Scrap Book
As science is the brain-child of man, so poetry is the soul-child of man, and the human voice, Poetry is written to be heard, not read alone.

Thucydides, an ancient Greek historian, said of poetry, "It is the soul-child of man, so poetry is the soul-child of man, and the human voice, Poetry is written to be heard, not read alone.

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FAME WITHOUT A TIE MEANT NOTHING TO A TORONTO WAITER

The Poet A Hotel Didn’t Want

by Wessely Hicks

WALLACEHAVELOCK ROBB was sitting in the museum on his wooded eyrie of Abbey Dawn, five miles east of Kingston, discussing poetry. It’s a subject which he’s qualified to discuss, for Robb is an epic poet.

He has published upwards of a dozen books of poetry. His longest work, Thunderbird, took him 17 years to write. And this September, he’ll publish another book, Tecumtha, which has taken him 30 years to write.

Abbey Dawn is a 500-acre wooded plateau which rises 200 feet above the St. Lawrence River. Robb established it as his residence some 30 years ago, which makes it probably the largest poet’s study in the world.

As a poet, Robb fits the popular conception of one of his craft. He has the white goatee and the thin, haunted face. And he wears wide, flowing collars on his shirts which have been unencumbered by ties for 40 years.

Wessely Hicks

Wallace Eyburn is on holidays. His column will again appear on Page Seven when he returns.

When he gives readings of his poetry, he wears a wine-red-purple gown such as those which were worn by the Roman poets, Homer and Virgil. The gown, which is faced in blue and has Roman and Indian poetic symbols on the sleeves, was given to him by the Women’s Literary Club of St. Catharines.

As he sat, surrounded by Indian relics and relics of an older people, Robb took something of a despairing attitude. Poets, he was saying, are not recognized and poetry is approached too silently. It needs sound.

One time,” he was saying, “I was in Toronto and I invited my good friend, Wilson MacDonald, the lyric poet, to have dinner with me in the dining room of a big hotel. But because I was wearing my flowing collar with no tie, the headwaiter wouldn’t let us in.

“There we were, two of Canada’s most distinguished poets, and we were kicked out of a public dining room. If we’d been from Hollywood, they would have paid us to go in, no matter what we were wearing.”

He played with the silver Thunderbird, the sacred symbol of the Mohawks, he wears on a purple cord around his neck.

“When the printing press was invented,” he said, “the poets abdicated their throne. Poetry lost its sound effect. Until then, it had always been recited.

“An orchestra leader wouldn’t pass the score of a symphony amongst the audience and ask them to read it. When a poet hands you a volume of his works, he’s doing the same thing. What makes Shakespeare so wonderful is the rolling sound of his great words as they’re said aloud.

“Poetry should be read aloud.”

He picked up a small card with one of his poems called Evening Bell on it. He tossed it to me.

I read it silently. It reads:

"Of toil and sweat I made my furrow; Out of the soil I made a song; And in the song, I found my soul."

When I’d finished, Wallace Havelock Robb took the poem from me. He read it aloud in ringing, resonant tones.

“See the difference?” he said.

There was a difference, too. I could hear it better when he read it.

Dorothy Kilgallen is on vacation. Her column will again appear on Page Seven when she returns.
Famed Poet And Indian Lore Expert to Speak at Fenwick

Wallace Havelock Robb, the well-known Kingston poet of Indian lore who will speak in Fenwick Friday is shown here as he was honored by two Mohawk Indian boys for his poetic works on the Mohawk tribe. He is presented with a bear-cub claw necklace by Robert Brown, the Mohawk lad of New York state who made it. Left is Sherman Smoke, another Mohawk lad who presents a ceremonial drum he made.

FENWICK — Wallace Havelock Robb, of Kingston, poet, conservationist and leading authority on the early history of the North American Indian, will lecture on Friday evening in Fenwick United Church.

The talk by this outstanding speaker has been arranged by the WMS groups of the church.

Mr. Robb is an ardent nature lover and on his farm famous "Abby Dawn" near Kingston has established a sanctuary for wild life, as well as a museum of historical interest.

There also is the famous "Poets Bell" a symbol honoring America's first poet, an Indian. The bell is rung at sunrise and sunset each day and can be heard for a distance of 12 miles.

Mr. Robb played the leading role in the film "The Little Canadian" and has published a volume of poems "Far Bell Calling."

Wallace Havelock Robb, native-born, is intensively Canadian, and he opened his program with a ringing message to Canadians everywhere:

"What the poet sings today is the nation shall believe: for we are a nation today as a new day in this land of glorious morning. National art and culture will flourish and this nation will live to discover that it has a soul—a new song in a new land."

Mr. Robb should no longer tolerate the flooting of its Indian background and ignore the contributions to culture and civilization which the nation has made. This was the theme of the address which Mr. Robb delivered to the Wentworth Women's Literary Society in Hamilton on Friday afternoon and, by request, he repeated it from the story of Dek-an-a-we-da, Creator of the Five Nations of the Iroquois, who, after he had bound the Mohawks, Senecas, Cayugas, Oneidas and Onondagas, later the Tuscaroras in a Treaty of Peace and Friendship, which the Iroquois tribe—called— which worked every day and made this treaty to the utmost of its power until it was destroyed by the white man, he married as a bride an Indian girl so pure in heart and perfect in every way as to pass across the sky in the stars of the milky way. "I dreamed all was the pool of love, the great blue heron and the humming swallow.

The beautiful song of the Hermit Thrush and the terns of the brook were skillfully whistled and then embodied in poetic selections. The sacred phrases of the Brown Thrasher with their quick repetition introduced. "Ploughman Black or Brown a poem in witty and delightful affirmative harmony. "Glitch Medicine" was the treadmill of life when the Indian woman laboriously rolls the round stone back and forth as she grinds the grain and to its monotonous rhythm repeats her reiterated prayer to Mene Manito the Good Spirit to send food to his hungry children.

A number of selections from Wallace Havelock Robb's incomparable elegy poem "Fenwick" fascinated his audience as they portrayed the great Shawnee Chief whose people called him Tekum-cha, cougar, puma, panther—the star that leaps through the heavens. He is seated before his prayer-fire on which he carries his meditation alight to the Great Spirit. He speaks in symbolic pictures of his dream of welding together his people into a great nation in the west.

He travels the great river (the St. Lawrence) and, in sleepless anguish of spirit sees his life work falling through the treachery of his brother the prophet. Heart happiness is denied him also. A tribal tabu on a war-we-a, the lovely one, is not uniformed English tobacco and peace which the Great Spirit made. This was the girl who holds his heart.

Surely his is the star that keeps only to fall. It is now the night before his last great battle, and seeing into the fatal future, he strips off the uniform of a Brigadier of the British Army and dons once more theApparel which was suitable for the occasion. He tells his listeners that he will be bestowed upon the poet for his epic poem "Thunderbird" in which he saved from oblivion most of the Mohawk lore of the Kente race.

Probably a fourth eagle feather will be bestowed upon the poet for his recently completed epic, "Tecumseh."

Wallace Havelock Robb is well qualified to speak of Indian lore since he has spent many years in research in this interesting field and he has been adopted brother in the Mohawk tribe with the name of Dek-an-a-we-da, of the Kent-White Eagle and Pine Tree Chief, the loftiest and most holy office in the power of the Iroquois to bestow.

"For All the Gods do Surely Know" opened the recital of Poetry, and in white wampum his listeners felt the spell of space and silence when Be-ton the white spirit of thunder has created an enchanted white blanket and in the purity and freshness of a frosty night the spirit of John Wesley Powell took flight across the heavens. He was the one, the great blue heron and the humming swallow.

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He travels the great river (the St. Lawrence) and, in sleepless anguish of spirit sees his life work falling through the treachery of his brother the prophet. Heart happiness is denied him also. A tribal tabu on a woman-the lovely one, is not uniformed English tobacco and peace which the Great Spirit made. This was the girl who holds his heart.

Surely his is the star that keeps only to fall. It is now the night before his last great battle, and seeing into the fatal future, he strips off the uniform of a Brigadier of the British Army and dons once more theApparel which was suitable for the occasion. He tells his listeners that he will be bestowed upon the poet for his epic poem "Thunderbird" in which he saved from oblivion most of the Mohawk lore of the Kente race.

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Wings in the Wind
Recital on Wednesday
By Poet of Abbey Dawn

By ANNE MERRILL

It is known that Mr. Robb who has lived in the countryside for many years, and who has written extensively about nature, has been interested in birds for a long time. His poetry often reflects this interest, and he has been known to talk about birds and their behavior in his recitals. In fact, one of his recent poems is dedicated to a particular bird, the catbird, and its habits.

In that mystical vein, he held listeners' attention while he talked of foxes played at Abbey Dawn, his wife and two open-throat tail shirt with full evening dress. He would enjoy the incantations of the wild creatures, and his poetry is as close to the spirit of the wild as any written work can be.

In this recital, Mr. Robb spoke about the beauty of birds and the importance of preserving their habitats. His poetry is a celebration of nature, and he encourages others to appreciate the natural world around them.

The audience was thrilled by his performance, and many were moved by his words. It was a unique evening in a unique setting, and everyone left feeling inspired by the beauty of nature and the power of poetry.
Photographic reproduction of the oil painting of the Shawnee Chief for the frontispiece of Tecumtha by Adrian Dingle, A.R.C.A., who has also supplied 11 drawings as illustrations.

New Poetic Approach


Since it took the Seer of Abbey Dawn 30 years to write this small book about the personality and mission of Tecumtha therefore known to us as Tecumseh) a poor reviewer must be excused for failure to understand it thoroughly in a handful of hours. In the first place, Tecumtha is not a biography in the physical sense of telling where he went, what he saw and what he did. Rather, it is a series of dramatic poems centering upon the spiritual significance of his life and the drastic events of his time. These poems are preceded by, followed by and interspersed with many prose explanatory passages, without which the reader would not have much chance of finding the meaning of the poems nor the coherence of the whole. Fortunately, I have read with deep attention Glen Tucker's explicit biography which tells what white men know about the great Shawnee chieftain. That is a wonderful story in itself and easy to comprehend. But Mr. Robb goes back of all that to the oral tradition of the Indians, which explains more fully the nature, aims and ideals of this remarkable leader. The author has associated with Indians from boyhood. In 1948 he was accepted into their race as Great White Eagle had given the honorary title of Pine Tree Chief. He will be hard enough for us to receive the message sent; and it will certainly take time and involve radical mental readjustment.

That Tecumtha, the sum total of the very Indian-like poems, notes, explanations, etc., add up to a work of artistic merit I do not doubt-quite possibly a work of genius. It is certainly Mr. Robb's most ambitious effort, so admirers of his Thunderbird should lose no time in acquiring Tecumtha.

Tecumseh

Showen Chief
In Prose, Poetry

Canadians who know only of Tecumseh as the great Shawnee warrior chieftain who aided Sir Isaac Brock in the War of 1812 against the United States, will get a surprise when they open the pages of TECUMTHA by the Canadian poet Wallace Havelock Robb (Abbey Dawn Press, Kingston—$5).

This is no biography in the accepted meaning of the word. It presents an entirely different picture of the great Indian than will be found in Glen Tucker's "Tecumseh-Vision of Glory" or in the pages of the various works by that fine historian John Richardson.

Here the emphasis is not on the war leader as such. It is rather a blend of history and legend skilfully woven into an artistic pattern of beautiful prose and poetry portraying Tecumseh the man in love with a white girl, the god-like leader of his people.

It was Tecumseh's fate to assume the leadership of the Shawnees just at the time when land-hungry Americans were pouring into his lands. Far and wide he travelled, attempting to unite the various tribes. His dream of a great Indian confederation faded with his death on the banks of the Thames while attempting to halt the invading American army.

Mr. Robb has associated with the Mohawk Indians since he was a boy and in 1948 was by them adopted into the tribe with the name of Great White Eagle. He has used the traditions of the redmen, passed by word of mouth from one generation to another, to fashion this striking portrait.

TECUMTHA is illustrated with five engravings and eleven full-page drawings by the gifted Canadian artist Adrian Dingle, A.R.C.A.

In addition to many shorter poetical works, Mr. Robb is the author of THUNDERBIRD, an epic of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. Published in 1949 this work has been hailed by many scholars as a book of the Atlantic as a great Canadian classic.

Indian Legends
Retold By Poet

ARREYED-IN-WAMPUM by Wallace Havelock Robb, Department of Landa and Forecasts ($2.50)

Indian legends aren't everybody's idea of interesting reading matter, but they can offer the reader a change of pace. Generally, with their stylized writing, often slow-moving, almost classic themes and their personification of wildlife and elements of nature, they have a limited appeal.

But they can and do present insight into the Indian mind and way of life. Most of the legends are beautiful to read for their own sake. Usually these examples of Canadian folklore make good family reading.

Wallace Havelock Robb has taken some lesser known legends, of the man-bird, Arrayed-in-Wampum, which figure in the Ojibway and Mohawk myths and has retold them in this slim book of 46 pages.

His writing tends to be rather stilted, but the adventures of the Indian god remain interesting if not exciting. The plain, government-pumping look about the book won't arouse much enthusiasm for the contents except possibly in students of Indian
Ontario Is A Trillium
Manitou,
My Sweetheart, My Adored
The spirit of the Mohawks is being treasured by an adopted son

ROBB: POET OF ABBEY DAWN

By COLIN SABISTON

ABBIE DAWN, a 500-acre tract of mostly virgin woodland, rock outcrops and pools, is neither a railway stop, a postoffice, nor an incorporated centre of any kind. Yet it is a place of unique and sometimes haunting character known to thousands of visitors from this continent and abroad.

This came about because in 1928 a young businessman, Wallace Havelock Robb, gave up his prosperous career as a salesman of locomotives and heavy machinery to settle in a brick-stone-frame house on this piece of unsplotted Indian land near Kingston, and re-created the area’s cultural background as established by the Mohawks. Only a few of these Indians survive on a nearby reserve. But Canadian poet Robb has so vividly effected the re-creation that he has been adopted formally as an honorary member of the tribe.

One great Eagle—Thunderbird! Indignant and defiant, Proud and wrathful Chief of Eagles! Day-say-rin-goh, Thunderbird, Screaming and exultant. And magnificent against the sun!

That spirit, as well as the peaceful arts of the Mohawks, have survived under Wallace Havelock Robb’s more than three decades of devotion at Abbey Dawn. Like many other Canadians of Scottish descent, he soon discovered an essential affinity between his inherited tradition and that of the industrious, peace-loving Mohawks, who could become fearsome warriors when their villages faced desolation, and their tribes extinction. The Lairs of the Scottish glens and the Mohawk chiefs of the Quinte had much in common—love of the land, a code of courtesy, a sense of elegance; and both were natural-born actors.

“I have become so steeped in Indian lore,” he says, “that I have begun to think like an Indian. At 71 I have plenty of vigor left but I am beginning to feel that interests associated with my indoor and outdoor museums en-croach on my poetry. And poetry, for vocal as well as printed presentation, is still my main interest.”

The indoor museum is a building he has erected in a clearing, and there are collected archeological discoveries made on Abbey Dawn land, pamphlets, drawings and books on Indian life, and manuscript and printed copies of Canadian poems. Not least of his collection are mementos left on this land when Champlain, having broken his leg, stayed six weeks before undertaking his inland explorations up to the Georgian Bay.

The outdoor museum is the land. Through much of the area he and his sons—one still lives with him, the other manages a farm on the property—have built loose stone retaining walls on sloping grounds, about five feet from the bases of cliff-like, rocky outcrops. The intervening spaces are filled with natural gravel—a system of ideal paths which improve downward vistas.

Robb’s outstanding archaeological find at Abbey Dawn belongs to the period of pre-history before the Indians inhabited the area. It is a large piece of fused basalt and quartzite, carefully carved and decorated with low-relief symbols of unknown significance. Some experts believe it was a sacred altar on which the prehistoric aborigines sacrificed virgins, specially nurtured for the purpose, during fertility rites.

In the spring, crowds go to see the wildflowers, which include one of the largest displays of red and white trilliums in Ontario, sedulously guarded by the Robb family. There are found snowdrops, lady slippers and Dutchman’s breeches, jack-in-the-pulpits, undisturbed mosses, lichens and ferns. Robb has planted thousands of trees, watches the supply of water for the natural ponds, cuts out dead and diseased growth.

On the natural dias of an open-air theatre in the midst of the forest Robb stands to give summertime lectures or recitals of his poetry. For personal guests he may, without warning, launch into an impromptu reading:

Blown the reed-birds from the marshes,

Tumbling, bumping rocks resounding.

Flown the gulls to some far haven,

Grumbling waves upheaving,ounding.

Visitors pay 50 cents for a guided tour of the museum and drop voluntary donations into boxes fixed to tree trunks. Some go because, miles away, they heard the Poet’s Bell. Robb had this bell cast to his specifications in England. The bell is called Gitchi Nagama (Beautiful Song) and bears its name cast in the bronze.

It is rung at sunrise and sunset. Apart from that it may be rung only by poets, or occasionally by brides.

Abbey Dawn, near Kingston, has been his life since 1928

At 71 Robb has lots of vigor left

The resonance and range of his voice enhance his readings

Mr. Sabiston, a former member of The Globe and Mail staff, is a long-time critic of arts and letters.

Continued on Page 26

The Globe Magazine, November 14, 1959
Abbey Dawn

From Page 10

land, self-reliant, lofty and strong."

He is unworried by criticism from some sophisticates who have belittled his work, or suspected the validity of the spell of a contemporary voice re-creating the lore of men close to nature. He is content with the tributes of professional specialists who value him as a lay specialist in aboriginal culture. He publishes his own books and sells them at Abbey Dawn, and in the winter season he gives lecture-recitals to clubs and historical societies.

Both his poetry and his interest in machinery could have been expected: He is a son of W. D. Robb, who worked his way up in the old Grand Trunk Railway to become an early president of the CNR. And he is the son who, on a sudden impulse, seized a book of poems from a teacher's hands and read the verses as he thought they should sound. The demonstration was so impressive he was asked to teach poetry through his remaining years at Belleville Collegiate Institute. He wrote his first verses at the age of 10 while a pupil at Lansdowne School in Toronto. The poet is dapper, whether in his woods garb or, with wide white collar laid back, in his peculiarly elegant evening clothes. He has a small pointed beard. His movements are quick but not hurried. Even his conversation, spontaneous and voluble, never lacks content or measure in its flow, nor develops into a monologue. He studied singing when young but has used his resonance and range for speech, a significant point in his appeal as a recitalist. Indian gallantry is the theme of his major book, a poetic summary of the life of Tecumtha. (He restores the Indian pronunciation.) The Great Chief is presented as he delivered his powerful Niagara Oration, in which he called upon the tribes to side with the English against American and French encroachments on Indian life and culture. Robb presents the peroration as follows:

Leaping Panther!
Shooting Star!
I, Tecumtha, choose to die!
Like a panther, leaping, flying,
Like a flaming, fallen star,
Wounded panther, proudly dying,
Downward shooting, falling star,
Great, proud chieftain,
strong in battle,
I, Tecumtha, go to die!
Great, Proud Chieftain, for my people,
I, Tecumtha,
Go — to die!

Robb's current work in progress is a book-length treatise interpreting Indian proper names of persons and places. Unlikely though it may seem, this also is a phase of his poetry, as these are picture-names of family, tribal, geographic and historical significance, devised by Indians—aboriginal, but not so primitive as most people believe. His research extends from monastic libraries in Quebec to Indian reserves, and will take years.
Announcing

THE TYRIAN QUILL

By

WALLACE HAVELock ROBB

A selection of the epic poet's much loved individual poems and some favourites of the public over the years.

ABBEL DAWN PRESS
R.R. 1, Kingston
Ontario, Canada
1969
CONSTANCY
(Mark 14:8 as commonly paraphrased)

The Light in a poet's soul is implanted there by the Great Creator —

Authentically, he obeys the gods; his lodestar is Adoration and the expression of Truth in words of Dignity and Beauty is the Thunderbird of his existence soaring and wheeling with him, high and free in the Azure, or tearing his being to tatters in ineffable storm.

When a poet dies, the Great Creator knows how far he fell short of his vision; But God knows, also —

"He did what he could."

Writ June 1st, 1966 at Abbey Dawn

Wallace Havelock Robb
Out on the Yucca Flat, a flash!

Twilight of life!

Or only dusk?

Or night for fish and fowl and fern and flower

And tree and animal, including man, forever!

Thus, mad, cavorting, lethal-vaunted science raucid cries,

And punctuates with periods utter final --

The thuds of falling birds!

Oh, hopeless, human reckoning!

Oh, calculation-conscious breed!

Try, now, the supernatural --

It's maybe not too late! --

Perchance belated vision find

Almighty Manitou almost moved

By some obscure bard's plea for mercy --

One more chance! --

A little time!

The rich and rolling cadence of recital is entirely lost in cold and silent type, the art of sound more or less meaningless, the emotional development of thought cut to a minimum by space restrictions. Therefore, in print, those words underlined in colour will be left out.
WALLACE HAVELOCK ROBB
by
Mrs. Elva B. Marshall
October 1951

My paper this afternoon is to be given in two parts—the first is Wallace Havelock Robb and the second part is Abbey Dawn and an Epilogue on his last book "Thunderbird."

Wallace Havelock Robb—noted Canadian—is a man of many facets. Call him poet, archaeologist, salesman, ornithologist, stone-mason, humorist—You would not be wrong on any count.

He was born in Belleville, Ontario, in 1888 (63 years ago). His father, W. D. Robb, was the head of the Grand Trunk Railway System. He was a great lover of flowers—a love which he had largely to set aside in the press of business. In the son, this was to be transmitted into a love of Birdlife and to bring him fame if not fortune when he in his turn set business aside to put first importance to Nature.

The boy was educated in the public schools of Belleville and Toronto. He attended St. Andrews Presbyterian church in Belleville and led the Boy Scouts there. He wrote his first poem in Lansdowne School, Toronto, at the age of 10. During his youth he hid his poetry—poets being looked down upon. In High School he became Captain of the hockey and the football teams.

One day in poetry class, "Barbara Frietchie" was the lesson. Every reader "murdered" it and the class became a shambles. The shy little woman teacher was on the verge of tears when Robb stood up and held up his hand for silence. "I'll do this", he said in an authoritative tone—and he did. From then on until he left Belleville High
School he taught the poetry.

*(Read Belleville the Beautiful) page 18

He entered the business world in Montreal in 1906 and applied his imagination to salesmanship with success. From then until 1921 he built up a sales force covering all Canada with headquarters at Montreal. It is of interest to note that in his salesmanship he used the dissolving lantern and full colour slides to demonstrate his company's industrial processes and to educate customers and prospects concerning his goods----a trail blazer for the modern commercial films of to-day.

He was one of the first volunteers in the First World War. He saw some of England and Scotland but not France. He is the holder of the King's Medal.

At twenty-five years of age he married Edna Ilene Burrows of Belleville in 1913 and they have two sons and one daughter.

At 33 he retired from business to devote his life to poetry in all forms. (I shall speak of these different forms of expression later on.)

* Read "Song of Rossignol (Song Sparrow) Page 3

In 1921, disillusioned because he knew he was a poet, and yet he was earning a livelihood as a salesman, he left Canada for the United States. Here he wrote, lectured, and became an outstanding bird photographer.

A chance acquaintanceship with the Prince of Wales (now the Duke of Windsor) brought him back to Canada. On one of his Canadian trips the Prince of Wales used Robb's father's private railway car, and became interested in the son's poetic inspiration. When, later on, in Victoria, the Prince learned of his intention to return to the United States, since he was neglected by Canada, he sent for the young poet, heard the story, took action. He publicly acknowledged his Patronage, asked especially for the first copy of the
first volume of poems "The Quill and the Candle", and persuaded him to return to Ontario and to work here. He is the first poet to be honoured with the Prince of Wales as patron since the middle ages - a medieval custom revived by Edward in 1924. Mr. Robb did return and started his first bird sanctuary at Belleville-called Abbey Dawn. These two words "Abbey Dawn" are Wallace Havelock Robb's life and his way of life.

* Read Introduction to The Quill and the Candle and "Listen" following it (page 1)

In 1928 he left his birthplace, Belleville for good. Several dozen wild geese had been obtained—a number of them from Jack Miner—for the Belleville Abbey Dawn Sanctuary. One morning they were found dead—shot by miscreants that were never caught. It broke his heart. As a direct result of this outrage Abbey Dawn was moved to its present site some 4 miles east of Kingston. Here with wild flowers, birds, and relics of Indian life which so fascinated him on every hand, Wallace Havelock Robb works humbly with his hands and his heart. He has lived his own life and lived it to the full. Often the object of criticism, even ridicule, he has continued in his own way to interpret Canada for Canadians. "First of all, I am a Canadian" Mr. Robb asserts. "They call me the bad boy of Canadian poetry because I won't conform. Well, I am proud to be a Canadian, and my poetry is Canadian. My poetry often won't scan properly", he says with a smile, "But when it is recited that's something else again! Through my poetry I try to express my feelings about the air, the soil and the water of my native country. It is all emotional—straight from the heart. From these rocks and pines, the waters of the St. Lawrence, from Muskoka and the Laurentians I get my inspiration. They are not the quiet placid waters of the Thames nor the shores of Loch Lomond. My poetry just wouldn't occur in England". Abbey Dawn is the spirit
of living poetry. "The Sounding Muse"—that is, the human voice in poetry in place of mere printer's ink. The reason many people do not like poetry, it is said, is because they have had mediocre poetry tossed to them in cold silent expressionless print by editors who seldom or never hear good poetry recited and so do not themselves understand it.

Wallace Havelock Robb is the first poet in Canada to advocate "The Sounding Muse"—a return to the ancient Greek foundation of poetry-recital. Charles Horne of New York city, speaking of him has stated: "Wallace Havelock Robb has one of the most resonant voices I have ever heard, and his songs simply cry out for oral presentation." Because of the perfection of his voice and diction and the uniquely Canadian beauty of his poetry, he was selected to recite on the first transcontinental radio network of America—The C.N.R. concert from Halifax to Vancouver. He possesses a remarkable degree of poetical emotion and dramatic force. His interpretive power in recital is unequalled by any other Canadian poet, it has been said. He looks the poet and he speaks like an Evangel.

It is true that many of his songs of Birdland are simple outbursts of joy with no moral to point, no message to preach. That is their charm and appeal. Many of the poems coming out of Abbey Dawn couched in birdland expression are deeply philosophical, often subtle beautiful and potent observations of humanity. That is what is disarming about them.

Mr. Robb was the first person in Canada to publicly recognize the genius of the late Major Allan Brooks, D.S.O., painter of Canadian Wild Birds. He assembled at Abbey Dawn, Canada's magnificent collection of the paintings of native birds, many of which illustrate his poems—as in this volume "The Quill and the Candle", from which I have been reading. The first paintings for a Canadian collection were started with American funds. Seventy-six paintings in water colour
now in the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology, Toronto, were presented
to the people of Canada--The Wallace Havelock Robb Collection. It won
a special award of Merit--a solid gold medallion at the C.N.E. in 1926.
In the earlier part of my paper I referred to the poet that he has
devoted his life to poetry in all forms. This collection of paint-
ings constitutes one of his many forms of "living poetry."

I am closing the first half of my paper with the Poem "Behold,
O My Country!".

* Read "Behold O My Country" page 49

END OF PART 1

PART 2 - ABBEY DAWN

It is almost impossible to separate Wallace Havelock Robb, the
poet from Abbey Dawn which is his aura. It is another of the forms of
living poetry. Abbey Dawn is a fountain of kindred interest and
humanized knowledge to all kinds of individuals--naturalists, artists,
writers, teachers, farmers wanting facts, children wanting stories,
musicians wanting thrush overtones to the mist filled murmur of fall-
ing waters, struggling humanity wanting it knows not what--but all
finding a sip of refreshment at the Brooks of Beauty flowing through
this Garden of Love. As a poet's gothic dream it has developed into
one of the most potent and beautiful cultural influences in North
America.

The site of Abbey Dawn (marked by a totem pole at the gate) is
a park of five hundred acres on the highway five miles east of King-
ston, Ontario, where Lake Ontario empties into the broad St. Lawrence.
It is officially recognized by the Government of Ontario as Abbey
Dawn Crown Game Preserve and it has two game wardens. It contains
a chain of miniature lakes, a strikingly beautiful waterfall through a gorge, with a drop of 50 ft., and many varieties of habitat from woodland to open marsh. From Abbey Dawn's highest rock the Adirondacks can be seen and its wooded vales give seclusion to the Veery, the Hermit thrush, and the Poet. In peace and confidence both bird and poet pour out their song. Abbey Dawn--a name rich in spiritual overtones and deep national significance--designates the poet's library studio and workshop, and like the monasteries of medieval times it has a modest farm of maintenance called Abbey Dawn Grange. Although now retired from farm life, Mr. Robb still finds time to help his son on the Grange adjoining the sanctuary. Yes, Abbey Dawn is a sanctuary not only for wild life but for humans with poetry in their heart.

In the near future it may become famous for something entirely different, for on Abbey Dawn's jutting contours, Wallace Havelock Robb the archaeologist has uncovered enough evidence of Pre-Indian life in the area to conjure up an entirely new conception of Eastern Ontario's pre-historic days.

Among many other items, Mr. Robb has found a granite mask closely resembling the stone skulls found in New Mexico three years ago. At that time archaeologists pretty well agreed that the round solid stone masks had been brought to the area--or made there--by Asiatics who crossed the Bering Straits and made their way southward along the inner side of the Rockies to New Mexico, Mexico and eventually Yucatan to start the advanced civilization which the Spaniards found centuries later and destroyed.

The Abbey Dawn discovery has satisfied Mr. Robb, if no one else, up to this point, that a band of the same Asiatics branched off somewhere in what is now Alberta, and following the various rivers and lakes which form a fairly complete waterway eastward, made their way to the head of the St. Lawrence River.
"It is quite obvious that there was a pre-Iroquoin group here" said Mr. Robb. "This might have been anywhere from three to twelve thousand years ago. I don't know any more about a thousand years than I do about a thousand dollars. But I am confident it was well before the Indians appeared on the scene."

Dozens of various stones, all shaped like a head - or view of a ram's head, lend further credibility to the Robb theory. The Mexico-bound Asiatics, captivated by the symmetry of the Rocky Mountain goat's head, more or less adopted it as their tribal symbol.

No one can deny that the Abbey Dawn findings resembles a ram's head. There are too many of them to attribute the whole thing to coincidence. Fate and the Unknown which placed Abbey Dawn where it is resulted in the first knowledge and discovery of these mysterious granite relics which baffle archaeology but which none the less are numerous and convincing - the relics of an unknown people of the dim past, enigmas not yet classified.

In a newly-built museum on top of a rock mesa commanding Abbey Dawn, Mr. Robb has assembled hundreds of his Pre-Indian and Indian finds. This too is living poetry.

Abbey Dawn holds lovingly within its sanctuary the Robert Holmes Memorial and wild flower shrine. If it possessed no other fascination, this alone would be sufficient to draw me there. I knew, admired a and revered this talented Canadian painter of exquisite flower paintings in water colour. He taught design at the Ontario College of Art when I attended there, and his themes were always of Canadian wild flowers, hepaticas, bloodroot, wild iris, ladyslippers. I never paddle a canoe through a maze of white-green arrowhead that I do not think of Robert Holmes-- nor pick a water lily from our lagoon in the North that I do not see a waterlily mural of his which adorned our classroom at the college and to which I gave my adoring reverence.
day after day as I worked on my own stencil design for a canoe cushion to be based on a waterlily motif. And I hear his musical voice re-iterate a maxim I have never forgotten when he criticized some luckless student's lack of imagination - "Monotony, even when beautiful, is palling." I cut out this picture of him at the time of his death - May 14, 1930 - some ten years ago - the clipping does not bear the year of his passing. This card I bought at the Art Gallery in Toronto about 4 years ago and it is typical of his wild flower paintings in a woodland setting.

Wallace Havelock Robb gave to him his first public recognition in the form of a testimonial banquet. He had been considering his life a failure. He had nine days of triumph and then the end came. He dropped dead after addressing the Art and Letters Club of Toronto.

Ontario's wild flower shrine in Abbey Dawn is a carving of the face of Robert Holmes in low relief on a huge granite rock about which cluster naturally the wild flowers he loved. John Byers the sculptor took two years to carve it there on the living rock and it commemorates in a fitting way and in a fitting place the great wildlife artist Robert Holmes.

"He is the host of Day who stands at the Door of Dawn to greet the rising sun."

There is another fascinating "living poem" at Abbey Dawn. It is Gitchie Nagamo the Poets' Bell. Gitchie Nagamo is (in Indian) "A Beautiful Song." It is named in honor of North America's first poet - the Indian. On one side it bears two lines from Mr. Robb's poem "Morningsong"

I gave my Soul to the Silent Dawn
And it goes where the song of the birds has gone."
These lines are a prayer in adoration of the morning. It is universal and can be said in any religion.

The other side is inscribed with the name of the firm who cast the 3/4 ton bronze bell—Gillett and Johnstone, Croyden, England, and the date, Abbey Dawn 1936.

Mr. Robb travelled thousands of miles to find the right toned bronze bell which can be heard for seven miles and which he rings at sunrise and sunset, or whenever he feels that its clear carrying tones should be added to the beauty of the day. "Spring is not a season but rather a feeling in the human heart."

"He who hears the birdsong on his heart
Hears the Bugles of Beauty on the sun-tipped heights of Morning."

The birds find in Gitchie Nagamo a useful friend and they love to peck at the bell-rope, and to weave the strands they pilfer into their nearby nests. They quite wore out a bell-rope, and now Mr. Robb puts out bits of coloured yarn for his "feathered retainers" and the gay bits soon highlight the surrounding cradles-to-be.

The great Belgian carillonneur Dr. Kamiel LeFevre of New York City, speaking of Gitchie Nagamo, told newspapermen there that a new bell had been born to the world. Big Ben of London England is the symbol of Parliamentary Government. The Liberty Bell of Philadelphia is the symbol of Democracy and Freedom. Gitchie Nagamo is the symbol of "The Bluebird of Happiness."

As far as is known this is the first Poets Bell in the world. Mr. Robb dreamed of the bell and the dream came true.

But the bell needed a tower from which it could be rung and Robb said "Maybe the fairies will build me a tower." They laughed but he said to them "Who are you to say there are no fairies? Did Jesus ever say there were no fairies? Did any great poets say it?"
Not a very many weeks had passed by when some thirty farmers of the surrounding district came to Abbey Dawn to say "We appreciate having the bell and we will build you a tower." They made a very early start next morning and by 4 o'clock it was completed. It should have a corner stone, they said—but what was it to be? Brass was too costly. What better than the family bean pot? Mrs. Robb entered into the spirit of the affair and placed the family bean pot with the documents inside the corner stone, pouring paraffin around the lid that no moisture would reach the papers.

"The purer the thought and the higher the theme
The fewer my fellows who follow my dream."
from the poem "Twang Twang"
(on the Sagonask River at Belleville)

EPILOGUE

I had hoped and expected to visit Abbey Dawn and to meet Wallace Havelock Robb before giving this paper to you—but I had to cancel my trip—and now perhaps we shall meet him together in the near future when we hope he will be able to visit our Club.

Mr. Robb's extensive travels, his years of vagabond writing, the extraordinary fullness of his experiences in all levels of society fit him to interpret Birdland with universal understanding. What lovers of Literature lost in general song when Robb dedicated his muse to Birdland, lovers of birds have gained. From the altar of Beauty where he laid his mystic quill a strange new mavis incense comes unfurling loveliness—hovering as a bird.

Wallace Havelock Robb considers being born a poet is a very great and grave responsibility to humanity and poetry is a holy thing.
Mr. Robb has been adopted as brother of the Mohawks with the name of Kan-yeh-ga-haw-kas of the Kent White Eagle and Pine Tree Chief. He is the first Pine tree chief ever honoured with the title in Canada—the loftiest and most holy office in the power of the Iroquois to bestow.

Mr. Robb's latest book is "Thunderbird"—Indian legends of the bay of Quinte made into a novel in verse. To enjoy the reading of this unusual book it is necessary to enter into the spirit of the author; to shed preconceived notions of form and content and to dismiss the consciousness of the world of to-day. Thunderbird is astonishingly fresh and exhilarating. Prose continually breaks out into strange poetry. This is Canada when only the Vikings had visited it. There are Mohawks and Algonquins, battle and storms, lovers and villains, and the youth of the world. (Insert page 17 here)

The Thunderbird is translated as God's Might—a supernatural eagle with the striking power of lightning—a visible manifestation of the Great Creator. The poetry, difficult at first, gradually brings with it the beat of the drums, the songs of the birds, and the terror of the storms.

The Bay of Quinte, the rivers and islands about it, are the setting of "Thunderbird" and the story opens with the return of a group of Mohawks from a successful southern raid. They bring with them a captive Viking boy who is adopted into the tribe. Contrary to fictional custom he does not immediately re-organize the Indians with his "white man's" brains, but plays a minor role until he elopes with the daughter of a chief. Tribal rivalries, customs and superstition are most convincingly presented. One gradually becomes accustomed to the Indian names. The rivalries climax when A-du-ga-ra-tho plots to oust the ancient chief. He fires the sacred grove of the Thunderbird, emblem
of the tribe, but his plot is frustrated and he is killed when the son of the Viking returns to wed Am-a-we-yo, the Hawk maiden heiress of the dying O-nay-go-rah. The Thunderbird is translated as God's might, a supernatural eagle with the striking power of lightning, a visible manifestation of the Great Creator. The poetry, difficult at first, gradually brings with it the beat of the tom toms, the songs of the birds and the terror of the storm. Being partly story, partly poetry, and partly authentic Indian lore, "Thunderbird" is thus entirely Canadian in form as well as content and quite unlike anything else in print.

Three distinguished Academicians—2 American and one Canadian—have written that "Thunderbird" is an epic equal to the best of Homers' works and in some ways surpassing them.

I could not find a copy of it in the store here nor in the Library so could not read you any extracts from it—but perhaps he will do that for us himself.

The public has long called Mr. Robb the Abbé out of sentimental esteem— and indeed Abbey Dawn has much of the woodland-cathedral mysticism of the Druids—so I am going to close with his poem, "Morning Song" from which the inscription was chosen for Gitchie Nagamo—the Poet's Bell.

* Read Morningsong—Page 52
Dear Folks:

Thank you for your lovely candle card! I got so annoyed, angry is the word, at the commercials on TV and radio prostituting lovely carols and hymns of tradition that I said, "I'll send no Xmas cards and I'll make damn few presents! So, a wicked silence around here! However, we had a huge prime rib roast of beef and lots of relatives and company and booze and I spent little time at this desk, let me tell you.

Your marvelous letter was loved by everyone on hand as I now have to get our nurse daughter, Miriam, to read my mail as I can't see very well any more, make errors on this machine too, but I can see the letters, I see well, tho, for my age.

I was below par before Xmas, got little done. I now have to help a lot with Mrs. Robb who is senile and pretty bad, tho she loves visitors and chatters away, tho nobody knows what she is saying. We guess correctly a lot, which helps and pleases her. I dress and undress her morn and eve, and sometimes its a job! The skin cancer on my back is under control and no more bother, but it has broken out on lower left ear and is only now coming under control. What medicine can do now is wonderful.

I wrote an aphorism to go with pine and spruce twigs beautifully done up by Miriam for a nurse friend dying with cancer in hosp. and I afterwards revised it for universal application:

Nature ministers to mankind in Beauty,
And Awareness transforms the Beauty into love.

I must go now and care for Edna while Mim walks the dog a bit.

So, I'll repeat again, that your letter was a charmer stamps and all. You are a remarkable woman. Forget about Gitchi Nagamo for Brock! Joe now has taken charge of everything with power of attorney, and he says he'll take his time and that's that. We had an open house 29th and in at the door came a comely lady followed by her husband and a group. I never saw her before, but I kissed her and she introduced herself, "I'm Mrs. so and so.

(Over)
Dear Elva:

Certainly you have my permission to have my recent aphorism published in Peninsular Nature or Field Naturalist or any other nature magazine of your choice, either in the form which I sent you first or in the following and more universal form. You see, being a perfectionist, I revised the original this way:

Nature ministers to mankind in Beauty,
And Awareness transmutes the Beauty into Love.

May you have success. I loved your letter, love all your letters, they are always alive. I write little now. I have to force myself to do routine work. It is a rare thing for fire or love or emotion to twang my Golden Lyre with inspiration. I cannot see well any more, and read little aloud. Joe has a remarkable taping machine which he sets down somewhere when I get talking about my life and career, and he has scores of reels of tape. I'll be 87 come May, and as my Grandpa Black used to say, "This grown auld is a damn puer affair!" God and the Fairies and gods are still good to me and I survive.

I met a religious, old lady friend the other day and she asked how I am and I said, "I swear like a trooper, drink like a fish and tell all manner of wicked things." She said, "Ah, go on with you, Mr. Robb, you're terrible!" One!

Wallace Havelock Robb
Dear Elva:

How wonderful it was to see you again and chat a little! This is to thank you for your good offices and wish you and Jack well.

The inclosed copies of the poem to Ontario and the St. C. W. Literary Club are what I had in hand there at Brock Univ., but which didn't get distributed for one reason and another. You know those to whom they might properly go, so distribute them as you see fit. I have now on hand only one or two more for my own library. There never were many of these anyway -- it was just printed at Abbey Dawn Press in this limited way for your members and me and my friends.

Mrs. Armstrong had things on her mind, I guess, and I didn't see her again. At my age, although I am in splendid condition, that was quite a do, so to speak -- I felt like I'd been wrestling Bobby Hull!!! I had more than one snort after the Kennetts got me back to Dundas. Yeah, Man!

Orders are pouring in for The Tyrian Quill. One Toronto man ordered fifteen for his grandchildren -- cash with the order. Another man came here this morning and laid down $ for four. Nice going!

It was a splendid do you gals had, so it was. I was glad to have a hand in it. Send one of those T.C. circs to the Pres. of Brock -- I forget his name. Man alive, I'm busy! Oneh! Wallace
Dear Mrs. Marshall:

We're almost strangers, which I don't like, so long since any contact -- I think Elva's the name, isn't it? I hope and trust that you are well and John, too.

Now get ready for a flash of lightning and a roar of thunder! --

I'm concerned about my age (I'll be 83 come mid-May) and the destiny of the glorious Gitchi Nagamo, the "Poets' Bell", "A Beautiful Song". And it is a beautiful song, tho in this age of sex-pot poets and other pollution how few, indeed, there are today who hear it in their hearts. Now listen:

Gitchi Nagamo will not go to Queen's University for some good reasons; the University of New Brunswick is seething with fine poets, in Fredericton, A.B., and they'd pester me to death if they knew the situation. This property, Abbey Dawn, will be no more, save in a name I have made immortal. I am perplexed about Gitchi Nagamo. I am to be cremated, and I shall live in my works. But what of Gitchi Nagamo? I have given many literary treasures to Queen's Edith and Lorne Pierce Collection of Canadiiana -- wonderful things. Of course, Dr. Lorne Pierce and Wilson MacDonald and I were close friends for years and Lorne held Wilson and me in specially high, literary esteem. So what?

Now, then, again, the Women's Literary Club of St. Catharines has been my loyal and active friend since my return to Canada in 1925. It was they who robed me in the Tyrian, the royal, Roman purple of the Caesars and the poets, in 1955. And here is the destiny of Gitchi Nagamo at stake! What shall I do? What shall I do? As one of my lovers cries in one of my legends. Listen again:

Brock University is young. They have traditions to build. There are other deserving universities, why name them? If the women of your club want to start kicking up the dust -- who knows what may happen! That's all I'll say now. Wuff sed! Lots of love to you both.

Uneh!

Wallace Havelock Robb
Dear Elva:

R. R., Kingston, Ont., Canada

Mch 17/71

Inless my memory betrays me, I rec’d no airmail letter in Feb. Forget it! And thank you for speaking to Dr. Stanley’s paper on my career at the Literary Club. It is 4:40 p.m. and the sun is sinking and I’ll have a busy day tomorrow, so I needs must start this letter now. And it won’t be long, as there isn’t much to say:

I’ll simply acknowledge that I have read all your news about yourself and the members, and get on with it. Thank you for informing me! Our angelic Edna has glaucoma in one eye and, as a result, to save it and the good one, it’s four drops in eyes each day, permanently! We are doing it.

Sometimes when I most think that the Abbey Dawn Fairies and the gods have deserted me, pop! Up comes some incident that helps me beyond my sad hopes. I feel with you and Jack, of course, and with all the other ailing ladies, and I, too, am just getting over a terrible bout with a wicked bug to my stomach, and, as you say, I was sick as a dog.

Now, about Gitchi Nagamo and its ultimate destiny: Take it easy! We are a dour and tardy people, we Canadians, and the Yanks would be pounding on my door and giving me no peace -- but we must cultivate the idea in Canada -- and allow it to sink in. "pity 'tis!" etc.

I am sending you two more copies of Stanley’s paper. Give one to Chown, whom I remember well and liked, instanter. Culturally and theoretically, there should be no work at all at all! But Canada, as I’ve said, YEAH!

I plan to make no restrictions on the bell, Gitchi Nagamo, but plan to suggest Brock appoint a committee to rule the ringing of the bell. Poets and brides ring it; and I ring it after baptizing a child, of which I have done sixteen or seventeen. We ring it Easter Sunday morning, and on July 1st, and the summer solstice, June 21st I think, and Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve (for the winter solstice) Christmas morning, and when visiting poets care to address themselves to the bell. A joyous occasion prevails at times, if important. Any committee could make it’s own rules to the glory of God and man and the Arts, Poetry, of course, leading. G.N. is still mounted, but lower, on timbers. Our tower on the Lookout was low, about 12’, painted white and cost about a hundred bucks. I'd like to see it settled in location, at least, the university, I mean, before I die. I feel close to St. Kitts because the paper there has always supported me and you ladies. The bell can be heard 25 miles any a time, over the river and up and down. There have been over 200 poems to it, only one of which I wrote myself. It is in a steel cradle, can be rung at ground level. It is a sweet toned, tuned bell, weighs 600 pounds with clapper. Poets have come to ring it from China and India! It is unthinkable, but it could wind up in Harvard, Yale or Syracuse! I have a grand nephew a professor in Yale..... I have lectured in Syracuse. Nuff sed! Maybe Mayor Chown is the man. Anyway, Brock is young and needs traditions, and here’s a chance. Take your time and post me. Wallace
Dear Elva:

Thank you for your letter. It raises questions to which you need answers as soon as possible. So, here we go:

The mouth of Gitchi Nagamo is about a yard wide. It is a piggly among great bells, but it is big enough for all that and it is more than destined to fame, it is already famous in a way proportionate to the popularity of poets and poetry in these relatively materialistic times.

Over two hundred poems about Gitchi Nagamo, the "Poets' Bell", and some about both the bell and the abbey are here in a large album. Only one of these poems is by me; when poems started to arrive I was taken by surprise. When they got up to eleven, I thought I'd better write at once the poem I had been mulling in my mind, which I did. So, I wrote poem # 12. Poems of tribute to Abbey Dawn or to me or the bell or all three keep dribbling in. I suppose, if G. N. gets set up at Brock, and there comes a time of renewed interest in poetry (interest in the arts goes and comes in waves) who knows how many or what or by whom poems to Gitchi Nagamo will pour in. I suppose this album (probably two by now) will have to be copied out and then handed over to Brock for their archives. I fancy the presence of the bell may stimulate keen interest in poetry, probably an understatement.

Incidentally, the Salvation Army, Kingston, has asked permission again to hold their Easter Sunrise Service on the Lookout at Abbey Dawn this year, their 18th such service. Fancy that now. The bell starts ringing as they are arriving and it keeps ringing until they get up to the Lookout. When the service is over, I ring again as they depart -- and they just love it. I give a brief reading of a poem about the resurrection at the service.

Man loves a great and mellow bell because it speaks his soul. G. N. is a tuned bell, which is why it is mellodious and not clangorous. The note is D natural. But it is not like hitting D on the piano, say, for it had five other tones, half and quarter and so on, which can be scoured by slapping the bell with your palm in different places. These notes all sound together and form a chord, like an organ chord, which makes the tone so beautiful and so wistful and far-carrying. Once the students hear G. N. in their hearts and ears together, the memory will remain with them forever. G. N. has caused men and women to weep with emotion. At a distance of half a mile, say, it is a nostalgic enchantment. When the Reeve of this Township spoke at the dedication, in 1936, he wept when he told us how, at sunrise on summer mornings, he and his brothers at their farm three miles away stood in awed silence listening to the bell. What genius creates it needs must leave to
humanity when the Grim Reaper calls.

Gitchi Nagamo alone, the bell and clapper weigh 600#; in its steel cradle it weighs about three quarters of a tone, I believe. When it gets rolling, so to speak, it has authority and is a powerful force in physical form as well as sound. I found out why so many protestant churches have no bells in their steeples, or, at most, tiny ones. It would seem that the "lip service" Christians wouldn't go to the expense of a strong enough tower to prevent a catastrophe when the heavy bell would start swinging. The Roman Catholos always have realized the cultural and spiritual power of great bells -- this because they are led by men of profound sensitivity and knowledge.

G. N. already has taken on quite a patina of dignity and age. I wrote a special baptismal document for the first baptism I was called upon to do and which poets in Europe still do when asked, a throwback to the time when all poets were priests. A medieval style copy of this would naturally be supplied with the bell, mayhap some poet in the future may be required to function. I have done about 16 or 17, but never offered to do any, nor have I done any without two weeks delay and examination as to motives. I used to perform this "Under The Bell" which is what the document was called. It is a very solemn ritual, with me in gown. It starts with the beatitudes (forget my spelling from time to time!!!). Not a few of the mothers have wept at the end. When the bell was up at the Lookout in its sturdy tower, and it would be spring, say, and the birds singing all around as the ceremony took place -- no wonder mothers wept.

One Protestant missionary on furlow from China, came all the way here to see G. N. and he told me that they talked of it in China and he just had to come and see it. He translated the lines on it into Chinese for me the way they do in China -- I give my soul to the silent dawn and it goes where the song of the birds has gone. This means the great Creator (Silent Dawn) and Eternity, of course. This is why the bell is acceptable to all religions, and not by any planning on my part. I wrote morning song impulsively and passionately, and I put those lines on the bell with holy awe, little knowing what I was about. When the New York Times and the Boston Globe and the New York Herald Tribune ran editorials I was just a little frightened! Many and many a paper ran editorial comment. One said, we have heard of making plowshares into swords, but here's a farmer poet who has turned plowshares into a glorious bell. Words to that effect. I have this publicity here in my hectic file system. As they turn up, they will go with the bell, I suppose. I just wonder what would assuredly happen if I revived all this publicity in connection with the destiny of G. N. "Wuhl", as the Mohawks would say. But St. Kitts has been wonderful to me. That says it! I'm giving brock its chance. Nuff said.

Gitchi Nagamo is Ojibway (Algonquin) and it means, straight, in casual use, a great or grand or big ringing. But poetically, and in oration or lofty use (and their leaders were all poets and orators) it takes on lofty, romantic and poetical interpretation, at which Tecumtha was skilled, if you will remember. It means, "A Beautiful Song", a Majestic Calling", "A Psalm of Life", etc. It is so wonderful, that I, now a great chief of the Mohawks, the highest of the Iroquois, should have given G. N. this magic Ojibway name.

When there is another strange and maybe psychic thing: You know, the Holy Bible stresses the sacred nature of the number 7. Whether other
religions or peoples look upon seven this way I do not know, but I always have done, maybe because I'm nominally a Christian. Well, the bell arrived, and, on the top, cast there where I had nothing to do with it in my design, was the factory number, or what I took to be the factory order number. It was in four letters. Now, being a bit of a mystic, I wondered about this. So, I set down the number, set under it the same thing in reverse, and x added them, and, lo! they came out 7777. And more of the same! That'll make cynics scoff and serious thinkers to marvel and ponder.

You mentioned use of some publicity and asked permission to go ahead. Well, when I put this up to the then Prince of Wales, "How far may I go?" He said, "I trust you to be discreet, and you have been, go the limit!" You do likewise. It is my career, not Dr. Stanley's! He was here a couple weeks ago, here sitting in this study and in our livingroom and kitchen. Yeah, man! You go ahead and use anything that will further the cause. Credit Dr. Stanley's paper with anything you quote.

I forgot to say, that I have written many bell poems and have made much mention of the bell or bells in various ways. Time is in favour of me and my poetry, Gitchi Magamo and Brock University. Universities are like poets, they do not die.

Now, this long statement, and that's what it is, is only a small part of things about Gitchi Magamo. I could keep on writing all day! But this is sufficient.

Joe and Edna join me in our very best to you and Jack. God Love You!

Onah!

Wallace Havelock Robb

PS/ My compliments to Mrs. Marshall, God Bless Her! She's a gallant gal, so she is. And go to it! -- here's the green light.
Dear Elva:

Got your card of 28th last evening. Congratulations on progress so far! Sounds fine! Gitche Nagamo is a matter of vision, and everyone just doesn't have real vision, especially in these materialistic times. Everything folks can see and grasp takes $$$ and especially Brock or any of the universities. Fortunately, G.N. will take practically no money outlay, and it is so romantic, glamorous and beautiful.

I forget whether I mentioned to you Gitche Nagamo's value in cash: I got it in 1936. It was cast for Abbey Dawn in Croydon, England, and to my own direction as to details, though following the standards of traditional weight, mixture, shape, etc. It was 35 years ago! From the changes in costs due to the passage of time and inflation, I think $5,000.00 would be its cost today, but that's not the point. the symbolism of it is the thing. It started out as a poet's bell, but it was received with such acclaim in Canada, U.S.A., United Kingdom and so on, that it promptly became the "Poets' Bell". And just as Liberty Bell in Philadelphia (cracked and all!) is the symbol of freedom, so Gitche Nagamo is the symbol of love and the bluebird of happiness. It is the Bluebird Bell for youth -- and I did not name it that, it just acquired it. I received a letter last evening from a prospective young mother who was baptized by me under Gitche Nagamo. She requests that I provide two names, one for a boy if it is a male and one for a girl if that's the case. I shall do as requested. God knows what G.N. will mean to the students of Brock, say, fifty years or so from now.

Gitche Nagamo will be available this coming fall, if Brock accepts it in time for moving it before rough weather. Otherwise, it would have to wait until next spring. I wish to see it in safe quarters with the timelessness of a university, before I die. I am in splendid health at present, but time is inexorable, so to speak. To give up this glorious bell is a devastating sacrifice, but real poets must think in terms of humanity; they must see and act upon vistas not common to other folk.

I have only 5 THUNDERBIRDS left! Good supply of TECUMTHA, KAYONARONTE, HAIL CANADA!, A PAR BELL CALLING AND ONE ARRAYED IN WAMPUM. Lots of THE TYRTAN QUILL. The library of Brock is the one which should have these works. If they want a THUN, they'd better get a wiggle on!

Lots of love to you and Jack! Oneh!

Wallace Havelock Hobb
Dear Elva:

Thank you for wonderful letter! I'll start answering now, but today is not my efficiency day -- phooey! I was up, we all were, until two last night; I did some readings from HAIL CANADA! and THE TYRIAN QUILL for a Kingston doctor and his mother here on a visit from Northern Ireland. Oh, dear! Our daughter, Miriam (Mrs. Robt. Bryan) the nurse, is now living here with us, with her husband, for good -- she is helping run the house and take care of Mrs. Robb who is rapidly going down hill into senility. Fortunately, Edna is a gentle natured person and doesn't give us overmuch trouble, but she is a Christian Scientist and that makes for difficulties. Edna has glaucoma, and has to have drops in eyes four times a day, and so on -- I wish that fool of a Mary Baker Eddy had died aborning; she was a stupid, ignorant, religious fanatic! Now I'll try to get on with it.

First of all, congratulations on what you have accomplished. Good Girl! About the U.N. and the "Peace Bell": this is a gesture and publicity and all that, but it could never be in a class with "Liberty Bell" or Gitchi Nagam, the "Bluebird of Happiness" (Love) Bell -- albeit, Canadians, being so apathetic and tardy, may delay universal recognition of this inevitable end. Bells, big bells of dignity and significant symbolism never die. Let the ladies and brock ponder on this for a while! The bells down in Alfred University, Alfred, N.Y., which inspired (with Ottawa's carillon) my wonderful oratorio, "Gloriosus" (not yet set to music because the Dr. of Music, Wingate, at Alfred, told me it was beyond him and only a Handel could give it a proper setting, well, these bells were buried in Belgium for over 300 years!

I fancy this is the place to answer your questions about Kamiel Lefevere, Belgium's greatest carillonneur at the time and who was fetched over by Rockefeller for the Riverside Church carillon. He it was whom we, Edna and I, visited in his tower when I was seeking information on big bells and their tones and probable costs. When I told him of my dream of a glorious "Poet's Bell" (now Poets' Bell) and how I intended to handle it, not for my birthday, not for signals or fire alarms or unimportant things, but for beauty and sunrise and love in its many aspects, Lefevere's eyes filled with tears, and he said words to this effect, "Oh, how wonderful a bell this will be, a new kind of bell -- here I am a poet, bell ringer and composer for bells, and I never thought of it myself. This will be a new thing in the world, and it will be famous right from the day it is cast." And when he told the United Press, I think it was first, then, later, the Associated Press, in N.Y.C., about it, they doubted his words and said, "China and Indian and Burma have had magnificent bells for untold years, and we'll find out." So, they cabled all over the world to their agents everywhere, and, within about a week, they had the answer -- there never was a poet's bell in the world before! And that was that! Nuff sed

Good for you about "Tecumseh" for Brock. It would seem inevitable.

I shall send to you in next mail another copy of Dr. Stanley's paper, THE ABBE OF ABBEY DAWN. I can't send any more. The poem, Ontario Is A Trillium Manitou, is truly a work of dignity and apprehension; it is worthy an oratorio, too. And it is so wonderful that I wrote it for the W. L. C. of St. Catharines. If you do not win through now, I can assure you, that, one fine day, as Churchill so often said, it will be given its place by posterity. It's like the bell, G.N. -- if Brock
doesn't have the vision to grasp the future, as I said before, I shall be sadly disappointed, but some university will get it, and I do hope Brock will respond. We'll see. The Wake Robin, no less than thirty-one blooms (!) is blowing love and beauty to the world right now at the corner of this old home. It is the exact colour of my gown which you women gave me -- royal Roman-purple. That gown, you know, will be a literary treasure when I'm gone -- it is mentioned in my will.

To answer your questions: 1. I can't name many of the poets who have rung Gitchi Nagamo solo and ceremonially, but, of course, they are many. Several were minor poets from Niagara Peninsula, but I forget their names. The nicest story I have, though, is about the poetess sister of an officer from Afghanistan. He was attending staff college here and his sister was visiting him and he came to see me and said that she couldn't speak English, but knew all about the bell and was eager to come here and claim her right. So, they came, and she was all in native silks and they had a party with her of about ten, no less. She entered the museum, greeted me briefly, laid down a book of her poems in her own tongue, to which I smiled and indicated the way to the bell. I made everyone remain behind so that she would be alone with the bell. I showed her how to address herself to the bell, and then I retired. She rang it beautifully and at varying speeds and tempo, then stood with bowed head as it died down to silence. I advanced toward her but stopped dead in my tracks, for I observed that she was weeping. So, we waited. When she got control again, she turned and smiled and shook hands, and that was that. Her brother told me that all Pakistan and India would hear about it. Nuff sed!

2. Some minor poets in St. Kitts area wrote poems to G. N., and these are in the book of such poems, but I can't recall names offhand.

3. The names of the 6 editors are unknown to me, but they ran editorials in Boston Globe, N.Y. Herald Tribune and N.Y. Times. The one you mention was Herald Tribune. I can't locate it right now, but we have it. I think it was in the fall of 1936, just after we got the bell, and it was to the effect that after a war men turn their cannon into plowshares, but there's a poet-farmer who has turned his plowshares into a glorious bell just to express beauty and happiness when he feels in the mood.

4. The stories about human reaction to the bell are numerous. One of the best is about a rough, tobacco-chewing hillbilly about five miles from here. It was autumn, and we had about four days of mean, cold, rainy weather. So, I didn't ring G.N. Then down came this lean, angular man and tackled me. "Looked, mister! We never had a big bell calling to us around here until you went and got this one. And you started ringin' it; and we got to like that bell, and now you ain't been ringin' it for several days -- what the hell's the matter with you anyway!" So, I said I rang the bell for joy when I was in the mood, and it had been miserable weather of late and I just didn't think it appropriate (this was before we had any system and were feeling our way) and the fellow spat tobacco for about twelve feet and said, "Well, By God! Come to think of it now, that's the way it oughta be!" Then he enlarged on how G.N. had enriched their lives and how sweet it was sounding from afar. They never had known what a bell could mean. This rough man expressed what the bell means far better than many other folk who said essentially the same thing. We must ask Dr. Gibson and the Board of Brock to accept this poet's understanding of the matter, even tho' they may not entirely grasp it. It is the poet's way, and I shall not complain. All men cannot see with the understanding of the poet, else there would be no need of poets. Nuff sed!
5. If G.N. should have to be recast because of a crack, or some such matter, if it were at Brock, for instance, the matter of recasting would be a thing involving the whole student body and the alumni and the authorities. Legend and sentiment and aspiration would enter the scene. It would have to be recast and tuned in England, as no reliable bell founders are to be found in North America.

6. Thomas Bowie, Toronto, was the sculptor who did the heads of Wilson MacDonald and myself for H. Spencer Clark of Guild of All Arts, Scarborough, but whether they are yet in bronze I do not know.

7. One interesting story: When I ordered Gitchi Nagamo from England, the bell founders wrote to Kamiel Lefevere, N.Y.C., stating that they had received an order for a beautiful bell from a lone man in Canada—now what could one individual unattached to any church or suchlike do with a gorgeous bell? Would they risk casting it? Lefevere wrote back to them saying that they would be astonished at what this one, lone man would do with the bell, and to go ahead.

8. I cannot supply a copy of the baptism ritual because I would have to type it all out, but I shall supply for the archives a sample of the document in my own script, beautifully done, like a medieval manuscript. Poets, from the dim past baptized because, of course, all poets were priests in the early times. All priests were not poets, naturally. Practically all poets were in the priesthood up until the dark ages. All the arts were mothered by the church. When, with the passage of time, Art, Science and Religion separated, poets were not all priests. During interminable wars and pestilence, etc., when priests were not easily come by (too many of them dead!) the people would turn to the poets to perform baptism, especially in certain circumstances, such as war, plague, etc. Anyone could perform baptism. I could find no ancient form of baptism outside the churches, so I wrote one myself, and the literary critic of the Globe & Mail, William Arthur Deacon said that it is the most beautiful such ritual he has ever seen.

9. A tuned bell is cast and then metal is turned off the inside to make the bell sound correctly at the different sections so that it makes a chord. Untuned bells clang, usually unmelodiously. When the bell is reachable with the hand, one can slap it at different points and get different notes, but to get each note sounded this way by hand would require much testing. It isn't done by the public.

10. John Byers is dead. He was for some years head of art in the Protestant high schools of Montreal. He was both painter and sculptor. He made a cast of my head, a bust type, and a copy in bronzed plaster looks down on my here right now. He did many small things in bronze and I have on my desk a lovely, nude girl paper cutter. The head of Holmes he did here is now in the Guild Inn grounds, Scarborough, due to vandalism here—bombarding Holmes face with empty beer bottles and marking it with lipstick! Byers was a student of Holmes, knew him intimately. The late Miss Jessie P. Semple, head of Art in Toronto schools had been a student with Holmes. She saw Byers' Holmes head and pronounced it perfect.

11. Congratulations on your family background! Yes, I saw Kamiel several times, wrote a poem the theme of which is Lefevere high in his tower and the melody pouring down over the land. I think I have told you how he was moved to misty eyes when he realized what I was
creating and so eager to help me. He found the range and size of bell which I could likely finance, only about three, and he sounded them in turn, and I selected D-natural for a try, and then he played a composition with D in it frequently, and each time this note would be coming up, he would give a look and nod his head as he hit it, and we selected it — to Edna's joy and his and mine. All this away high up in the Riverside Church tower in New York, when I was for a season on N.B.C. Radio in those days. I think that would be 1934 or 1935. G.N. was cast in 1936. Kamiel Lefevere was a poet, which probably meant that he was universal, as I, indeed, am — honouring all religions, conforming to all, on occasion, but worshipping the Great Creator. He may well have conformed to R.C. church ritual, but in N.Y.C. he was a Baptist.

It was the first bride to come here to ring the bell who informed me, imperiously, that G.N. is the Bluebird of Happiness Bell. You must understand, that I was only vaguely aware of what I had created in this bell! — we were feeling our way; we had no precedent; I had established ringing at sunrise and sunset only; anything else was, for the time being, "no can do"; then along came this bride & groom, not asking, but demanding the right to ring the bluebird of Happiness Bell on her honeymoon! — is this not a sanctuary for birds? Are you not a poet? I refused her, at first, but, after all, maybe the fairies were running this place! What born poet would refuse a bride this strange, new bell? And maybe it is, indeed, the Bluebird Bell — a bit of Heaven and Earth in one at once spiritual and material object, like the Bluebird, a bit of Heaven and Earth! I surrendered, almost instantaneously; that is! So, she rang the bell and went her way. Only after the sixth bride barged in did I realize that this was no longer mine only bell — humanity would run it, the fairies would run it, the gods and the people! — I was and still am but the poet, a servant of my fellow man. Kamiel was about my own age. I rather think he died. If not, he'd be pretty old by now, because I'm a pretty lonely, old man.

About "Mistmorn of August", the D.ofD. is long ago out of print. But I could have Joe take it in to Pub. Lib. or Queen's and get a machine print made — anon, that is. As to Arrayed In Wampum, it may or may not be had from Department of Lands & Forests, Queen's Park, Toronto, price $2.50. They have freed it to me to reprint it myself, but they may have some left. I'm going to try for more soon. My works were so easy to get — and, once sold out, are available from old book dealers only. Phooey!

I'm abandoning this letter in order to get it into town and in the mail to you, as someone is going to town. If there is anything unanswered, let me know. This bell, G.N., is the first bell of the kind in the world, (Kamiel Lefevere) and, like my other gifts to K... Hist. Soc, Royal Ontario Museum, etc., is given in trust, as most such gifts are given. So long for now! I'm proud of you! And this goes for all the women in St. C. W. L. Club. Oneh!
Dear Elva:

With the prevailing situation here and which I need not detail, I've been a busy old dodger. Our daughter, Miriam has been and is living here now permanently with her husband. She's a star nurse of great experience with old people. She knows the score. Edna never lets up. Just so.

I am not a bit amazed over your revelation that Gitchi "agamo is one page 77 -- that sacred number. I hadn't noticed that, and I thank you for drawing it to my attention. I have long since learned to accept these countless manifestations of the occult. For many, many years I have known that I am not entirely in control of my life and career. For instance, sometimes I get off on the wrong track and pursue a bad course which seems good to me and logical and exciting -- only to meet frustration and a dead end. I have later been astonished at the turn of events -- everything works out in a far, far better way when I switch to the right track. Strange, but happening so often that I now know my course will be ordered for me. Strange, but true!

I am delighted with the way things have been going with you. Yes, girl, and it does look, doesn't it? like the Fairies are busy, busy, busy.

About the Alfred University Carillon: When I was on the air for N.B.C. in Radio City, New York, 1936 or '37, I told about Gitchi Nagamo and read some bell poems, and Professor Lloyd Watson called me up from Alfred and asked me to go the long way round when motoring back to Canada, as they had these old bells and lacked a poet. So, we did. They had wooden tower only at that time, hadn't had the bells for long. These Alfred bells were coated with green patina, had been buried for about 300 years. Your guess is correct, they were buried to protect them from the enemy. The secret was well kept, and people died and it was lost and forgotten, When they were rediscovered, Alfred University was the fortunate one to get them. I was conducted to them, Edna along, and they were played for me on a hill at a distance. The poem, GLORIOSUS resulted. Wingate, a doctor of Music and composer, said to set it to music for an oratorio would take a Handel, it was beyond his power -- too, glorious for anyone but a great genius! So, it has never been set to music. The Watsons came here to see and hear Gitchi Nagamo, and wept with emotion when they heard it calling from afar. Dr. Watson was the discoverer of how to breed the domestic bee, a secret from the time of the Egyptians. You missed Alfred on your trip because it is off the beaten track and hidden in the hills. The poem GLORIOSUS is to both the Peace Tower carillon and the Alfred one. The Ottawa bells sound in the Gatineau Hills like the Voice of God. If Brock is wise and lucky enough to land G.N., all these legends and traditions will go with it, naturally. It has ties with Ottawa and Alfred and Riverside Church and N.Y.C. And what
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which I could likely finance, only about three, and he sounded them
in turn, and I selected D-natural for a try, and then he played a
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were so easy to get -- and, once sold out, are available from old book
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I’m abandoning this letter in order to get it into town and in the
mail to you, as someone is going to town. If there is anything un­
answered, let me know. This bell, G.W., is the first bell of the kind
in the world, ( Kamiel Lefevere ) and, like my other gifts to K.
Hist. Soc, Royal Ontario Museum, etc., it is given in trust, as most
such gifts are given. So long for now! I’m proud of you! And this
goes for all the women in St. C. W. L. Club. Oneel!
else it and I have ties with only the Fairies know! I even forgot to include Abbey Dawn in this background! I suppose Alfred has a better tower now, as we had progressively better towers. Could I but live long enough, G.N. would have a stone tower. It will be thus with Brock of St. Catharines: a modest, timber tower, if they like, at first, then, later, when students and faculty awake to the romance and glory and tradition of G.N., it will be precious, believe you me. Man loves a bell because it speaks his soul, I have said in my poetry. That's why Dr. Gibson loves bells better than he himself knows, I fancy. Alfred is tops in ceramics. Many Canadians go there for pottery training.

Lefere pronounced his name Kam-ee-l Lefere

Ethelyn Wetherold was a fan of mine, sent me a bound copy of her poems. We corresponded. She loved my philosophy of the soil. I had forgotten about her. Forgive me!

No, I never saw a translation of the East Indian poetess' poems. We were all so excited and overwhelmed. She was divinely sweet. We are such a young country, often so bewildered that we miss a trick or two before we awaken to what has gone on. I hope and trust Brock doesn't miss the boat! Nuff said about that!

Tom Bowie, sculptor, is alive yet, lives in at 11 Norma Ave., West Hill, Ont. I doubt if the profile of me and that of Wilson M. have yet been cast in bronze, but I think H.Spencer Clark, Guild Inn, has the thing in hand. Maybe he's waiting till we're both dead!! Phooey! Bowie is mid age. He studied under Scottish and English sculptors, is a prize winner, a very able artist. If Brock gets the bell, maybe Spencer Clark would share what he has. Who knows. He surely could make a superb bust of me, and I think he charged at that time for a bust fifteen hundred dollars in bronze.

Miriam's daughters, Kerrie and Lynda are both engaged or near it. They took over Miriam's home, but Kerrie, who is now a jeweler and trained gemologist is going to a new job in Ottawa. It is hard to believe that Alan is that tall and ready for high school. Gosh! I'm not that little and old!!

Thank Jack for me, for his patience and enthusiasm! And than you both for the violets on my birthday. People are wondering about the ultimate destiny of Gitchi Nagamol Me? I'm keeping mum! I don't want a thousand poets breathing down my neck! There are some 40 poets in Fredericton, N.B., where the U. of N.B. is, and the old homes of Carman and Roberts. If they get wind of the bell situation, look out! I want Brock to have it, and this for many reasons I need not name.

More power to you! Onehl

Wallace Havelock Robb
Dear Mrs. Marshall:

It seems like I've been away from these cloisters for three years instead of three days. This is the very first thing I am doing since returning.

"Minonawea" the intimate, love name which Tecumseh bestowed upon the young woman he adored -- the one and only he ever seems to have held in such lofty esteem and reverence as his true mate, whoever she was -- means, superficially, "Sweetheart". In other words, in the custom of the Whiteman in demanding a brief and Anglicised form of any Redman name, no matter how shallow and inadequate that rendition may be, Minonawea means Sweetheart. But this is what caused the deeply intellectual and spiritual Redman to look upon the Whiteman with cultural contempt -- he, the Reoman, would say, "Ugh!", turn his back and walk away into silence. Actually, Tecumseh was paying his mate the highest compliment possible; he was putting himself in the place of a woman who is loved and who knows that she is loved beyond all others and who is proud of it and justified in claiming that she is the chosen one -- he chose a feminine expression, sweet and musical in sound, and which means, from her point of view, "I am the one!" It is difficult to nail it down in English, but, to Tecumseh, it would have the involved and beautiful meaning of "Beloved, divinely appointed and who knows what and who she is, and who fulfills her mission, a right her very name asserts beyond question."

In this gesture of Tecumseh, calling his sweetheart "Beloved" with such overtones of spiritual and physical adoration (in a name putting himself in her position concerning their relationship) we get some grasp of the Redman's understanding of marriage. It seems altogether likely that Tecumseh and Miss Galloway were man and wife, secretly, due to circumstances, and in the Redman custom, a thing that both held in greater reverence than Christian marriage. Naturally, she would want a form of marriage sacred to her mate. All this is hinted at in the name, but only one who has come to think like an Indian can grasp it.

Miss Galloway was about sixteen when they first met, and about eighteen, maybe, or perhaps seventeen, when they felt destiny. She was the daughter of Tecumseh's close friend, a Scot of culture named Galloway. He had a library of 300 volumes of the classics, a most extraordinary thing in the wilderness of Ohio at that time. Her mother must have been dead. Because of her culture, natural gifts and setting, probably none of the young, rough, poorly educated men appealed to her. She admired Tecumseh's mind, opened the classics to him, saw his greatness, and the rest was destiny. In Princess Margaret we have something akin to it: a field of inadequate, young men not one of whom inspires her -- and, against the field, an older man of powerful personality, achievements, a "man's man" and a hero. She, Minonawea, is recorded as physically attractive and wholesome. Tecumseh offered her marriage Christian fashion, but she, with the wisdom of Solomon, went his way. He seems to have been all the greater because of her. My TECUMSEH will reveal the rest -- tragedy! — Onoh!

Wallace Havelock Robb
Dear Mrs. Marshall: Hi - A - Ho!

June 15, 1952
R.I. Kingston, Ont.

Any other one who wants it, I'll do it. It's not any 100% well, was bought on local TV this week and the fashion phone for college TV. 

Yesterday, so, I'll go on with other things, Mr. Wilson and every thing else. She and Mr. Goodwin say here will. No doubt, give you a description of it. Mr. Goodwin, our.

Abby

Dawn
THE ABBÉ
OF ABBEY DAWN
by
George F. G. Stanley
Indian Lore of the Bay of Quinte

BY

Wallace Havelock Robb,
Abbey Dawn

This address will not concern itself with the strange relics at Abbey Dawn, those archaeological enigmas made and left by people in the Bay of Quinte area in the unknown and baffling past. We shall deal with the red man, the North American Indian, as far as we at present know him, from about one thousand (1000 A.D.) to the early part of the nineteenth century.

From the very hour the white man arrived in the Western Hemisphere, everything about the red man's way-of-life, which was an ideal form of civilization, everything the red man thought and did, was altered, corrupted, or destroyed, except his native tradition which was protected by the infallibility of the poet, "The Keeper of the Wampum", and the technical perfection of his ceremonial recital, or reading of the wampum, at the Council Fire. The Council Fire was more than parliament. It was the court, the hearth, the comforter, the town hall and the all-in-all of the people, and it was never without dignity.

The reading of the wampum, the recital of the laws, traditions and religion, before the people, by their poet, was kept pure and aloof from passing influence, or even steady political pressure, by four powerful and well-nigh unchangeable things: wampum strings, or belts; the inherent and fiercely incorruptible pride of the poet in himself and his priestly office; the "Prompters", a body of two score, or more, appointed individuals charged with the responsibility of creating an uproar if there were any innovations or deviations in recital, or unauthorized additions; and finally the geography, all place names being romantic and beautiful aids to memory. This was especially so of the Huron-Iroquois peoples; its summit of perfection was the Flint People, the Mohawks.

This was a civilization perfectly suited to the people, time and place. It had the humanity and philosophy of Jesus, and the wisdom of the Greeks. It was a "Plato's Dream", the perfect democracy. It was on the point of discovering, yea, had discovered, music as the offspring of its poetry, just as the Greeks had done in their day, when the "enlightened" (and may Manitou forgive me the use of the word!) white man came as the Russians come today, "in peace, to save and set free these poor, unfortunate people!" The gap between the lofty calling of the "Keeper of the Wampum" of the Mohawks and the "Medicine Man" of more primitive tribes was, often, a vast void.

In dealing with the Indian lore of the Kente Country, I have not been and am not infallible; yet, I have all three powerful aids that the Keeper of
MORNINGSONG

Dedicated to Miss Jean E. Browne, National Director, Canadian Junior Red Cross, a lover of children and a friend of Canadian Birdland.

Oh, I am the Abbe' of Abbey Dawn,
I rise in the morning moony wan;
My candles of incense greet the day,
They flicker and call me to kneel and pray;
They flicker and lengthen me out on the wall,
As I steal to the door when I hear the Dawn call.

Oh, I am the Abbé of Abbey Dawn,
The breathing of sleeping birds I see,
As I move in the shadows beneath a tree;
Their silhouette cut in the silvery moon!
A cameo carved on the face of the light!
Oh, I am the Abbé,
I rise in the night,
The Abbé of Abbey Dawn

Oh, I am the Abbé, and once, in the dawn,
I whispered my faith in the ear of a faun;
My candles all glimmered, but I wan't there,
I was out in the silent, young, mystical air,
Where I brushed a bush that I didn't see-
A drowsy, dreaming-birdland bush-
And the startled wings were ashamed of me,
For the air was astir with their fluttering "Hush"!
Oh, I am the Abbé of Abbey Dawn,
I hear them waking one by one,
All birdland piping matin song!
A morning prayer to the rim of the sun!
My feet in the dew, and the day has begun.

Oh, I am the Abbé, at break of day
I light my candles but cannot pray;
So, I give my Soul to the Silent Dawn,
And it goes where the song of the birds has gone.
A FAR BELL CALLING

Ah, faint and far and sweetly calling,
Like a memory enshrined,
Are the belling tears of Beauty falling
Faint and far upon the wind.

Faint and fading in their dying,
Like a mystic psalm entwined
With a love forever sighing
For a soul it cannot find.

Like a far bird winnow grieving,
Waning off upon the wind,
Out of sight forever leaving,
Like the last of all mankind.

Song of beauty ever losing
Souls of vision undefined,
Ever fading, ever dying,
Ever musing on the wind!

"The Poets' Bell" at Abbey Dawn is called Gitchi Nagamo (Nag-a-mo) an Ojibway name so rich in beautiful overtones of meaning, that its poesy is almost impossible to express in English; it may be interpreted as "A Mystic Poem", or "A Beautiful Song" (the most popular meaning), depending upon the spirit in which it is rung, or what the poet is reciting or saying. In general, it might be called a "Psalm of Life."

In addition to its name and date, Gitch Nagamo has cast on it the last two lines of the poem "morningsong."
Wallace Havelock Robb

A Queen's Tribute
Is Poet's Reward

The mailbox of the poet of Abbey Dawn, Wallace Havelock Robb, yielded a particularly interesting letter one day last week. It was a missive from Government House in Ottawa and contained a message for the poet from Queen Elizabeth, forwarded through her vice-regal representative in Canada.

A copy of Hail Canada, a collection of seven poems published by Mr. Robb for Canada's Centennial Year, had been forwarded to The Queen from the Governor-General's residence.

The letter of acknowledgment said, "Her Majesty was delighted to accept these poems. The Queen enjoyed reading them very much and thought they were a most appropriate commemoration of Canada's Centennial Year."

Mr. Robb's publication of Hail Canada was printed at Abbey Dawn Press in November in a limited edition of 3,000 copies. A six by nine booklet, its cover is graphically surmounted with the Maple Leaf flag.

The poems pay tribute to Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Wilfred Laurier, Ottawa, Canada, its flag and to the season of Spring in this country. The title of the book is taken from the lead poem.

Once before the poet of Abbey Dawn received a letter from Buckingham Palace. That was in 1959, after the Queen's visit to Canada.

Inspired by the royal yacht's presence so far inland in Canada, the poet wrote an ode to The Britannia titled, Enchanted Ship in the Seaway. A copy was placed in Queen Elizabeth's hands at her point of departure from Canadian soil for the flight home to England. One week later Mr. Robb received a letter of thanks from the Queen for the poem.

The aging poet, now in his 79th year, lives quietly at his Abbey Dawn residence on Highway 2 surrounded by memorabilia of his lifetime interest in Canada and its native people, the Indians. On a hilltop nearby stand his Poet's Bell whose tongue has sounded across the miles on ceremonial occasions.

But the poet's creative spirit is still active and the inspiration of Canada's 100th birthday has brought him in return the accolade of his country's Queen.
The Bell of St. Basile-Le-Grand

Christmasse Greetings from Abbey Dawn 1963

[Signature]

Mr. & Mrs. J. M. Armstrong
Abbey Dawn

THANKSGIVING DAY. 1963

Dedication
To the memory of William Mair, of Belleville, Ontario, self-educated Scot and literary scholar, especially in the poets since Homer; a Grand Trunk Railway locomotive engineer at whose feet, as it were, I sat for hours as did the youth of Greece at the feet of Socrates.

MENTOR OF MY YOUTH
(Circa 1905)
How plaintively drifting
Through my matins of memory
Comes the distant, ventriloquistic Ardency of the Meadowlark;
A song of enchanted morning
Wispy wafted on a summer zephyr —
A faint and mystic never-never-song —
A psalm of love flowing out of the lea!
Sweet mem-o-reee!
En-thrall-ing mee!

And the Veery!
Oh, soft Cathedral Bird
Of my vespertine adoring!
Ineffable Mavis of the Gloaming,
Vague and invisible spirit
In the dusk-like shadows
Of the hemlock cloisters —
Celestial harmony eternal:
Willa-willa-willa-willa-willa —

Oh, Veery Soul of Calm!
Oh, infinite Manitou sound!
A sylvan psalm to my adolescence —
Willa-willa-willa-willa-willa —

Matins of youth, so Meadowlark serene,
Sweet mem-o-reee!
Inmemorial visions vespertine,
Willa-willa-willa-willa-willa —

Amen!
Amen!
Amen!

*Diminishing sound
fading to faintness.

WALLACE HAVELOCK ROBB
R. R. 1, KINGSTON, ONT., CANADA
ONTOHIO IS A TRILLIUM MANITOU, 
MY SWEETHEART, MY ADORED

LEGEND

Manitou Sig-wung -- The Spirit of Spring; Youth
Wake Robin -- The Trillium in general, but often indicating more especially the rarer, wine-red trillium (Lily Family)
Waking Robin -- Robin Redbreast in the early morn.
Chee-lau, chee-lee! -- Redman name for Robin Redbreast in imitation of the Robin song.
Onaway! -- Awake!

Oh, Manitou Sig-wung in adoration!
Oh, throbbing Youth! Ontario in spring!
Luxuriant Trilliums! Vestals in a Vale,
Their tapers kindled by the burgeoning glow
Of snow-bank lilies, waxen white Wake Robin,
In the morning, in the sunlight, on a knoll of woodland dream!

Ontario, My Love! My Love!
Oh, onaway! Awake my fair and loved one!
Wake Robin! Lily-lipped blown --
Mine Own! Mine Own! My lush and lovely own!

Arisen am I with the dawn;
The dewy-lipped Trillium dawn,
The misty, birdland, waking Robin dawn,
To seek my love in the matins
Of his ardency of morning;
Oh, Thrush! Thou altar candle of Ontario in song!

Chee-lau, chee-lee!
Chee-lau, chee-lee!
Chee-lau -- impassioned ecstasy!
Oh, love-sweet pain possessing me!

Now do I bleed with Beauty,
Ontario, My Adored:
Lo! the wine of my wound of passion
Falls vagrant on the blossoms as I go,
Uncertain, as I pass the woodland through,
A lily here and there --
The wine-red, purple Trillium --
Wake Robin of my love!

Sing, now, oh, Bird
Of the Broken-hearted Breast:

Chee-lau, chee-lee!
Chee-lau, chee-lee!
Chee-lau, chee-cheerup-chee!
Oh, carol-bewildering Beauty
True lover awake unto me!
True lover awake unto me!

Ah, lovely is the Manitou Sig-wung,
The Spirit of the Spring;
So lovely is Ontario
Where the Trillium ardent blows.

-- Wallace Havelock Robb --
Abbey Dawn, R. R. 1, Kingston
April 12th, 1958.
My Dear Miss Duffin:

It is impossible for me to convey to you and the members our profound regret that we shall be unable to be among you on November 1st when you deposit all the literary treasures and records over the years in the trust and care of Brock University Library.

For compelling reasons, Mrs. Robb and I cannot go; but you all may be sure that we'd be there if we could. I'd just love to handle a few of the records before they're turned over to their new custodians.

The years have been many and the memories long -- oh, I sometimes wonder if you all or more than a few sense my feelings -- my deep respect and sentiment for you. I have recently been invited to a university to give a reading of my poetry and with a special request that I take with me and wear my Tyrian gown. Fancy that now! And I am always asked about it, it is impressively unique, and when explaining it, I never fail to pay tribute to The Women's Literary Club of St. Catharines.

My first volume was The Quill and The Candle, 1927, Ryerson Press, Edward Prince of Wales patron. What may very well be my last volume of poetry, a very special selection of 96 poems, THE TYRIAN QUILL, is at press in Toronto, being published by Abbey Dawn press, Kingston. Unfortunately, it will not be off the press and available by Nov. 1st. I hope to have it early in November. A circular will be issued next week I expect. Again expressing my oneness with you all,

Onel!

Wallace Havelock Robb
Importunities for a revival of the ...POETS' FESTIVAL ... having come from manywhere, and enough poets and poetesses having more or less pledged themselves to enthusiastic participation, a few of us, having sifted the matter, have set a time, and we will see what happens: ---- Bring your poetry! ----

Place -- Abbey Dawn Time -- June 7, 8, 9 ........ 1952
The Big Day ..... Sunday, June 8th

10: AM. to Noon -- SACRED MOHAWK COUNCIL FIRE -- Redmen from New York State and Tyendinaga under the direction of "Far Eagle". - Aren Akweks, will kindle and conduct this Council Fire. The CALUMET will be smoked. Probably some Indian Women also will attend. The General Public will be admitted to this rare Indian Event - Adults - $1.00 - Children - .25 cents. ... 2:30 p.m... Symposium, with addresses; recitals and general "Sounding Off" under direction of a chairman. Two cash-prizes, amounts dependent upon circumstances; Gitchi Nagamo, Fee per poet, for the three days --$1.00

THIS EVENT PROMISES TO BE SIGNIFICANT IN CANADIAN LETTERS.

WELCOME: Poets can't afford to miss it; friends and kin of poets and all other kindred souls, people interested in cultural things, should come. No meals or bedrooms at Abbey Dawn, but tourist-accommodation, in the neighbourhood, most with meals if arranged. Please advise W.H.R. at Abbey Dawn, R.R.1, Kingston, if you expect to come.

This invitation printed with ye olde "The Valley Press" Foxboro, Ont hope of the 'Best Festival' ever!

hand-lever printing-press known as - by Charles Andrew Tupper, in the May 10th, Year of our Lord -- 1952
OPALESCENCE

to
Professor Evring, of St. Catharines

(Memento of Women's Literary Club Meeting, Nov. 2nd/1961)

In a World of Memory there dwelt
A soul who roamed that land,
And he found a poet's opal
As rich as Samarkand.

And he stored it in his bosom,
For red it was and green,
Moody -- With Roman Purple Fire
Like flame he'd never seen.

Pure azure! Lapis Lazuli!
Canary yellow clear,
With Fidar's immemorial Muse --
Dan's Opalescent Spear.

Rainbows of sundown paradise,
Maroon like brooding night;
Iridescence of far Gethse
And Marco Polo's might.

And he brought to the Poet's Fire
Unutterable prayer
That found, by bardic alchemy --
Dek-ana-we-da there!

O full and fabulous this world
Held in his votive hand --
The Poet's Opal Alter Licht,
Richer than Samarkand.

The World of Memory is
the realm of literature
and history.

Written at Abbey Dawn,
between Nov. 7th and 14th, 1961

Wallace Havelock Robb
Abbey Dawn

CAME THE ABBE

To Beatrice Armstrong (Mrs. G.M.) President
Women's Literary Club,
St. Catharines, Ont.

(Cameo of the poet's brief visit and recital)
Nov.2/51

Day-say-ronth-yo!
"Thunder and Lightning!"
Came the Abbe of Abbey Dawn.

Day-say-ronth-yo!
Passion sounding,
Flared Tecumtha -- and was gone!

Written at
Abbey Dawn,
Between Nov.7th
and 14th/1951

Wallace Havelock Robb
Abbey Dawn Sheds New Light on Indian Days

Gitchi Nagamo, or the bell of the poets, is rung by poet-naturalist Wallace Havelock Robb. He travelled thousands of miles to find the right-toned bell which is rung at sunrise and at sunset, or whenever Mr. Robb feels that its clear, carrying tones should be added to the beauty of the day.

To his guests Mr. Robb describes historic and archaeological discoveries in Abbey Dawn sanctuary east of Kingston. Near this spot, Indian chiefs held councils for the unified peace of the redmen in both Canada and the United States.
Poetry's Bad Boy a Canadian First

By ARTHUR COLE
Kingston, Oct. 30 (Staff) — Canada's bad boy of poetry, Wallace Havelock Robb is a man of many facets. Call him poet, archaeologist, salesman, ornithologist, stone mason, humorist. You would not be wrong on any count.

"But first of all I am a Canadian," Mr. Robb smilingly asserts. "They call me the bad boy of Canadian poetry because I won't conform. Well, I'm proud to be a Canadian and my poetry is Canadian."

Though becoming increasingly well known for his writings since a new book—Thunderbird—was published, it is not of this accomplishment that he is most proud. Two words—Abbe Dawn—are Wallace Havelock Robb's life...and his way of life.

Situated just east of Kingston, where Lake Ontario empties into the broad St. Lawrence, Abbey Dawn is about 100 acres of rugged rock and woods. These days Abbey Dawn is especially beautiful, ablaze with autumn's colors. Of recent years it has become a sanctuary not only for wildlife but for humans with poetry in their hearts.

In the near future it may become famous for something entirely different. For on Abbey Dawn's jutting contours Wallace Havelock Robb the archaeologist has uncovered enough evidence of pre-Indian life in the area to conjure up an entirely new conception of Eastern Ontario's prehistoric days.

Among many other items, Mr. Robb has found a granite mask closely resembling the stone-shield found in New Mexico three years ago. At that time archaeologists pretty well agreed that the round, solid stone masks had been brought to the area—or made there—by Aztecs who crossed the Bering Straits and made their way southward along the inner side of the Rockies to New Mexico, Mexico and eventually Yucatan to start the advanced civilization which the Spaniards found centuries later and destroyed.

The Abbey Dawn discovery has satisfied Mr. Robb, if no one else, up to this point, that a band of the same Aztecs branched off somewhere in what is now Alberta, and following the various rivers and lakes which form a fairly complete waterway eastward, made their way to the head of the St. Lawrence River.

"It is quite obvious that there was a pre-lourenou group here," said Mr. Robb. "This might have been anywhere from three to twelve thousand years ago. I don't know any more about a thousand years than I do about a thousand dollars. But I am confident it was well before the Indians appeared on the scene."

Domes of curious stones, all shaped like a head-on view of a ram's head, lend further credibility to the Robb theory. The Mexico-bound Aztecs, captivated by the symmetry of the Rocky Mountain goat's head, more or less adopted it as their tribal symbol. No one can deny that the Abbey Dawn findings resemble a ram's head. There are too many of them to attribute the whole thing to coincidence.

In a newly built museum on top of a rock mesa commanding Abbey Dawn, Mr. Robb has assembled hundreds of his pre-Indian and Indian finds. Near by is the famous sanctuary. But vandals broke his vases. He has learned, in Victoria, of his intention to return to the U.S., he called the young poet in and encouraged him to return to Ontario and work here.

Mr. Robb did return, settling at Belleville where he started his first sanctuary. But vandals broke his heart in 1928 and caused him to leave his birthplace for good. Several dozen geese, some obtained from Jack Miner, had been obtained for the Belleville Abbey Dawn. One morning they were found dead, shot by miscreants who were never caught.

But a chance acquaintance with the then Prince of Wales brought him back to Canada. Mr. Robb's father was W. D. Robb, head of the Grand Trunk Railway. On one of his Canadian trips, the Prince of Wales used his father's railway car, became interested in the son's poetic aspirations. When the Prince learned, in Victoria, of his intention to return to the U.S., he called the young poet in and encouraged him to return to Ontario and work here.

Mr. Robb did return, settling at Belleville where he started his first sanctuary. But vandals broke his heart in 1928 and caused him to leave his birthplace for good. Several dozen geese, some obtained from Jack Miner, had been obtained for the Belleville Abbey Dawn. One morning they were found dead, shot by miscreants who were never caught.

Abbay Dawn was moved to its present site near Kingston as a direct result of this outrage. There, with relics of Indian life which so fascinated him, he worked hard. Wallace Havelock Robb works humbly with his hands and his heart.

Although retired from farm life, Mr. Robb finds time to help his son on the farm adjoining the sanctuary. The one prize bull on the farm shows his affection for the poet with a warm lick on the hand.
At home with princes or bums

The late Duke of Windsor was patron to Kingston poet Wallace Havelock Robb for 11 years.

Robb had moved to the United States in the early 1920s because the light shone brighter there for young, aspiring writers. The Duke, then Prince of Wales, met Robb's parents in Belleville and learned of the poet's self exile, with regret.

"He convinced me to come back to Canada," says Robb. And under the patronage of this royal personage, Robb produced his first book of poems, "The Quill and the Candle," in 1927.

But Canadians have not always been kind to the controversial poet and he has often turned to the U.S. for acceptance of his writings.

"The Yanks treat me well. They appreciate my work."

As for the rebukes he sometimes receives in his native country, Robb says: "I'm not a jealous poet. I know my powers and have absolute confidence in them."

He sees himself as a Bohemian of sorts who is equally at ease in the company of princes or bums.

"Sometimes it takes half a bottle of Scotch to calm me down."

Though he calls modern poets "a lot of sexpots", he is no prude.

"I've always been of a nature to scandalize my wife... I looked upon sex as the enjoyment of our natural processes," he says with an impish grin. "A poet has to be open-minded.

"I have a rapport with young people. If I'm alone with young people — if no older people are around to cause tension — I get along with them as though I were young."

"I handled the 'bad boys' class in Sunday school. From the drop of a hat I had them in my hand. It may have been that I was on to their tricks — because I was one of them." In the 1930s, Wallace Robb was approached by Mohawk Indians of the Kente (Bay of Quinte) region who asked him to write their history.

The Indians were afraid their folklore would be lost to future generations unless it was safely recorded, because their offspring were more and more being assimilated by the white man's culture.

"Their young people were riding in hot rods and listening to jazz music on the radio," said Robb.

The poet had for some time been interested in the Indian ways and he found the request both flattering and challenging. He and Mrs. Robb lived with the Mohawks for 3½ years, learning their language and researching their history.

"The Mohawk language is way ahead of English," he says. "They can express infinitely more."

In the spring of 1944, Robb finished his first saga on the Indian, titled "Thunderbird." It had required years of research, and consisted of both prose and poetry.

"The Indians called on the four winds and adopted me into the Mohawk tribe by blood right. The chief scratched his wrist with a needle and my arm in the same place and brought our arms together, mixing the blood. Then they marched me three times around the fire."

Robb was made Pine Tree Chief in the ceremony on the Abbey Dawn estate, and was also given the name Great White Eagle.

Later he wrote a book on the great Shawnee chieflain, Tecumtha (commonly called Tecumseh). He says it took him 20 years.

The two greatest statesmen in North America were not George Washington and Abraham Lincoln or Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, says Robb. They were two Indian leaders, Tecumtha and Deganawidah.

"Washington created the United States by bloodshed. Lincoln saved the union by bloodshed. But Deganawidah, who was a sort of prophet to the Indians, formed the League of the Iroquois — for peace. It was the first true democracy."

"And Tecumtha had a magnificent dream — a unity of Indians to give them an Empire to stand up to the white. He too was a man of peace."

A third book on Indian lore, a poem titled "Kay-on-a-kon-te", was published in 1961. This is the longest poem Robb ever wrote and it tells the tragic story of a Mohawk maiden and her young French nobleman lover. But the poet says sadly that "no attention was paid to the work at all."

The Indian influence is evident in much of Robb's poetry — he often turns to the Mohawk phrase to express an idea, enriching the sound and meaning of a passage.

"Language is a very inadequate thing to express our feelings. Take the word 'love'. It can mean sexual passion, love for our fellow man, love for our cronies and so on. The word itself is entirely inadequate. 'Love' doesn't tell you anything."

But a poet like Robb must use language — the language of verse — to express his "contact with the infinite".

"Science is the brainchild of men. Poetry is the soulchild of man."
“When a poem is inspired
I can feel the mystery”

By ROGER RAINBRIDGE
Staff reporter

When Wallace Havelock Robb can’t find the words to complete a poem, he shakes a blasphemous fist heavenward and pronounces an angry invocation.

“I said damn it, give me the words. You put this in me, now give me the words.”

Such an act would scandalize those of an orthodox faith. Nevertheless, as a “born poet,” Robb considers himself profoundly religious, though not in the “churchy sense.” He is open-minded about religion and can worship comfortably in the temple of any sect.

When I was in Quebec I would go into a Roman Catholic church and just sit or perhaps compose a poem.”

A good poem, he says, is mystically or spiritually inspired.

“I can write through sheer craftsmanship and make a pretty good poem. But it won’t have the mystery of an inspired poem. When a poem is inspired, I can feel the mystery of it. I feel it is being fed to me — whispered in my ear.”

At 84 years of age, with long white hair, moustache and pointed beard that give him a “Buffalo Bill” likeness, W. H. Robb, the “Abbe” of Abbey Dawn, is still writing poetry. In fact he is just now beginning to write regularly again after a short period of inactivity.

A few years ago, Robb lost his close friend and fellow poet, Carl Madsen.

“He was my crony — a crony in the truest sense.

“When a man’s your crony, he’s more than a friend: He’s part of one’s being, World without end.”

“When things weren’t going well. I would call him up and go down to stay with him for two or three days (he lived east of Morrisburg, Ont.) and we’d talk about Robert Burns. He was an expert on Burns.”

Not long after Madsen died, Robb lost his oldest brother. The combination of these bereavements affected him deeply.

“It put me into a depression. I didn’t have it bad, but I knew something was wrong with me. I lost my afflatus, the urge, coupled with the inspiration, didn’t come.”

In his most productive periods, the poet said he used to “reach up in the air and pick down the words.” He would write as fast as his hand could go, leaving blanks when words didn’t come immediately, and filling them in later. When the poem was complete he would put it away for two or three weeks, then take it out again and immediately correct its weak points.

An inspired poem has a beginning, a middle and an end, he said.

“I knew when the poem was finished and usually would burn it a bit of incense as an offering of thanks.”

Robb wrote his first poem when he was 10 years old, in Lansdowne Public School, Toronto. The teacher had read a selection from Charles Kingsley’s “The Water Babies” and asked the class to write a poem with this as inspiration. Robb couldn’t do it.

“It’s all going around in here in a song,” he told the teacher, circling his stomach with his hand. “But I can’t write the poem.”

“Could you write the song?” the teacher asked.

The boy answered, yes, and dashed it off in three or four verses.

Each verse was a different attack, but the rhyme and meter were correct in each,” he recalled.

To the boy’s horror, the teacher told him to take the composition to the principal.

“I thought for sure I was going to get the strap.”

The principal read the poem and told the boy to return to his class. “I’ll talk to your teacher, later,” he said.

“I thought that was even worse,” the poet recalled.

He didn’t realize the principal and teacher had thought the poem so good that they would later send him on a two-week recital tour of Toronto public schools.

This incident dramatically launched his career and at the same time revealed to him the secret of poetry.

“I realized poetry is sound — the mother of music.”

Poetry is meant to be read aloud, to strike the ear like music, says Robb.

“A good poet reading his poem can electrify. I was gift-
ed with a magnificent voice for reading poetry, but it’s failing now with age. It is the misfortune of many poets to not have a good voice.”

Wallace Robb occupied a favorite chair in the cozy, cluttered living room of his home on the Abbey Dawn estate, north-east of Kingston, as he communicated these ideas to a reporter.

Now he stood up and left the room in search of a book of poems. “The Tyrian Quill,” with which he would illustrate his point. He returned, resumed his seat and searched the book with a magnifying glass.

“I have to use this now to read, and close my right eye or everything is blurred. It’s because of my age. I’m 84 and something’s got to give.”

He finds the poem he’s looking for and reads it with affection, carefully sounding the words:

“Ah, faint and far and sweetly calling,
Like a memory enshrined,
Are the belling tears of Beauty falling
Faint and far upon the wind...”

The title is, “A Far Bell Calling”, a tribute to the Poet’s Bell at Abbey Dawn.

He turns to another selection, “Flownman Mocker Brown”, and reads in a high-pitched, staccato voice, imitating the song of a thrasher:

“Plow it! says the Thrasher Brown,
Plow it, plow, it, plow it!
When the farm is looking down,
Plow it, plow, it, plow it!
Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up!”

“I have written poems that are three-quarters sound and one-quarter meaning,” Robb says.

“The poets today are writing rotten poems because they are not listening to sounds.”

Earlier in the interview he had even harsher words for the new poets:

“This modern outfit is a lot of sexpot. The tyros that are coming on have a gargantuan ignorance of nature. They know city life, and perhaps, to be fair, that’s the way things are today. Everyone is leaving the country and going to the city.

“They get their nature from this damn box,” he says, beating his fist on the top of a television set beside his chair.

Wallace Robb plowed the land he lives on for 15 years. His poetry reveals a strong love of nature — its sights, its smells and its sounds.

From “Easter Morn on Abbey Dawn Ridge”:

“And now moves this Laurentian rock
With Easter urge and opening bud,
And song extravagant from every bird
That flaunts unreasoning love’s glad mood—
I cannot sing, nor would I talk;
I quietly adore, without a word.”

In his poem, “This Abbey Dawn,” he writes in awe of the famed sanctuary:

“I live in a paradise primordial;
I live in an Arcady
Of primitive pine monarchial;
I live in a land of never-never,
Where unknown birds of loveliness
Carol their mystic musings
All the bythoms day—
I live at ‘Abbey Dawn’.”

Robb does not always execute his craft in a serious state of mind.

“The Lord gave me two wonderful things: a magnificent inspiration and a hilarious sense of humor.”

His poem about Wm. Allen (who died in 1946), “The Bootlegger of Barriefield”, illustrates Robb’s lighter side. It tells how old Bill skirted the ‘tyrannous iccker laws’ by borrowing an ambulance in town and driving it to Quebec to load up with booze. On the return trip, he sped along with siren wailing, picked up a police escort on the way and gave them the slip when he reached Kingston.

“They crossed the causeway, they could swear.
The ambulance in tow,
But somehow, it just wasn’t there!‘Now, where the hell did it go?’ ...
Old Dollar Bill, and what a lad!
Life seldom caught him short;
He gave life back the best he had—
And Slipped in a little snort!”

***
Dear Madam President and Officers and Members:

In accepting the honour of an address and presentation of a symbolic gown of poetry, last January 28th in St. Catharines, I did so in the name of Poetry, and more especially indigenous Poetry. I expressed the belief I had -- the hope and faith we all had -- that this gesture to Poetry would inspire our poets and poetry lovers alike, and that we would live to see the fruits thereof -- a sensing of our own native powers, an awareness of the superb, creative gifts within ourselves.

This is to inform you, that already things have happened to our heart's desire. The Wilson MacDonald Poetry Society, with H.Q. in Toronto and organized to help Canada's peerless, Lyric Bard, has called me, her complementary, Epic and Dramatic Bard, to lend lustre to its Presidency -- already things are booming! But yes! And there are other evidences, but I must go on to the main purpose of this letter, which is to record my thanks in writing, and prepare you -- brief you, as it were -- for a gesture of tribute to your Club somewhat in keeping with the extraordinary honour you bestowed upon me:

I am taking you behind the scenes at Abbey Dawn, away in advance of the public, and dedicating to you a poem that is the climax of a movement not yet written for TECUMSEH, this dedication of a single poem within a volume already dedicated to another having its precedent in my first volume, The Quill and the Candle, which was dedicated to my mother, and in which my at-that-time patron, Edward, Prince of Wales, was graciously pleased to accept dedication of a single poem, the first one in the volume.

The movement in my TECUMSEH in which this poem dedicated to you will appear will be entitled, Arrayed-in-Wampum.

When I say that I am taking you behind the scenes, I mean that you will be seeing and grasping hitherto unrevealed (poetically) Canadian mythology which, by its very nature, its fabulous wealth of imaginative fancy, even embodied romantically in my epic, cannot hope for wide, public appreciation and understanding during my lifetime, nor for years to come. It is a foundation stone of Canadian, indigenous poetry for which future Canadians will dig, eagerly and with anguish, not to say passionate remorse, anon. It is your privilege to be in on it now, on the ground floor, for I shall explain it
in detail, and in such a way that the imaginative, Redman overtones of poetical beauty will be understandable -- more or less -- right at first reading.

There is a saying, "Genius never explains." It functions for him to grasp who can. After twenty-six and more years of trying to think and feel like Tecumseh, trying to grasp his motives and emotions, his involved overtones, his complex, creative, poetical flights, I think like Tecumseh myself! I quite understand why it was that the interpreters who tried to record his orations (Whitemen) could only listen in thrilled wonder, most of the time, then, later, try to recall and write down something like what they thought it was.

Like the true poet he was, Tecumseh always attacked the unattainable, never anything less. Genius always attacks God's Own Unassailable with that very sword of Light which God Himself placed in its hand. Failure is always inevitable, but, equally always, gloriously tragic, or movingly beautiful. Genius knows that perfection is unattainable -- but it tries.

There are, of course, many obscure overtones beyond what I can deal with in my brief. A beautiful gem has many facets -- one sees, at one time, only those reflecting light at the angle at which one is gazing; one is aware, however, of the many other facets, some of them seen before, some taken for granted, some guessed at, and some vaguely sensed, or suspected. And this is why Poetry yields more and more to the one who approaches it in awe and repeatedly -- every contact reveals new meaning, new beauty, hitherto undiscovered Truth.

It takes the people, by and large, the "general public", years to respond to a true poet. It will take the public years to become aware of and respond to the beauty, poetical subtlety and mythological profundity of even this one poem, Arrayed in Wampum. You will have as much of it before you as limits of time and opportunity permit me to give you at this writing. And, if you keep this record, who knows? -- one fine day, your worthy Club may prove to be the point of departure for an understanding of the great epic, TECUMSEH, by Wallace Havelock Robb.

After the first flush of reaction is over, I recommend that you read and re-read, and study, not only section by section (verse form) but line by line, this cascade of song, this torrent of intricate dreaming, this abandon of soaring. You will then begin to comprehend the significance of my life and powers -- the meaning of what you did when you gowned me -- in terms of the dawn of indigenous Art in this glorious country, Canada, only now in the borning, and in which, as in all ages, Poetry is both foundation and pinnacle. The ample, but far from complete elucitation of the poem is inclosed on another sheet.

The gown you placed upon me is fittingly rich in colour and overtone, very beautiful, indeed. May this poem, Arrayed in Wampum challenge you, as I, the arrayed one, the poet, am challenged. "I leave you now!"

Onehl

Wallace Havelock Robb
Lorne Pierce, D.D., Litt.D.
1890 - 1961
Dear Mrs. Armstrong: Nov. 11/51, Kingston, Ont.

HAVEN'T REC'D THE COPIES OF THE STANDARD YET, but presume they will be along in mail tomorrow. Thanks!

Now, I regret to say that our Xmas card is already ordered, and it is possible that I cannot get extras -- if they already have been run -- but I'll try. About 30, did you not say your membership is? Let me know this, instanter.

Now, then, maybe I can do something to contribute to your Dec.1st Celebration of the 59th Anniversary of your outstanding Club. I am like all born poets, I'm all things to all men. I gave your club the poet in loftiest mood, because, after all, it is a literary club and I wasn't wasting my time and yours. But I have many facets, am versatile, even hilarious, except that I detest practical jokes. I write much "verse d'occasion" for my friends and neighbours and all kinds of events, get a whale of a kick out of it. I may send you some light verse for fun, just to add to your Celebration. However, I may need a name or two. So, please reply promptly and inform me with answers:

What is the name of the young woman who gave me the envelope with the fee? She also brought the register for me to sign. She has rosy cheeks, large eyes, mischief in her smile. I want her name.

You told me the name of the retired teacher of history and the classics, but I didn't write it down. It was he who spoke to me afterward. He is tallish, thin, looks like a professor, refined features and, I think, gray hair. You spoke of him as being a highly cultured man. What's his name?

Also, a woman spoke to me about the beauty of sounding words and the music of them, and it seems to me you said it was Mrs. Kadwill, a musician who is also a composer. If it was not Mrs. Kadwill, who was it?

I can't get anything ready until I get the answers. Give Mr. Armstrong my most cordial greetings. I was wined and dined in Toronto, gave a recital, got booked for two more up there in January, got home glad to get into my old boots and take my axe to the woods.

Wallace Havelock Robb
EARTH SEEN FROM THE MOON

Our planet, there alone in space:
Now we do truly know
Man's tiny place
In the vast unknown entire --
Earth's living, lovely face
All gray and green and fawn
Of cloudy dawn,
Yet, shining with incandescent fire --
Alive with glow;
Yes, that's the Earth,
Alone and small away out there,
And Man thereon --
But where's out there?
In Creation, who knows where?

The Earth, hanging alone in space,
Laved by its little sun --

Awake, oh, Man, to reality,
And be One!

Jan. 20th, 1969,
at Abbey dawn,
Kingston, Ontario,
CANADA.

Wallace Havelock Robb
To the Rev. Wm. Henry Gregory, of Verona, for his 100th birthday celebration, Jan. 25th, 1969

Old age has its compensations;
To be heavy laden with years
Is to be aware of Creation;
And awareness of the love and beauty in Creation
Becomes, with time, transmuted into wisdom.

The foundation of wisdom
Is compassion and love;
And compassion and love are rooted in philosophy;

Divinely enlightened philosophy,
Garnered over the years,
Begots wisdom -- a wisdom of light
That is kin to Old Sol.

Abbey Dawn,
R.R.1, Kingston, Ont.
Writ Dec. 31st, 1968

Wallace Havelock Robb
Madam President:

As a native, Canadian Poet now not far from 81 years of age -- and feeling pretty fit in a hopeful sort of way -- and, inexorably, nearing the end of a long, successful and happy career, I feel that it is fitting that I should give your club some sort of modest gesture, sort of a formal thanks for your records now (I understand) being placed with Brock University for Canada's sake. I salute you for this, and may I please say to you:

You have had, established and created over the years, with inherent vision for posterity in this growing Canada of ours, a quiet and distinguished history of noting what creative individuals to help get recognition -- and your reputation in this respect is all the more noteworthy because you have been so modest about it over these many, long years. As our poet of the Habitant, Drummond, says in old Maine of his poems of tribute to a remote and modest, but very effective "Prize", "... But you deserve some credit, too, I speak of this before." And it is so with you wonderful women of vision and awareness -- so enthusiastic, so quietly loyal and faithful without let-up. The sure knowledge that you recognized my genius and kept alert as to my progress in awaking our Country to a few things of Truth and Beauty -- ah, me! I find it beyond my power to make clear to you, the club, what a tower of strength you have been to me. And I can speak for our departed, glorious lyricist, Wilson MacDonald whom I knew so intimately and to whom you were, also, so strengthening in his difficult career. He is among the immortals now, and you are among his recorded supporters -- as, indeed, you are, overwhelmingly, in the records of my enchanted career.

Now a word of advice from this romantic, old Abbé of Abbey Dawn: You have a dramatic challenge at this particular time, what with Brock Univ. established and Canada on the verge of fabulous things: A country's greatness comes out of its history of the arts; you have a chance to pass on to posterity, oh, what a literary club! What a remarkable record you have built up! What a foundation for posterity's literary club in your university city! Ladies, I salute you -- get out and get moving, now, and get new members. Here's a carbon copy of a thing I just wrote. Skemno Koval! "Good Luck!"

Gehl!

Affectionately

Wallace Havelock Robb
Poem and climax of that movement, or part, of TECUMSEH called "Arrayed-in-Wampum", which movement, now numbered 18th, is not yet completed, nor does it concern this dedication, although this poem, as the climax of it, bears the same title, "Arrayed-in-Wampum"

From Arrayed-in-Wampum

( Dedicated to the St. Catharines Women's literary Club, of St. Catharines, Ont. )

1955

The movement, which is still in the rough, deals with an August trysting of Tecumtha and Minonawe, as explained in the attached explanatory notes. He sings to her, opening on a note of their sweet memory of a former meeting when he sang about his Patron, "The Plumed Star".

Ah, Beloved, trillium purple are the Eagle's wings --
WAKE-ROBIN red!
The fulgent passion of the Plumed Star!
The orichalcum couch of love
Untrammelled in the Evening Skyl!

Now, Beloved, see me sunset soar!
Now, Minonawe, hear me sing!
Let yonder swan upon the water,
Wa-pa-the-a, vainly preening,
Hold his pride and steal a hearing
Of his master, I, Tecumtha,
He who sings for you alone;
Indeed, though all creation accidental listen --

You, My Love, my thrilling host,
My all in one.
Wake-Robin red!
The heady wine of borning day
Rising on fire -- herald of Venus!
A copper aureola fervid blooming
On the countenance of morn --
Smouldering Orient biding time,
And only tolerating Sol's white heat
Of disappointment, jealousy
And vespertine eclipse upon the very lintel
Of Pan's Temple to the Loon --
The amorous call and longing lure of mystery,
Lunarian veils of Venus
Enfolding lovers trysting in the dusk till dawn.

Wa-migis-ah-go!
Wa-migis-ah-go!
Eagle in the azure!
Loon upon the water!
Wa-migis-ah-go -- twin-man god!

Loon of Wampum on the azure soaring,
Loon of Lightning astral eager flashing --
In the dome of heaven
Loon of Laughter singing,
Crier of the Storm, a screaming arrow!

Thunder-fisted, echo rolling

Sounder of the Clouds --
A swooping Loon!

Arrayed in Eagle-Lightning Wampum --
Wa-migis-ah-go --
White as foaming water, Phantom Loon!
Wa-migis-ah-go:
Arrayed in wampum, man's but a fish,
O Gitchi Manitou,
Diving, who knows which way disappearing,
Thriving, laughing and evasive, devil fearing,
Striving in troubled waters, red-eyed reappearing --
An eagle that's a fool with fins for wings,
Invisible in flying --
A wampum-weighted trout, with feathered fins,
His element bemoaning,
Discontentedly decrying,
An eagle soaring out of sight
In challenge to the very Thunderbird --
Defiant falling!
More than light struck:
Star inspired --
God-like dying!

O Manitou!
How mighty is man’s loon flight, eagle falling;
How glorious his madness,
God's Magnificence appalling.

Wallace Havelock Robb
This is the song that Tecumtha sings to Minonawea at their August trysting. It will occur as the climax of another movement in the epic, and which is yet to be written. The lovers saw so little of each other, and their meetings were so far apart, that every such meeting was as delicate and shy, ineffably tender and fleeting, as the trysting of the deer in the Haliburton Hills. It was as though the Shawnee were courting her each time as a new and diffidently ardent lover -- a little strange, always, at first, but not too strange. Such was their mood; a modesty to be mastered by all the subtleties of the way of a man with a maid. This Redman sense of decency and dignity explains his approach through the medium of song and the citation of his merits. The White man made the mistake of considering this as boastfulness, or bragging. It was no such thing! The Redman did not imitate the White man's method of calling himself Professor Whodunit, L.L.D., P.D.Q., continuing to wear the honour long after he had become a bore and could no longer sustain it. The Redman announced his merits only so long as he wore them with honour.

In the movement which is the prelude, or will be, to this poem, it is August, but around which date in August we do not know; nor do we know the place. Probably it was in among the pines near the edge of the water, on some jewel of a mountain lake, or maybe a gentle section of some lovely river. For security reasons, the timing had to be carefully observed. Minonawea usually arrived a day ahead, or a few hours, perhaps, to select the spot for the shelter and fire. She usually gave the trysting call, whatever had been decided upon for the occasion. In this case, it being August, the endless calling of two birds was the signal: Tecumtha's call was that of the Rainbird, Krow-krow-krow-kow-kow-kow-krow-krow-krow-krow-krow! The Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Minonawea's call was the ventriloquist, mournful, elusive, but far-reaching and low, Woo-Whe-you! woo-woo-woo! (elongated) of the Mourning Dove. It was usually in the time of quiet water, at early morning or toward eventide, when Tecumtha would call across the water, nature's sounding board, announcing that he had heard and located her. How indescribably lovely it must have been!

(Above, concerning the custom of citation, I had intended to say, that, in this matter, the Redman was but adhering to his custom of imitating nature: his citation was akin to the courting custom of the birds, where the male displays his plumage, prowess and song before his sweetheart, and she expects so to be courted.

"Arrayed-in-Wampum" is the Ojibway name for the Great Northern Diver, the Loon. It is expressive of the back of the bird, the plumage there being suggestive of wampum, a robe of wampum. Tecumtha, was a linguist, fluent in many tongues by the accident of his birthplace. Which is fortunate for Poetry! Yes? He not only knew the Ojibway name of the Loon, but understood and grasped the origin of that name -- the whole horizon of it -- and, in using the theme in oration, developing it romantically, he was something like Bach in music: when he had finished playing on it, it hadn't many, if any, possibilities left untouched.

Wa-migis-ah-go, which is Ojibway for "Arrayed-in-Wampum", is an imaginative play on two words that are very similar, that for Eagle and that for Wampum. This similarity seems to arise from the meaning of power, kingship, wealth. Both the Eagle and the Wampum are symbolic of these things. The Loon, as well as having a robe of
Wampum to his back, has a White Wampum breast, which is a symbol of sacredness, spiritual power, purity, etc., and, indeed, the magic power of the Loon to vanish -- well! that was fit companion to the soaring into infinity and invisibility -- the disappearing into Heaven of the Eagle. The Loon is only a little more terrestrial, that's all, a little closer to human limitations, and, therefore, a little easier to understand. So, out of all these overlappings of names and meanings and powers and romantic weddings of thought -- nothing lost in the compounding! -- "Arrayed-in-Wampum" was a supernatural being, a god. He was a god-man-eagle-loon. Like the gods of ancient Greece, he had all the earthly powers of man, loon and eagle, with the supernatural powers and imagination of a god.

It is easy for us to understand it to this point. It is not so easy to think of it Redman fashion: the Loon, for instance, is a Loon, and, in this form, we can imagine the god sitting in the lodge of a Redman and talking to him, maybe as a loon, maybe as a man; but Redman imagination didn't limit the thing in this way. The god, in the lodge, let us say, sitting before the Redman and conversing with him, was not only earthy and commonplace (if you cut him he'd bleed!) but, at one and the same time, was all three shapes, man, eagle and loon, man size, a phantom sort of a being with the gift of tongues, all one and the same thing, yet each identity separate! It was such mental intricacy, beyond the power of the early Whiteman to grasp, that baffled men like Benjamin Franklin who openly admitted the superb mentality, not to say the mental superiority, of the great Redman leaders. Oddly enough, too, while thinking of this god in the wampum plumage of the Loon and the lordly presence of the Eagle, talons and all, he, the god, was, at the same time, envisaged as man in the finest of buckskins richly adorned with colourful porcupine quills and wampum. He could soar in the sky, strike, swoop, had the powers of the Thunderbird, etc., and he could dive and disappear under water, and all that, and whether eagle or loon or man, it was all one -- the god.

What the Greek sculptors and painters did with Icarus, let us say, will be as nothing compared with what Canadian sculptors, painters, musicians, etc., will do with Arrayed-in-Wampum, and many another mythological treasure revealed in challenging form in TECUMSEH.

Wa-migis-ah-go is pronounced with the emphasis on the underlined parts. It is written phonetically. There are other ways of writing it, but, sounding the Wa as wau, or wah, as in my own name, Wallace, and the ah in harmony with it, one can hardly go wrong. It is soft and musical.

No other theme in this epic could so well have lent itself to this dedication. It is so applicable to the gown you bestowed upon me. Indeed, some of the lines, while meaning something else, maybe, hint of this overtone.

One cannot tell from the poem, exactly, which time it was that Tecumtha arrived, for he dwells upon the Evening Star and the Sunrise alike. Love is timeless, recognizes no limitations.

Venus, Vesper, the Evening Star, the Plumed Star, was Tecumtha's lode-star, his personal goddess by virtue of the fact that he had been born in the year of the transit -- the passing of Venus across the face of the sun. This was of tremendous import. One phase of Venus
appears to have a fuzziness, like a plume, at the end; it can be seen with the naked eye -- by people of exceptionally keen sight. The Redman called it "The Plumed Star". It was a symbol of love. Copper was a symbol of love, too, among the ancients. The copper of Atlantis, the lost continent from which the Shawnees (Shawanoes) are thought to have come -- and which origin is believed to account for Tecumtha's superb genius -- was a superfine copper ranking with gold; it had an animated lustre peculiar to it, and only a possessor of other metal. It was called orichalcum (pronounced or-e-kal-kum) and the efforts of the Romans to imitate it resulted in yellow brass. The meaning of orichalcum is "copper of the mountain". Tecumtha knew all these things through contact with the accumulated knowledge of the ages in Minonawea's father's library. That most Canadians today know nothing, or almost nothing, of these things, these native things that pertain to our background and birthright is something to be deplored -- an ignorance in our people that is the fruit and result of the pro-European and anti-indigenous smugness of our universities and our whole educational set-up. In other words, as a poet, I am not esoteric, not obscure, but, on the contrary, I am singing the song of my native land, beautifully and clearly, using the simplest of language. If I am "difficult", as a poet, as I have more than once been told, the fault is not with my song, but with the people. All alone, we have been taught and are being taught English History with a Canadian flavor! The day will come when Canadians will be taught Canadian History. So, to that extent, I am, like many another poet, "ahead of my time". If all of this seems involved and tedious, just try and realize, that the St. Catharines Women's Literary Club is experiencing something unique, and this privilege is the result of its own alertness, its own intellectual readiness to meet a challenge when it turned up -- its awareness of a knocking at the door of indigenous opportunity. Your vision and enthusiasm has immortalized you. Not only will you need to know whereof you speak, in this regard, but, too, you will want to be infallible -- masters of at least this one part of TECUMSEH. Forgive me if I dwell on thing at length -- better that I err on the side of adequacy than let you down. The day will come, shall we say? when some of you will be reciting this particular part of TECUMSEH who knows where? -- and you will be in my boots, hoping that your hearers will know enough about Canada to "get" it.

Now to get on with it:

Line 6, where he seems to be boastful -- he is Redman natural, and his announcement of his powers is similar to my own wearing of the Wake-Robin gown, or a scholar's use of L.L.D. to his name.

Line 9: Wa-pa-the-a is the Shawnee word for swan, pronounced Wa, as in Wallace, the as in theatre. Tecumtha's home village, as a lad, was the pow-wow place for scores of Redman nations. Which accounts for his gift of tongues.

Line 14: Naturally, this is Minonawea of whom he was speaking. But, could it have been, that the poet here had, also, in the back of his mind, as an overtone, that it could be taken as redolent of those who brought the Wake-Robin into full bloom in the middle of what seemed like an endless winter? I salute you!

Line 19: Copper Aureola, a coppery fire of love in the morning sky, rising passion.

Line 24: Vesperine Eclipse is an imaginative licence he is taking
with the basic thought of the transit of Venus. Venus is romantically credited with power to eclipse the sun in the passage, which is not actually so, of course, being impossible -- but it has the value of being so to Tecumtha, because of the importance of Venus in his life. We can only imagine the impact of such a thought upon his hearers, their awe and his irrisistibility. And it was in thus singing to Minonawea, that he worked out many of his oratorical master strokes. His people knew the place of The Plumed Star in his life. They would see below the surface thought, credit Tecumseh himself with a Light to dim the sun.

Line 26: The long, weird call of the Loon at dusk and in the night, sometimes, but not so commonly, in the daytime.

Line 33: Twin-man god is a reference to the Eagle Loon powers of the man, which qualify him as a god. Tecumtha probably was thinking of himself, in the background, vaguely, at first, then increasingly so. It would be the Redman way, to philosophize on humanity, but with overtones of himself. He starts off, at the beginning of the poem, on the theme of the colourful sky, and love passion; but he scars in such lofty beauty that he loses himself in the supernatural possibilities of the mythology -- he more or less imagines himself as this fabulous being, hinting at overtones of his powers in oration.

Line 39: Thunder-fisted means, allegorically, the Eagle striking like lightning, as the eagle does hit its prey in the air, a terrific and shattering blow with closed talons, like an iron fist.

Line 40: Sounder of the clouds -- surface thought is the sound he makes to reverberate among the clouds; but the overtone is a subtle thought about probing, searching: it is a play on that other meaning of the verb to sound, which gives the expression a double meaning. When we realize, that Tecumtha, when speaking in his own Shawnee, which he always used in oration, sometimes soared on poetical thoughts, or conceptions, with even six, or more, mystical meanings, we begin to have some notion of his glorious powers -- and why no interpreter of that day could capture them. Only a poet who was Tecumseh's peer could have done him justice, and no such poet heard him, at least no Whiteman poet.

Line 41: a swooping loon. This means stooping, as the eagle does, which no loon can do, of course; but this is a loon with the eagle's powers!

Line 44: White as foaming water... this is a marvelous example of the limitations of English when trying to create Redman thought in English. White is a spiritual quality, purity, etc. White wampum meant purity and spirituality, and the Loon's breast is the white of snow new fallen and lying in the sunlight. The loon, whencourting, and, too, when trying to startle and scare away enemies, sometimes rises to an erect position on the surface, and sits on its tail, so to speak, beating the water into foam with its feet. It is an extraordinary sight, something out of this world, unreal; the water is churned into white froth, almost cloudlike for a second or two at the peak of the action. Here, Tecumtha tacks onto that thought the elusiveness of phantom. It becomes a water phantom and a phantom loon! As Tecumtha would say it, it would be White as foaming water phantom loon, meaning foaming water phantom, phantom loon. It is
practically impossible to adjust the thought in the rhythm of English poetry without punctuation, if obscurity is to be avoided. Therefore, the foaming water loses something of its overtone of unreality in order to clarify it and hold the rhythm, and the phantom quality is attributed to the loon. I tried it, first, as White as foaming water phantom -- loon! But, though I probably will recite it this way, dramatically, the hostages a poet has to give to the printer suggest a little yielding of ground. I've torn out great handfuls of hair over this!!!!

In the next section, Tecumseh moves into the realm of introspection, ornithomancy, intuition and premonition. He loved Minonnewa, and he loved her beyond all telling. He thought aloud for her and to her, sharing with her, as far as he could do so, his every thought of his dedicated life, his mission, his compassion for his waning race, the arrogance and stupidity of humanity at large, man's follies, aspirations and failures. He is thinking of humanity, but, inevitably, in terms of himself. Genius that he was, he was driven to serve, to sacrifice himself -- some what might. He knew the score, the probable cost. He had both contempt for humanity, and pity. He was too great a man to basically hold anything but compassion for man. There is a little play on the loon's red eyes -- eyes which flame, wonderfully, when seen at close quarters with the almost level rays of the rising or setting sun caught in them. There are several overtones in this. This whole section is rich in overtone, much of it involved, but easily grasped.

In recital (I presume someone, possibly Mrs. Marshall, will be reading it) this final but one section is working up to the climax. The technique is to give the Defiant falling lots of punch and potency, but carefully measured so that it is not too much, not enough to discount the Godlike dying! which is the climax, and it must be powerful in effect, not loud, but potent with utter finality. To this purpose, one must lay the groundwork for the final word, dying, back at line end 54, on the word decrying, which sounds the note, the rhyme note, for the Godlike dying! Music imitates this technique of recital, or song, in poetry. Poetry is the mother of music. In the same way, the rhyme end word, falling, line 56, has anticipated the climax echo (the last section) which closes the poem on that note, with the overwhelming word, appalling, or, rather, the whole last line ending on that note. These last four lines are more than interesting: they represent that daring and confidence of a poet who violates the rules of climax. Godlike dying is the real climax -- or is it? Theoretically, it is; and, theoretically, the last four lines here would be an aftermath, a dying away echo. That, they certainly are. But, having avoided anti-climax, they side-step, or ride high over the mere echo quality -- steal the climax! Only a line of combined sound and thought, a line of the dramatic ultimate, could do this. All great music, like Handel's "Messiah", etc., is in imitation of this technique. There is a slight pause before these last 4 lines, to let the climax have its full effect, then the mood changes, softens, to awe, wonder and awareness, philosophical amazement over man's finite infinity of being.

One final thought: All this examination and explanation, this analysis and approach to understanding, which has taken hours and hours of time, is after the fact -- the fact of the poem! I wrote the poem in a couple hours of fury! -- I set down the first two lines, after weeks of vague innermost millings and millings. Instanter, the subconscious became the conscious! The analysis came afterward!
MRS. HAYNES:

DATE OF MY HAMILTON APPEARANCE IS SET FOR FRIDAY AFTERNOON NOV. 2ND.

IF YOU COULD HAVE SOMEONE WITH A CAR TO PICK ME UP AFTER THE LECTURE AND TAKE ME TO ST. CATHARINES, I COULD SPEAK TO YOUR WOMEN'S LITERARY CLUB THAT SAME EVENING. OTHER WISE IF YOU CAN'T DO THIS, WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

W. H. R.

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MEMO TO MR. + MRS. ARMSTRONG,
LAURA NIXON HAYNES,
AND THEM THAR CURVACEOUS LADIES:

THIS IS JUST TO TIP YOU OFF THAT W.H.R. WILL BE IN FULL RECITAL, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TORONTO, JANUARY 26TH, 1933, IN THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM THEATRE, GIVING PARTS OF HIS LATEST 4 POWERFUL MOVEMENTS IN "JECUMSEH", NOFF SED!

W. H. R.
Dear Mrs. Armstrong: Nov. 21/51, Kingston, Ont.

Here it is -- or they are -- the result, or aftermath, of the Women's Literary Club recital which I gave on Nov. 2, last, and at which time I assured you all, that your rapt attention and appreciation moved me deeply.

First, and because I am loath to put it last, I am inclosing for your husband, Mr. Armstrong, the memorial which I wrote for my father, W. D. Robb, late head of the Grand Trunk Railway. He started at the bottom, went to the top; he was the only Canadian ever to be given the chance to run that railroad -- he got it too late! As it was, he made a better showing than any head they ever had. Van Horne, Hayes and Robb are the three outstanding names in Canadian Railroading. Mr. Armstrong and I "clicked"; we have lots in common. Kindly ask him to accept this from me in kinship.

Now, then:

Came The Abbeis for you to keep after you read it to the Club. If the Club wants a copy of it for the files, you may give them a copy. This same holds for the other poems: the signed copies are for the persons indicated; copies may be made for the files if the Club wants.

BALLAD OF THE CURVIOUS LADIES: For McCrea, Wallace and Marshall, I selected Miss McCrea to play the poet's part because she seems to have the necessary sense of fun in her. If for any reason she can't do it, you'll know whom to pick.

Whose Sandal Is The Pegasean Shoe: For Mrs. Haynes.

SOUNDING WORDS: For Mrs. Kadwill

Innocence Betrayed: For Miss Doris M. McCrea

Opalescence: For Mr. Ewing, the teacher of history, Lit, and the classics. He is to get the signed copy, but I am inclosing an extra copy for someone else to read, as I am aware that he is not a member. This is addressed to him because of his devotion to cultural things and his expressions of appreciation of my Muse, but there were others there like him, and it is a tribute to them, as well, and I trust that they will accept the gesture.

Kindly let me know as soon as you get this envelope, so I won't worry about whether it reaches you in time or not.

Wallace Havelock Robb
Dear Mrs. Armstrong:

I have just re-read your Xmas card message to our elder son, Joe, who will see to things when I'm gone. Joe opines that it should be filed with my papers, not with the spent cards to be thrown out or who knows what. So, it is being saved.

We finally had to give up Xmas cards except to our immediate relatives, and not to many of them. You know the old saying, "I hate the most of my relations!" Oh, dear! Anyway, we had to do this seemingly ruthless thing because my loyal following got so extensive, each one very special in some way, that I could no longer face 400 to 500 cards each year, which forced me to start on them in mid-November. Too much is enough, as we used to say. So, let none be offended. My lines will defend me -- I trust.

Thank you again, and for memory's sake, God Love You! Yes, I had a wonderful letter from Mrs. Marshall.

Oneh!

Wallace Havelock Robb
The Peninsula Field Naturalists record, with deep regret, the sudden passing of a distinguished Canadian Conservationist, Naturalist, Ornithologist, Bird photographer, Lecturer, Recitalist, Archaeologist, and Poet, Wallace Havelock Robb of Abbey Dawn, Kingston, Ont., on January 29, 1976, in his eighty eighth year.

Following service in World War 1, Mr. Robb commissioned a series of seventy-six paintings in water colour of Canadian Birds, by Major Allan Brooks, D.S.O., and presented them to the people of Canada. This collection is housed in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

In 1921, as representative of the Province of Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds, Mr. Robb joined the field trip of the American Audubon Society to the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, for the purpose of photographing sea birds in their natural habitat. Photographs taken at this time were displayed all over Canada and the United States.

In 1928, Mr. Robb acquired a 500 acre tract of land on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River near Kingston and here he established the Abbey Dawn Crown Game Preserve - the first Sanctuary for Birds of Prey in America. It consists of many varieties of habitat, rock mesa, woodland, marsh, a picturesque waterfall, gorge and chain of miniature lakes - a haven for songbirds and waterfowl. Shy deer and grouse find it to their liking, and wildflowers grow in well-loved profusion.

In early 1930, during a brief stop-over between trains in Toronto, Wallace Robb caught sight of a tiny calendar adorned with an exquisite water-colour sketch of wildflowers in a natural setting, inside a shop. He entered, made inquiries. "Oh, yes - an old man, artist, comes in sometimes. Has a room near here. They say it's full of little pictures. Lives alone - used to teach art in some college. Never tries to sell a picture. Thinks he's just a failure! Name is Holmes."

Returning to Abbey Dawn, Mr. Robb got busy, wrote letters, phoned, and set in motion an effort which culminated in a splendid testimonial dinner in Toronto to Robert Holmes, R.C.A., O.S.A. and to his Art - his first (and only) public recognition.

He enjoyed nine days of triumph. Then the end came. He passed away suddenly, while addressing the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto on May 14, 1930.

A day or two after his death, the Toronto Art Gallery came to his lodging and shortly afterward purchased his entire personal collection. He had painted from nature over one hundred varieties of Canadian wildflowers!

At Abbey Dawn, in a secluded wildflower glade, Wallace Havelock Robb planned for a memorial shrine to the great Canadian wildflower artist. On a native granite rock, John Byers, sculptor and painter, of Montreal, a former pupil of Robert Holmes, carved, continued on page 5
Wallace Havelock Robb cont'd...

in low relief, the head and shoulders of his loved teacher, in which no twinkle of the eye nor turn of the whimsical smile was missed. It took two summers to carve it there.

I well remember the twinkle and the smile, and the delicate little sketches of hepaticas, lady-slipper, bloodroot, arrowhead, trilliums and wild iris that decorated the walls of his classroom in 1917-18. I was also his pupil.

The memorial sculpture is no longer at Abbey Dawn. It was transferred, of necessity, to the Guild of All Arts, in Toronto some years ago, to preserve it from vandals!

Wallace Robb wrote many poems of birdland, which he recited and whistled in skilful imitative harmony with the songs of the various birds, to the great enjoyment of bus loads of school children who came to Abbey Dawn with their teachers - to see, to hear, and above all to discover, to absorb something of the wonder and the magic of the World of Nature around them - the Essence of Abbey Dawn.

Farley Mowat sent this message to Wallace Havelock Robb on his last birthday:

"I salute YOU, not because of your Birthday, but because you are a shining man in a dark world."


"He who hears a bird song in his heart
Hears the Bugles of Beauty
On the sun-tipped heights of morning."

W.H. Robb

.......

* * * * *
Robb dies
(Continued from Page 1)
destroyed by vandalism in 1960.

Born in Belleville in 1888, he entered the business
world in 1909 with his
brothers. But in 1924 he
started a long career of
writing. He also wrote a
series of dramatic poems en­titled Tectumtha, Hail
Canada, a volume of
patrjotic verse and a series
of smaller volumes in later
life.

Surviving are his wife, Ed­na; a daughter, Mrs. Miriam
Bryan; sons Joseph and Clif­ford; a brother, F. Morse
Robb of Belleville; four
grandchildren and one great­grandchild.

A memorial service will be
held Saturday at 1:30 p.m. at
the Robert B. Cullen
Funeral Home. Cremation
will follow. In lieu of
flowers, the family asks that
donations be made to
charity.

(See Robb dies, Page 2)

Literary Club pays
tribute to poet-friend

In tribute to Wallace Havelock Robb, poet of Abbey Dawn,
who passed away suddenly at his home in Kingston, Ont., in his
87th year, the officers and members of the Women's Literary
Club of St. Catharines wish to record their deep appreciation of
the warm and stimulating friendship which Mr. Robb extended
to their club for more than a quarter of a century.

They also wish to extend their deep sympathy to the mem­bers
of his family and to thank them for their gracious permis­sion
to use the poem, In Memoriam, written in 1947 by Mr.
Robb at the time of his father's death.

IN MEMORIAM

Whom I Have Loved

Ah, loved ones, leave me, now, to rest;
Behind me, then, close gently this last door;
The great effulgence in the West
I would explore.

The day is done,
But fair befall the morrow;
Beloved, do not sorrow;
In peace ineffably content I go
Into the afterglow,
Following the sun.

Whom I have loved, farewell! And, so, to rest;
The times we had! And those gone on before!
Thus, now, I go, remembering, to the West,
And come again no more.

Ah, loved ones, gently, fondly close the door.
Remembering — tho' I come again no more.
— Wallace Havelock Robb
Dennis T. Patrick Sears

Wallace Havelock Robb: So long, and good luck

Wallace Robb is dead! Long live Wallace Robb! So it is said of kings and Wallace Havelock Robb was a monarch royal wherever he trod. The size of a pint of porter the man had the heart of a lion; if you were foolish enough to cross him Wallace would lean back and give you a blue glare and a roar that would shiver every rock around Abbey Dawn.

It would be fool's talk to mumble about sorrow and regret at his passing and stuff like that: Wallace would be the first to snort. He knew, better than most, that death was the price of life and he was no more afraid of death than he was afraid to kick some ignoramus of a hunter off his sacred domain at the Abbey. Death came, not like a thief in the night, but as an old friend, and Death and Wallace had a drink together and went away to other pastures and different adventures.

It is not for me to pass judgment on Wallace's literary labours; he quarreled long and loud with the grey, depressed souls of the academic world. I read Wallace's column in the old Canadian Countryman forty years ago. I've heard him recite and have been favoured with copies of his books. His work was filled with zest and the spirit of life. Wallace poured his soul into his work and left it behind for the rest of us to read it.

Wallace wore an open-collared shirt in the manner of Byron; if you suggested he was imitating Byron you were likely to come up short of a couple of teeth; I nearly made this mistake.

We'd many things in common; we liked birds, Indians and whisky, and detested hunters and cats. If you wished to set Wallace raving mention your pet cat and the man would give you a lecture that would rattle old Macdonald's statue. We've shared many a glass and many a laugh.

Wallace had a tremendous and abiding love for nature, but he was no sentimental fool. I had a plague of English sparrows that were attacking bluebirds and tree swallows. I telephoned Wallace and asked his advice. "Shoot the sons of bitches!" he roared. I came away rubbing what was left of my ear-drum.

Two other poets Wallace admired were Dorothy Sitter and the late Wilson Macdonald. The latter's work was often included in Canadian text books; he was a pastoral poet in the tradition of Lampman and Roberts. Dorothy Sitter writes silvery, chiming Edwardian poetry. Fifty years from now some genius is going to discover Dorothy and she will be read around the globe.

And so he's gone: his time had arrived and none knew it better than Wallace. I remember the day he gave the toast at my daughter's wedding; I remember splitting a quart of scotch with him in his great old den looking out over the river. I remember standing with him in the shine of the day's sun at Abbey Dawn and the wind rippling through Wallace's silver hair and he the king of all he surveyed. He's gone and there'll never be another. There's any number of poets about, there was only one Wallace Havelock Robb. So long, Wallace, and here's luck... And may the door be on the jar to wherever it is you're wending.
WALLACE HAVELOCK ROBB
(May 19, 1888 — January 29, 1976)

Last year, my father told me about this ode he had placed in his "In Memoriam" file. He requested that, in the event of his death, I should have it set up in type and printed on deckle-edge cards to be distributed to his family, his friends and others.

Joe Robb