each slide, when projected, represents a 16-foot width of the completed mural. The outline of the design is traced from the projection in India ink.

The materials for painting will be plastic. Two plastic vinyl fluids will be used, one to seal the plaster wall upon which the mural is being done, and a second to mix with dry color pigments for actual painting.

Advantages of this new plastic paint are many. It is completely permanent and can be painted on any surface. It can be viewed from any angle, since there is no shine from it. It dries rapidly, and once dried can be scrubbed without damaging the surface of the painting. Vinyl plastics are thus the ideal material for decorating today's buildings. When completed, York Wilson's Imperial Oil mural will stand as a remarkable example of what industry can accomplish in underwriting art for its own use.

More important, such wall paintings may cause governmental leaders to take a second look at our barren public buildings. Mural design can do much to make people feel at home when visiting structures which house the machinery of society, whether in commerce or government.

Canadian Architect Journal, May, 1957, by York Wilson: The problem of relating mural decoration to the architecture that it is to house can be a difficult one, or it can be so simple that it presents no problem at all.

The architect, being an artist, is aware of what painters are doing, and automatically selects the muralist whose past performance indicates a direction of thinking consistent with his own. If the painter is then allowed to proceed, with a relatively free hand, the resultant work is almost certain to be consistent with the architecture. If, however, the client expects the mural to perform a dual service - to be a decorative embellishment to the architecture and, at the same time, to act as an

illustration - one of these considerations must take precedence over the other.

Which of these considerations is to take precedence? It is here that some difference of opinion may arise, and the possibility of a problem of relating architecture and decoration may occur. The question is, whether the subject matter is of greater importance, or the decoration: whether some of the clarity of the story is to be sacrificed to allow for a more contemporary interpretation, or whether the painting must be so literal that it is inconsistent with contemporary architecture.

The question of precedence did come up - and, temporarily at least, did create a problem - during the designing stage of the mural for the prayer room for the Salvation Army building.

As is usually the case, the question did not appear immediately. Only after a considerable amount of work, and many sketches discarded in the studio, did we decide on a motif that seemed to the architect and myself to be the ideal decoration, for this particular situation. When it was presented to the client, it became startlingly clear that there was a slight difference of opinion as to where the emphasis was to be placed. The cartoon submitted was inclined to be partial to the decoration aspect, in that the message was presented in a contemporary rather than a traditional idiom.

To have used a wall in this building to present any story in a traditional way would have been as false a note as an abstract decoration in a traditional building.

Using the Twenty-Third Psalm as our subject matter was the solution to the problem, for several reasons.

Because the thoughts of great promise expressed in this psalm make it one of the language's most beautiful piece of prose, it seemed an appropriate message for a prayer room. Because almost everyone has committed the Twenty-Third Psalm to memory, the verbal interpretation of it would be automatic and would assist in the acceptance of a wall decoration in a contemporary idiom that might otherwise have been meaningless.

The relationship between architecture and mural has, we hope, been accomplished: but the real success of the decoration will be realized if people feel persuaded to visit the prayer room more often, and find it conducive to prayer.

Reproductions: Jack Nichols' fine drawings at the entrance - the Salvation Army Shield - the auditorium - the 23 Psalm mural and a glimpse of the Prayer Room through the door.

With the Imperial Oil Building now complete, Time had an article in its April issue, 1957. Paul Duval covered all the salient points. He shows

the left panel and the right with photos of Wilson and his two assistants. The two-story high foyer with the mural, towers above them.

GIANT MURAL TELLS STORY OF OIL

Toronto now has Canada's most successful marriage of art and architecture.

The new Imperial Oil Building at 111 St. Clair West incorporates painting as a natural part of its design. On three of its floors mural designs are a main feature.

In the eighth floor cafeteria of the 19-story building is a vivid abstract wall painting by the late Oscar Cahen. In the boardroom is a series of panels by Sydney Watson, principal of the Ontario College of Art.

Two Panels

The most important of the Imperial Oil murals is on the walls of the building's main foyer. Painted by York Wilson, the giant picture is divided into two related panels, each 32 feet wide and 21 feet high. Together these panels relate the story of oil from its geological beginnings to its most recent uses in the atomic era.

Previously, York Wilson had designed murals for Montreal's McGill University and for the new Salvation Army building in Toronto. But the Imperial Oil design is his masterpiece.

More than three years in preparation, the completed mural is the biggest in Canada. It is also the best. No single work of art created in this country surpasses it.

Free Rein

When Imperial's \$8,000,000 structure was first planned, Wilson was approached to design the main floor mural. He was given a free creative rein in both selection of his theme and treatment.

In the autumn of 1953, the artist began research on the project. Countless drawings and studies relating to every phase of the oil industry were made. From these were selected the symbols to be incorporated into the completed work.

Wilson made six full color designs, each measuring three by four feet, before he arrived at his approximate composition. By November, 1954, the final design was decided upon.

Six months were required to transfer the mural design to the walls of the Imperial Building.

By Sections

The original sketch was photographed in color, section by section, each color slide representing a 16-foot width of the wall space. These slides were then projected upon the wall of the foyer and the enlarged images traced in India ink. For this stage of the work and the actual

painting of the mural, Wilson employed two assistants, Jack Bechtel and Bob Paterson.

Plastic paints were used throughout for the mural. Pigments mixed with plastic fluids dry rapidly and, once dry, can be scrubbed without damaging the surface. Unlike oil paint, the surface reflects no glare and so can be viewed from any angle.

Framed by Italian marble columns, the completed mural now compels the attention of both visitors in the building and passing pedestrians. The painting is clearly visible from the street through the glass walls of the foyer.

In Mexico

York Wilson first became interested in mural painting during repeated visits to Mexico. Mexican painters have specialized in mural design more than artists from any other country. They have also pioneered in the use of new materials, such as the plastic colors used for the Imperial painting.

Wilson was quick to learn and adapt from his Mexican experience. A late starter, he was 32 before he started to paint seriously. Today the 50-year-old artist is one of the nation's best-known figures, with a growing international reputation.

Wilson's painting trips have taken him to the Arctic, North Africa and Europe.

"I honestly believe travel can help a painter a great deal," he says.

As though to prove his point, Wilson and his wife leave in a few weeks for Europe, where they plan to spend a year or so in Italy. While there, no doubt, Wilson will have his mind part of the time on his next mural for Canada.

Paul Duval

During the execution of the Imperial Oil mural many artists came to watch, some hoping to study with Wilson, especially students from the United States. One student from Perdu University arrived with a grant but York had no time to teach, but he was welcome to watch. This student later sent a photo of a mural he had done at Perdu which was reminiscent of the Imperial Oil mural.

A great sadness struck before the building was opened, the brilliant colourist Oscar Cahen was killed instantly in a motor accident on his way home to Oakville.

York's notes disclose: On August 13, 1956 the final surface was laid

on the walls. When Jack Bechtel and Bob Paterson arrived to start work on August 29 the walls were thoroughly brushed down and neutralized with three parts vinegar to one part water. On July 30, 1956 York took out an insurance policy for a year to cover his assistants. On September 17, 1956 York made boxes with handles to carry colour and supplies up on the scaffolding. And on February 15, 1957, York had a date with the board of directors of Imperial Oil, mural finished and approved.

Among the many pictures and reviews showing the progress and the finished mural, from black and whites to full colour displayed in Imperial Oil Reviews, the International Press, the thousands of folders (Mural in full colour and a review by Paul Duval) were handed out during endless months of tours. I have selected an article by Michael Jacot in the June, 1957 Imperial Oil Review which aptly tells the story:

M U R A L

Two panels by Canadian artist York Wilson in the lobby of the Imperial Oil building make up the largest mural ever painted in Canada.

When Canadian artist York Wilson started the largest mural in Canada at Imperial Oil's new building on St. Clair Avenue in Toronto, the foyer in which it was to go was just a wind-swept area. Concrete mixers, mechanical saws, welders' torches and an assortment of other building equipment were going full blast.

As Wilson began to apply his colors to the two panels, each 21 by 32 feet, machines stopped and jaws dropped. Looking at the large colored sketch Wilson had made, the workers expressed their feelings in no uncertain terms. One said it reminded him of a nightmare he once had in the army. Others politely turned their backs. No one said he liked it.

Wilson wasn't put out. The design, which has been described as a refreshing mixture of abstract and actuality, takes some time to assimilate. He waited patiently. The same workmen worked beside him for the next six months. Then one day one man came to him and said, "You know, I think you really have something there!" It was the beginning. Within weeks the crew, almost to a man, had expressed more than passing interest in the project and some even took their families up to see the giant painting on a weekend. One man liked it so much he wrote an essay explaining it.

Wilson was more than pleased. He felt this proved what he had always maintained: that an ambitious work of art, if it is good, and no matter how unusual, will eventually win the approval of the general public. At first sight the mural is strange. One fascinating aspect of it is that people are affected by it in many ways. Any one description of it would likely be inaccurate. Wilson describes it this way: "It depicts the story of oil from its beginning, millions of years ago, when oil was forming below the surface of the earth. The left panel shows the early period as a rocky landscape set in a weird prehistoric atmosphere; a flowing oil well symbolizes the discovery of oil.

A beam of light carries over to the right panel, where a large hand holds a cluster of molecules. This symbol of man rearranging molecular clusters is surrounded by the result of his scientific achievements. These are achievements in the development of transportation—particularly in the air—industry, science and the arts. They show the effect of oil and its products on our present-day mode of living.

Wilson adds, "The most startling thing about the story of oil is this business of breaking down the molecules (in refining processes) and reshaping them to make literally thousands of products. I see it as one of the most significant developments of modern times, and have tried to show it as such."

It took three years to plan and design the painting. When Imperial started work on the new building, the company engaged Cleeve Horne, another Canadian artist, as an art consultant for the building. He chose Wilson to decorate the foyer. The late Oscar Cahen, Danish-born artist who was killed in a traffic accident near Toronto last year, was also commissioned. He had the task of the murals in the staff cafeteria, which he completed shortly before his death. Sydney H. Watson, principal of the Ontario College of Art in Toronto, was commissioned to paint the murals in the boardroom.

Wilson first made countless drawings and studies. He toyed with the idea of the development of transport, Canadian industry, and Canadian resources and finally hit upon what he calls the "molecule idea" as being of greatest interest.

Eighteen months later, the composition was approved in sketch form. Wilson next had to make sure that the wall surface on which the painting was to be done would be permanent and wouldn't crack. Several samples of roughened, specially-prepared cements were offered him. He chose one to which paint adhered strongly.

Next he had to find paints that would provide the greatest permanency, the answer came from a new medium, vinyl acetate. Wilson used this to mix with dry pigments. Vinyl, a product of crude oil, has many advantages over other paints. It is as permanent as possible. It dries on the surface in three minutes, and completely

within a few hours. To make sure of a perfect surface, Wilson took one other precaution. He covered the whole area with a vinyl undercoat. It took 14 gallons.

The biggest problem was to get the design from his final sketches, which measured about five feet by eight feet, to the wall. Wilson decided to project the design onto the wall and trace it. Eight color slides were used and the outline traced in. Then the giant task of actual painting began. Starting at the top and working down, to eliminate splashing areas already painted, Wilson and his assistants worked on. Weeks passed.

As the mural took shape, Wilson endured (and enjoyed) more pungent comments from his co-laborers in the foyer. Some are unprintable, others more penetrating. Wilson joked many of them down. One man asked, "Will any one know what it is when it's finished?" Another said, "The black dot (the sun-like tip of the oil well) is an eye seeing into the future." But before long, more rewarding comments came. "It may turn out pretty good—it's beginning to make a little more sense now," said one stonemason.

People passing in the street—the mural can be seen through the glass-fronted foyer—began stopping. Visitors came inside to see. Wilson says he must have stopped at least 50 times to explain it to interested groups. Children usually make the most interesting comments. One eight-year-old asked why the left-hand mural was made up of curved and broken lines and the right-hand section tells the story of what man does with oil, and how he scientifically and mechanically adapts it to life.

After six months of work, and 45 gallons of paint, the mural was finished.

Critics gave their opinions. Paul Duval of the Toronto Telegram had already made his comment. "York Wilson's mural stands as a remarkable example of what industry can accomplish in underwriting art for its own use." The great Canadian artist, A.Y. Jackson, said of it, "I think this is the finest thing of its kind ever done in Canada; Wilson has had a very difficult task and he's done a magnificent job by any standards."

The general opinion of the work is that it expresses in the language of today, thoughts on Canada's amazing industrial and cultural growth. Certainly it is a contribution to Canadian art, but as its creator says, "Because of its advanced form, it may take 10 years for people generally to understand it completely. But at that time it may be the usual way of depicting such scenes and people will not think it unusual!"

There are photographs of many stages of the mural's progress, a full

colour one of the mural across two pages and a photo of Wilson at his drawing board. A final comment:

York Wilson has painted and exhibited in many parts of the world, including England, Mexico, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada.

He describes himself as “a self-taught easel painter with a flair for murals,” but other artists refer to him as one of the continent’s outstanding painters. Winner of many awards, his paintings hang in the National Gallery, and in many other Canadian collections. He is a member of the Royal Canadian Academy.

In spite of his wide travels abroad, much of his painting has been done in Canada. Some of his most interesting work resulted from a tour of the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, and Labrador. He painted the mural at the Redpath Library of McGill University, and the mural in the Salvation Army prayer room in Toronto.

Tall, well-built, with sandy hair and a neat moustache, Wilson is 50 years old, married (one daughter) and passionately addicted to his hobby, life-work and recreation—painting.

York did not discover until 1964 that he was mentioned in the American World Book Encyclopedia as one of three artists chosen to represent mural painting for all time, Michelangelo - Thomas Hart Benton and York Wilson with a reproduction of the left-hand panel of the Imperial Oil mural. Our grandson came home from school one day and said: “Grandpa York, did you know you were in the Encyclopedia?”

It came as a surprise, he didn’t know.