



William Kurelek

William Kurelek a retrospective

September 20 — October 20, 1970
The Edmonton Art Gallery
2 Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton
(in association with The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto)

The Edmonton Art Gallery's exhibition program is designed to introduce a cross-section of Canadian and International art to the community. The William Kurelek Retrospective is part of a series of exhibitions presenting the work of leading Canadian artists.

William Kurelek's contribution to Canadian Art is a unique one. Through his childhood memories he has created a visual record of farm life in Alberta and Manitoba. Combined with his intensive observations of contemporary society, his work has a universal content that makes it immediately relevant.

I would like to express the Gallery's appreciation to Avrom Isaacs of The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, who with the artist selected the works for the exhibition and who has contributed greatly to the organization of this retrospective; and to Miss Martha Black for her perseverance in assembling the catalogue.

We also extend our thanks to The Ukrainian Professional and Businessmen's Club of Edmonton; it's President, Mr. H. Barabash; and to the Ukrainian community as a whole, for their active support of this exhibition.

Finally I would like to extend our gratitude to The Canada Council for their support.

William Kirby
Chief Curator

Introduction

To occasionally view William Kurelek's paintings may be a confusing experience, as he seems to treat many varying themes. He could have easily created a reputation by concentrating on any one of these themes as they are all important for different reasons.

One of his most popular subjects is his recollection of life on the prairies in Western Canada during the 30's and 40's. Surprisingly enough there are few chroniclers of this most important period which is already history. Certainly no one with his ability. His concern for detail is almost Flemish. I often find myself examining the minute detail on the horizon line with as much interest as the foreground of the work. The horizon line and barbed wire fences are particular trademarks of this aspect of Kurelek's painting, strongly conveying the feel of vast, sparsely populated landscape.

He is a Canadian of Ukrainian descent, and little has been done of a visual nature with this important group. The insights he provides are invaluable. For that matter, little has been done (aside from documentary photography) on any of the ethnic groups in Canada. When he paints or writes about this group in a sense he provides us with a look into all groups of immigrants, and since most of us originate from immigrant stock we feel a natural empathy with this era. In our constant attempt to define 'Canadian' I am sure Kurelek's paintings will provide us with a greater sense of identification.

Prior to the development of the photograph as a commercial product, painting was used as a means of reporting. Kurelek seems to have revived this descriptive technique for his own purposes. Sometimes he uses his canvas on location without any editorial comment. At other times he powerfully injects his own attitudes into the painting. In this capacity he has painted in Alberta, Manitoba, the Sudbury area, Cape Dorset, Northwest Territories, and India.

Today we are most aware of the acuteness of problems of a moral, economic, and social nature. Bill was painting protest pictures back in the 50's when painting of this nature was considered in bad taste. In this sense he is avant garde. However, he has never shown any desire to be a fashionable painter, and has chosen his own particular direction.

It is probably in the area of religion and morality that Bill feels he must commit himself most strongly. Here some critics feel that his painting rests on questionable grounds. For many this is just not the time to attempt to literally describe happenings in the Bible. Portrayals of abortion, torturing of prisoners in Viet Nam and Africa, etc. are considered distasteful and somewhat naive in their intensity. The artist has made his feelings quite clear on this point: "The message is much more important than any aesthetic contribution I can make in this area." I think the over-reaction most of us have to this area makes it difficult for us to properly assess these paintings.

For me Kurelek is a religious painter regardless of whether he paints Christ being crucified or a simple farmscape. There is an intensity in his painting which converts all his work into a religious act.

I am not sure which of these areas is most successful. It is quite amazing how even his most simple paintings continually unveil themselves over a long period of time. Some of his paintings are surprisingly abstract in

the way in which they dissect the canvas into simple planes.

He is one of the most literal and direct painters, and yet in his eagerness to make his paintings perfectly clear most of his one-man shows have written introductions, and displayed with each painting is an explanatory note. These explanations are an additional bonus in that Kurelek is a gifted writer. We have reproduced selections of his diary notes, introductions to various exhibitions, and notes on some of his paintings. When considered along with the paintings, his writings provide such a complete explanation of Kurelek as an artist and as an emotionally committed individual that all critical comment by someone outside his own realities must become somewhat superficial and redundant.

Avrom Isaacs

Toronto, September 1970

Artist's Foreword

Strange how God arranges things, and yet back of the tangled web of circumstance — how rightly! Some regard me as the only pictorial chronicler of the immigrant pioneer tamers of the prairies. As if for that reason I was born of those very people 43 years ago in the Willingdon-Vegreville district of this province. Not only that, I came in, as it were, with one foot in the tail end of the pioneer era and one in the technological that makes it possible for such a beautiful new gallery like this one to be built, to put on a show of my works, and to have me present for the opening of it too.

The night I came into the world my father had returned by sleigh from a hard day's labour in the bush country cutting timber for our first real home, a log one, to replace the shack we were in temporarily. Finding I was due any minute, he turned his tired horses into a howling snow storm for another all-night ride to fetch an Indian midwife. When they returned they found I'd already been delivered by neighbors' women. But my engineer brother John who followed nearly two years later, and the rest of us seven Kurelek children, were born in hospital. Yet another indication of the amazing rate of change in prairie farm life my paintings record is the fact that my grandfather, who came to Canada from the Ukraine before the First War, worked together with his father to break and work the virgin soil — with oxen! Even my father still remembers seeing the steam engines, "the gentle giants of the plains," threshing and soil-breaking. But I don't. I myself worked the land with both tractors and horses, and I paint my experiences with these. But already my farm-horse pictures are

bought by Westerners now living in Toronto or Montreal for their nostalgic value, because one no longer sees horses on the farm any more.

Some of these fans of my pastoral pioneer paintings express regret: "Why can't he just concentrate on farm works? Too bad he's been bitten by that religion bug." All I can reply is, "Sorry, the two go together and form a simple inescapable axiom about my case. Thus: no religion: no Kurelek, and no Kurelek: no farm paintings." You see, fifteen years ago, about the time I began full-time professional painting, I was already, so to speak, FINISHED. Eye pain that returned with every lengthy painting session plus depression about the state of the world and my own personal inadequacies had brought me to the brink of suicide. It was only my conversion to Catholicism through the good example of an occupational therapist in hospital in England that gave me a complete new lease on life. The painting in this show entitled "Behold Man Without God" is an example of one done at my lowest, bitterest ebb. The title I added later when I realized it represented the sum total of my malady. Strangely, that maddening eye pain vanished for good in that pivotal year of my conversion, 1957. And now I have a zest for life that often makes me wish for two or three lives in one so I could experience all the things and accomplish all the projects that present themselves.

Yet another "miracle" and proof that God will not be outdone in generosity is my unusual success, of which this show is an example. I had already been painting for ten years and had approached various galleries in England and Canada with deflating, indifferent results by the time 1960, the year of the big break-through, rolled around. This was the very year I began the actual painting of my St. Matthew's Passion, a series of 160 paintings — one painting a week for three years. This was strictly a labour of love, as its prime purpose was the making of a slide film for use by missionaries as a teaching aid. I had given up hope of living by painting

except as a side line, and had returned from England in 1959 with the intention of starting a business of picture framing, for which I'd just then trained for two years in Britain. I walked into The Isaacs Gallery in Toronto with framed painting samples under my arm, and lo and behold, Mr. Isaacs not only offered me picture-frame work, but a one-man show of painting as well. Thanks to his promotion and salesmanship I was prosperous enough in two years to consider marrying and settling down as a family man. It took a long time to get over that feeling of unreality of my first show opening, and even as late as my Winnipeg Public Gallery retrospective I recall standing there among my paintings and thinking to myself, "It can't be *my* works all these people have come to see — must be someone else's."

Many of my other works in this show, namely the social comment and prophetic ones, may strike one as depressing. I paint them out of a new-found Christian concern for one's fellow man — saying, as it were, "I'm okay, Jack, but what about the other guy?" I've been lucky enough to travel a deal more than others — Mexico, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Jordan, South Africa, Kenya, India, Hong Kong, the Soviet Union — and (excepting war) to see the sad side of man's condition. The apparent depressing cast of these works is no doubt a reflection from my own hopeless past. For despite outward appearances, I *am* optimistic about the world's future — *after* we've passed through the Dark Night toward which the present materialism is tending. This is a free country, however, and the gallery visitor can agree or disagree after seeing my works. I just wish it were allowed for me to do about six weeks of on-the-spot work on the fascinating village from which my family emigrated to Alberta. I was allowed four hours there on my trip to the Ukraine this past summer — a mere glimpse of the faith and industry at my people's roots.

William Kurelek
September, 1970.

William Kurelek

Born in Alberta, 1927. Presently residing in Toronto.

Received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Manitoba, 1949. Went to England in 1952, deciding to learn "simply painting." As a painter he is largely self-taught.

- 1964 Completed a project which involved six years of work on the illustration of The Passion according to St. Matthew. The 160 tempera paintings were reproduced in slides.
- 1967 The National Film Board released a colour film entitled "KURELEK", based on his paintings.
- 1968 Trip to Cape Dorset, N.W.T., resulting in 30 paintings of the area, now in a private collection.
- 1969 Senior Canada Council Fellowship, 1969. Travelled in India, South Africa; visited Hong Kong.

Represented in the collections of:

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.
Philadelphia Museum of Art.
The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's Univ., Kingston.
Art Gallery of Hamilton.
McMaster University, Hamilton.
The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg.
Edmonton International Airport.
Canadian Industries, Limited, Montreal.
The Canada Council.
Department of External Affairs.
London Art Museum, London.

Represented in many private collections, including:

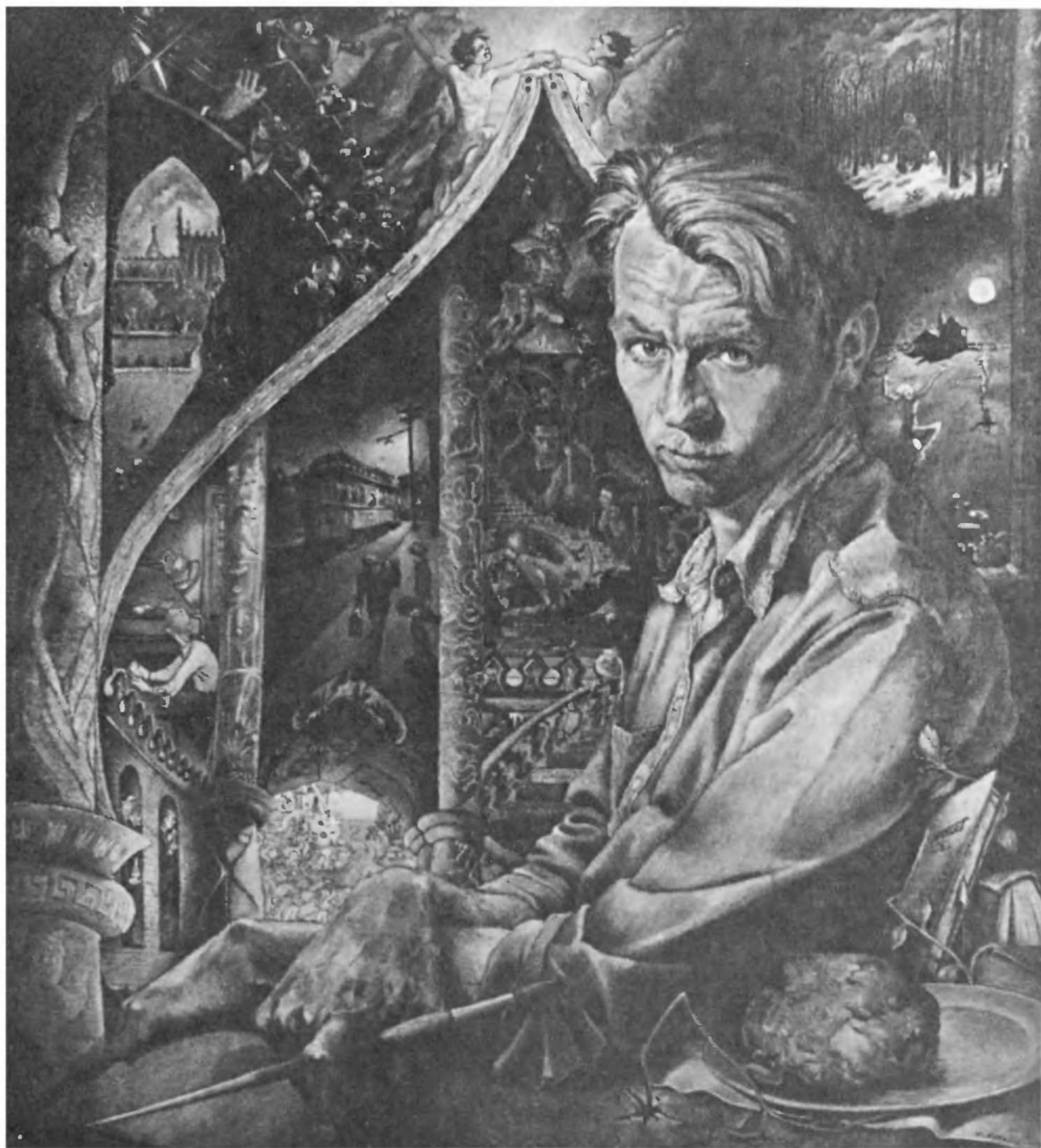
Mr. J.H. Hirshhorn; Mr. & Mrs. John G. McConnell;
The Hon. & Mrs. Walter Gordon; The Rt. Hon. &
Mrs. Lester Pearson; Dr. Evan Turner; Queen Mother Elizabeth; Mildred Dunnock.

One-Man Exhibitions

The Isaacs Gallery: 1960, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1968
Edmonton Art Gallery: 1965
Agnes Lefort Gallery, Montreal: 1965, 1967
Trinity College, University of Toronto: 1965
London: 1965
McIntosh Gallery, University of Western Ontario,
Winnipeg Art Gallery: 1965
The Yellow Door Gallery, Winnipeg: 1966
Yellowstone Art Centre, Montana: 1967
University of Sherbrooke, Quebec: 1968
Rodman Hall Art Gallery, St. Catherine's: 1967
Jacox Galleries, Edmonton: 1968
Hart House, University of Toronto: 1969
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts: 1963 (two-man show)
St. Vladimir Institute, Toronto: 1970
Art Gallery of Ontario Extension Dept. Travelling Exhibition: 1970-71

Major Group Exhibitions

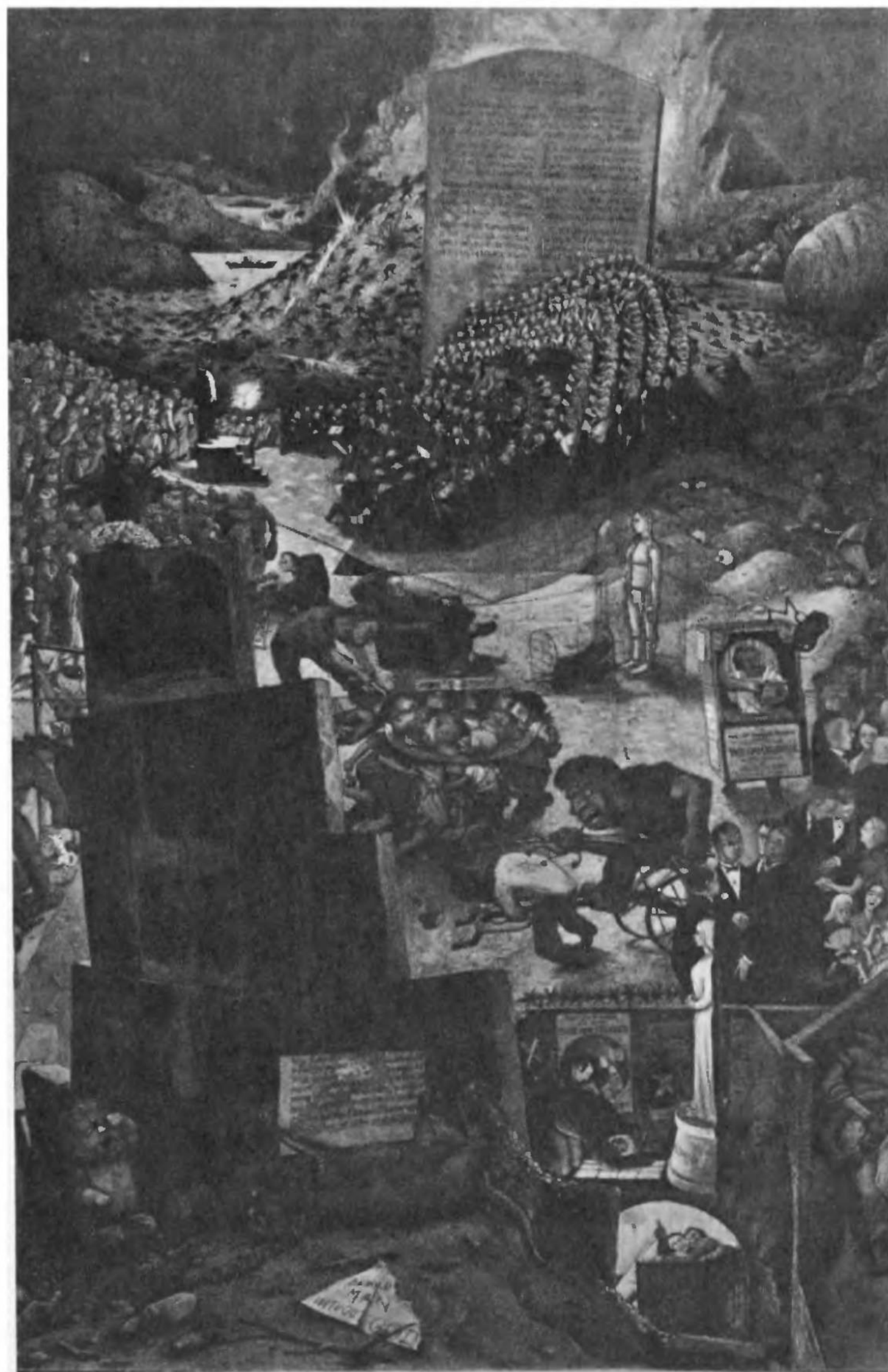
Royal Academy Summer Show, London, England
Invitation Show, Beaverbrook Gallery, New Brunswick: 1962
"Canadian Art," J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Ky.: 1962
Religious Art, Regis College, Toronto: 1962, 1966
Canadian Painting, Baner Gallery, New York: 1963
Invitation Show, Rochester Memorial Art Gallery, N.Y.: 1963
Biennial of Canadian Painting, National Gallery of Canada: 1963, 1965, 1968
Commonwealth Gallery, London, England: 1963
"Images of the Saints," Montreal Museum of Fine Arts: 1965



8 Lord That I May See 1950

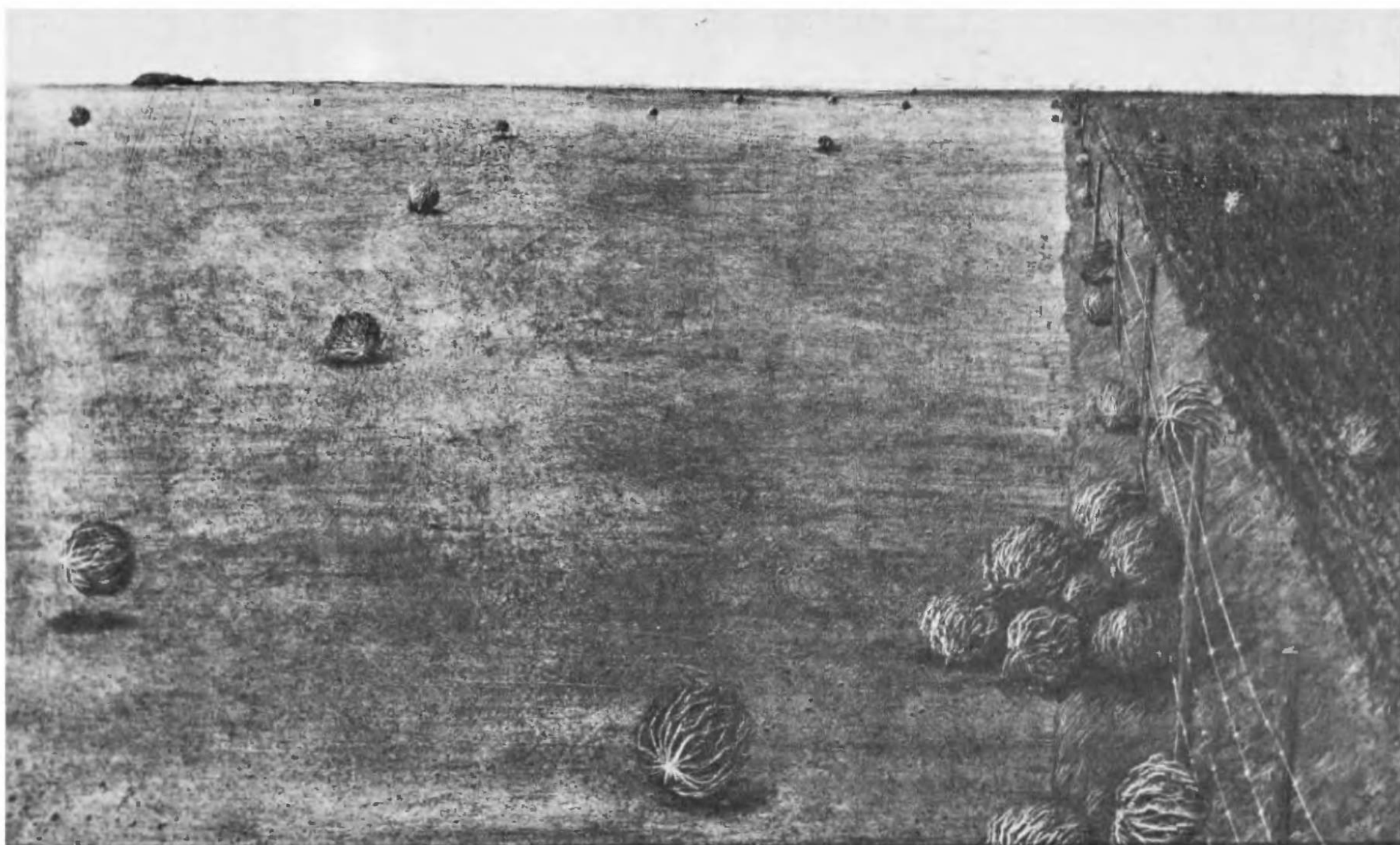
This is both literally and figuratively a *prayer in paint*. I remember being aware of it being that even while I worked on it: I was in Netherne Hospital, Coulsdon, Surrey in England then just a short while before my abortive suicide attempt. Through contact with Margaret Smith the occupational therapist who was setting me a good Christian example, I got to the point where I wanted to believe but couldn't. One just can't delude or make oneself believe. One can only dispose oneself to believe. Then God gives Faith as a gift in His own good time. That's why I represent myself as Bartimeus the blind man by the wayside, as recorded in the Bible crying "Lord that I may see!" to Christ in reply to His query "What will you have me do for you?" The setting is the so called Common — Coulsdon Common — a grassy hill by the hospital where I took walks trying to sort out the mess my thinking was in. You can perhaps make out the faint shadow of Our Saviour on the cinder path. The blind eyes I copied from Breughel's *Blind Beggar*. For I admired the painter Breughel most at the time. In the sky is a lark which I used to see and hear on the Common. But here it represents the Faith I recognized in Margaret — something beautiful to hear of but not being able to see it for myself. On the horizon you can see the figure of Margaret giving me a helping hand, so to speak, up the hill.





15 Russian Thistles Migrating 1961

On the prairie, we have this prolific weed called Russian thistle or tumble weed. It is prickly to the touch, grows in the shape of a tangled ball reaching to a foot or two in diameter. It is green in Summer, a drab grey in the late Fall, when it automatically breaks off at the stem and allows the wind to roll it along. Seeds are in the outside tips of the stems which break off as it goes bouncing along. Fences catch many of them and so it grows in profusion at the edges of fields the next year.



21 The Rock 1962

Mystical symbolism — the rock represents the Papacy on which the Catholic Church is built according to Christ's arrangement when He appointed Peter to head His Church using the words quoted on the face of the rock. In the sky are the saints the Church has produced. Surrounding the rock in the sea are the internal enemies of the Church (bad Catholics and natural error) who would have caused its downfall long ago were it not protected by the Divine promise.



24 Green Sunday 1962

This is the farm kitchen on a May Sunday morning and combines three occurrences — First: green Sunday which is an annual Spring custom of bringing branches of poplar trees into the house to be placed in all the corners of the living room. Second: the maid is posing in the traditional Ukrainian costume of the province of Bukovina where my people come from originally. Third: the youth with the accordion represents our neighbor's son who was a born musician and could play any instrument he laid his hands to. I used to be entranced by his playing. These are happy memories.

The frame for this picture was carved by MICHAEL STROZ



25 The Honeymoon 1963

This is kind of an ironic title because although my grandfather made his oldest daughter and my father a big wedding, there was no real going away. They simply loaded up the few gifts of household utensils and furniture in a wagon and went to live in the small shacky house in one corner of the quarter-section of land given to my father as a dowry. The next day they were at work on the land. It was in this shack that I was born, the first of seven.



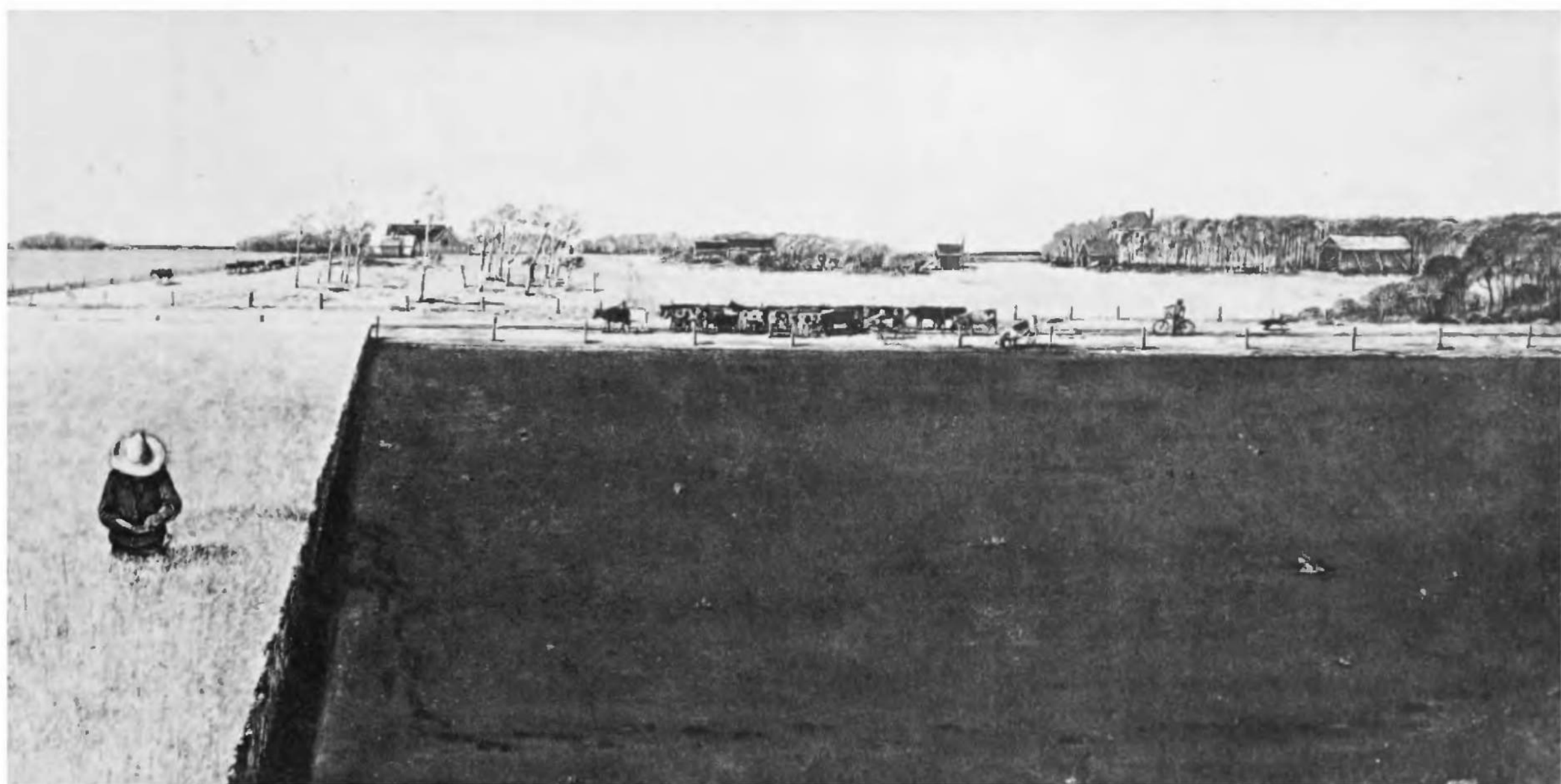
26 The Auction Sale 1963

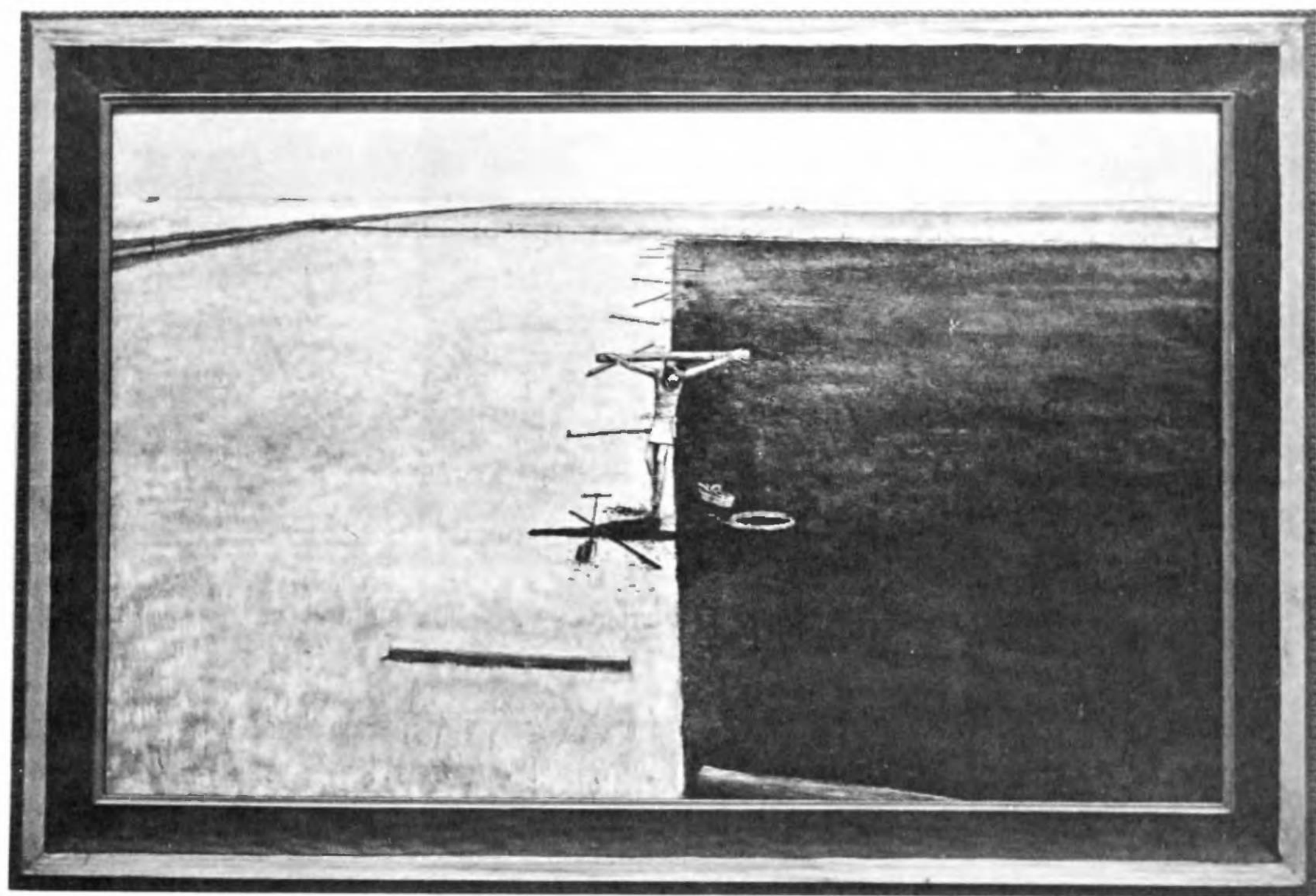
When a farm went up for sale the movable property — stock, machinery, household and garage articles were usually auctioned off. And so when my father decided to move East we also had an auction, only we had two auctioneers, one just for livestock. In fact, humour came out of this. When my father saw the finished work after long hours of painstaking painting of people and cars, he said, "Very good, but there were twice as many cars and people." The time is an autumn afternoon, the view from the third story of the farm house. The figure next to the dog is myself trying vainly to keep check on the sales for my father, since I was supposed to be "educated." But the auctioneer, a Stonewall implement dealer, was too crafty and fast for me.



27 Dairy Farming in Manitoba 1963

This is really a slightly misleading title as it doesn't show much about dairying except driving the cow herd out to pasture. But it was done on very short notice so I didn't have much time to think it out. Toronto City Hall asked me to do a painting for the Prime Minister and his wife as a gift from the city to them on their first official visit. Mrs. Pearson is Winnipeg born and raised and she is the collector of the two. So I knew she wanted a Manitoba scene when she asked for one of my works as a gift instead of an engraved plate with the city coat of arms. This view is of our whole farm yard from across what we called the "bog road" — it led to the bog land to the east of our farm which was uninhabited and had only hay claims and pastures. Even when my father was forced by crop failures to turn to dairying his heart was still in wheat farming and he left most of the work of dairying to mother and us children in summer. That's him wading through the wheat rubbing kernels in the palm of his hand to see if it's ready for harvest. Once again there's a hidden religious message or two. See the little figure of the praying boy in the bush — this refers to the short lived period of piety I experienced as a boy. Also the kiltdeer is putting on a broken wing act to draw the farmer away from her nest but doesn't notice the snake is approaching her nest. This is symbolic of my own parents being so concerned about getting us material security they neglected our spiritual welfare.





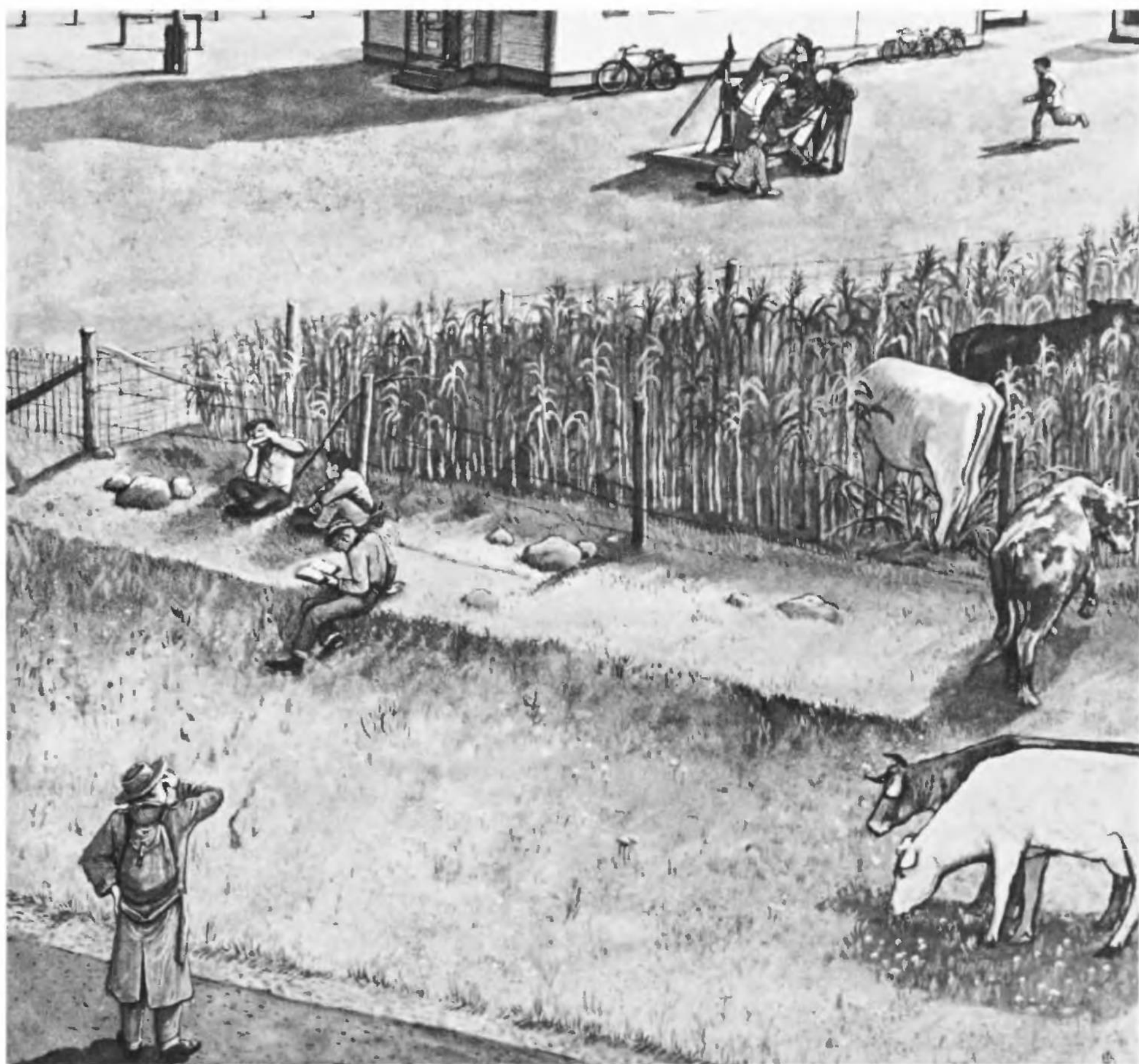
29 Ukrainian Orthodox Easter Vigil 1963

Back in the old country where Christians and customs were hardy and devout, Sunday Divine Service lasted three hours and since there were no pews, the congregation stood all the while. They also participated actively by singing the responses to the priest. Even in my early childhood in this country, they endured the all-night Easter vigil. Many beautiful and interesting customs surrounded the peasants' faith. Here we see my family arriving by wagon (others used Democrats or buggies and just a few cars) for the vigil, with the traditional paska (an Easter basket of special foods) which is to be blessed with holy water at sunrise. I remember that in the church there were bonfires round which men gathered in knots to chat during the night. In the old country, on hearing the joyous cry, "Christ is risen." those outside would set off fireworks.



34 In Search of the True God #5 1964

This series was inspired by another series I saw in Regis College Art Show several years ago by an artist John Inglis by name, which he titled in "Search of a Countenance" showing a figure wandering through fantastic landscapes but with no face. I'm a more literal kind of artist but the idea of the wandering searching figure struck a deep chord for I realized that was me too in my youth — I had been looking for God without realizing it — in politics, sex, art, worldly success, nature. And in a way it's the journey of all souls in this life. I depict myself as the tramp I was journeying through Canada, the States, Mexico, England — in the porkpie hat, the raincoat and satchel. No. 5 is to do with ART. I've set it at the Manitoba one room school I went to for the first nine years. I am on the road scratching my head — is this a satisfactory God? I see myself sketching and surrounded by a close crowd of admiring pupils (ART). Another boy is so absorbed in a book (LITERATURE) that the cows he's supposed to be pasturing on the road side have got into the neighbors' corn — I used to revere literature that way. MUSIC is represented by the harmonica player. Also getting rapt attention. In a way this picture is contrived. And yet the strange thing is that if I meditate sufficiently on it country images always suggest themselves as illustrations for Biblical parables so that they are plausible.



36 Hauling Grain in Winter 1964

My father had to work hard to pay off his passage. Because grain prices were poorest at harvest time, and the nearest railway and elevator town at that time was at Bellis, eighteen miles away, grain was hauled there all winter — winter being when there was also time to spare. It was an all-day job. Rising at four or five in the morning, two, three, or four sleigh boxes were shovelled full by hand, and after breakfast, the teams set out in convoy. In the picture my father is first, then my grandfather and my mother (who did a man's work). Horses struggling uphill after crossing the frozen Saskatchewan River in 30 to 50 degrees below zero would bleed from the nose (without harmful effect, however.) From time to time the drivers walked behind their loads to save themselves from being frostbitten. After loading at Bellis and having dinner, they would head back, to arrive at dark. Note the brakehooks on the sleigh runners and the ferry, in storage, across the river.



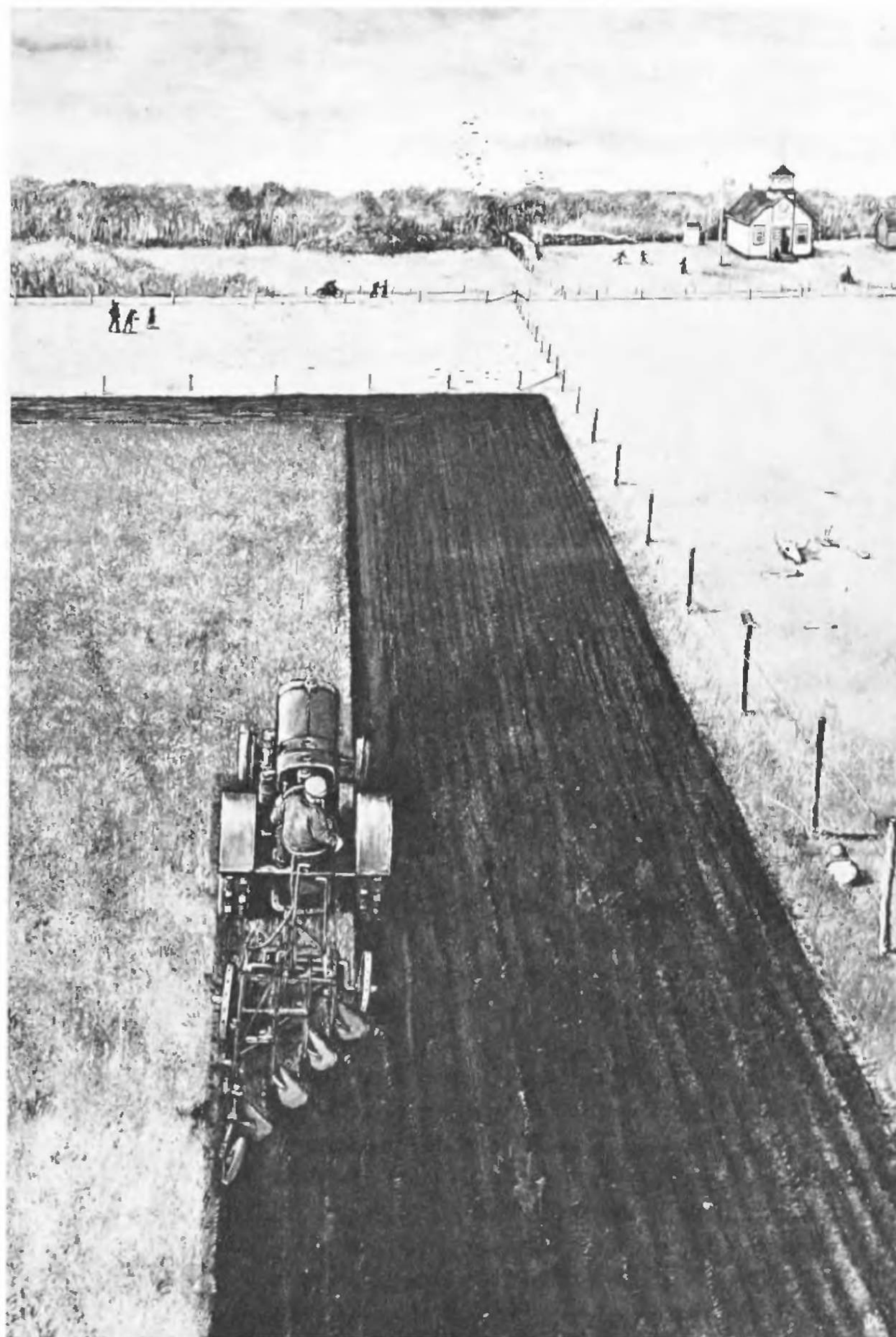
38 Unloading Hay in Cowbarn Loft 1964

Just as in Western novels cattle ranchers look down on sheep farmers, so grain farmers tend to regard dairy farmers. A common complaint of reluctant dairymen is that they are slaves to their cows — in winter especially, because then the cows have to be fed, watered, milked and bedded twice daily. They even have to be shaved. You think twice about hitting a cow back if she kicks you and pail into the gutter, because when she is upset she holds back her milk. My father finally admitted that the Stonewall district was not good grain-growing country and had to follow his neighbors into dairying. One winter chore was hauling hay from the fields, where it had been stacked during the summer, and filling the loft with it. People ask me what the man is doing on the ladder. One of my father's ideas was a long overhead pipeline from pumphouse to reservoir tanks in the barn. Once or twice, I absent-mindedly closed the reservoir valve before the pipeline was completely drained and the pipes froze solid. We had to get up on a ladder in the biting wind and thaw it out inch by inch with a blow torch.



39 Plowing in the Thirties 1964

My father bought the Stonewall farm complete with machinery. A McCormick Deering 15-30 tractor with steel lugs could pull a four bottom plow in Western soil conditions. In the distance can be seen children arriving at school; my sister, brother and I taking a shortcut across our pasture. It was a one-room school where one teacher, usually from Winnipeg, taught nine grades to about twenty pupils.



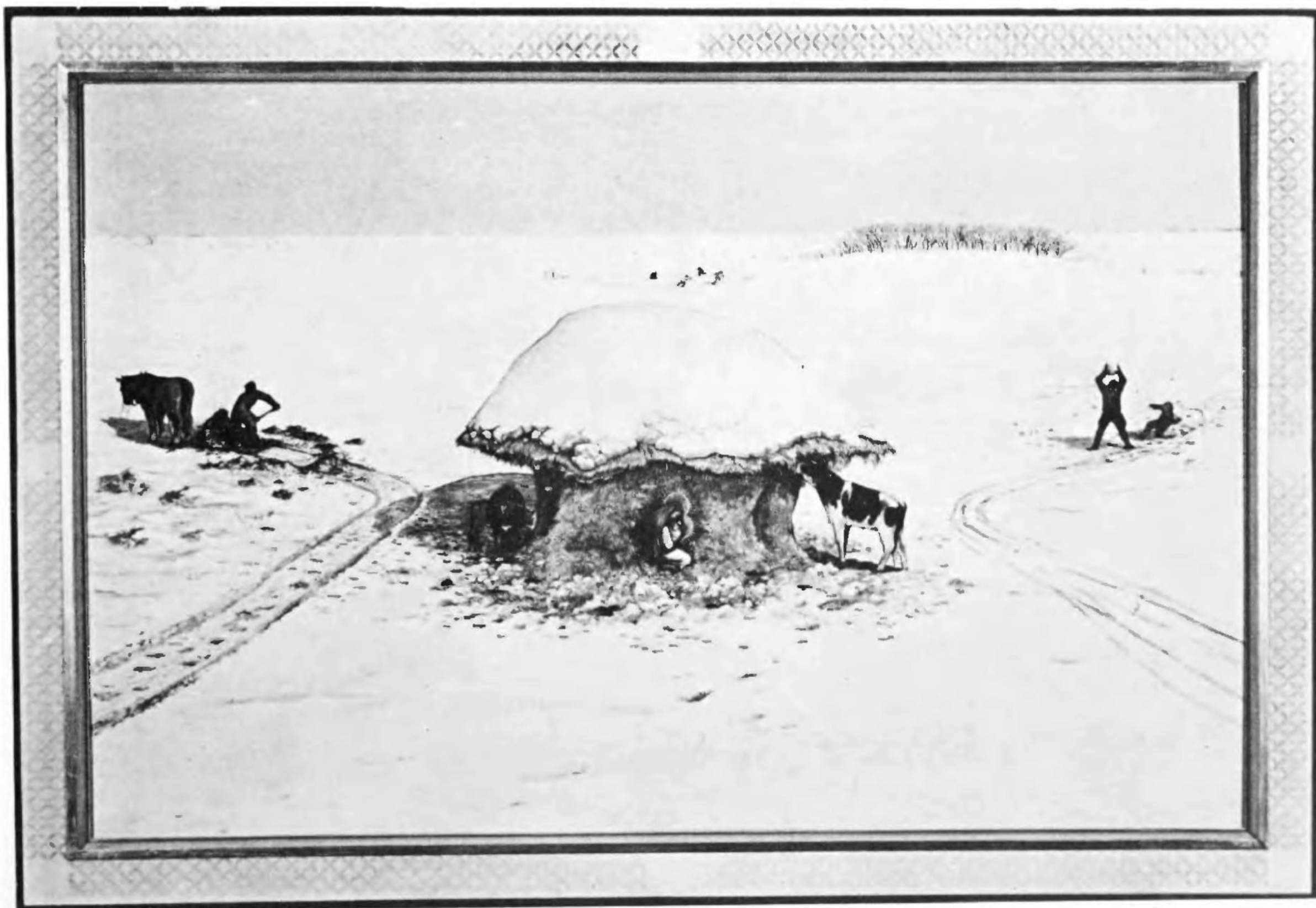
40 Depression Diet 1964

The winter following the drought and grasshopper plague was our hardest. As I remember it, the garden crop was poor too, and so all that winter, though we didn't actually go hungry, the supper diet unvaryingly consisted of small baked potatoes dipped in drippings from an old cow we had slaughtered. After a winter day of work and play in the snow, all wet clothing, especially foot and hand wear, was hung to dry around the old wood-burning stove which cast a cheerful glow while the hot kettle sang. Wood was pre-dried in the oven for better burning. A simple kerosene table lamp was our only source of light.



43 We Find All Kinds of Excuses 1964

This is essentially a modern day version of the Nativity, related in the Bible, when Christ had to be born in a stable "because there was no room for them in the inn." I'm afraid he wouldn't even find welcome in a warm stable among our "lower" classes today, for even workers and farmers are indifferent to the faith. To express this, I have placed "Our Lady and the Christ Child" in the bitterly cold Manitoba weather outside under one of those straw stacks, eaten away all around by cattle. The animals pay no attention, and they are not expected to. But man is around too, and yet he engrosses himself in his main outdoor activities, working, playing and fighting, and pays no attention to his God and Saviour.



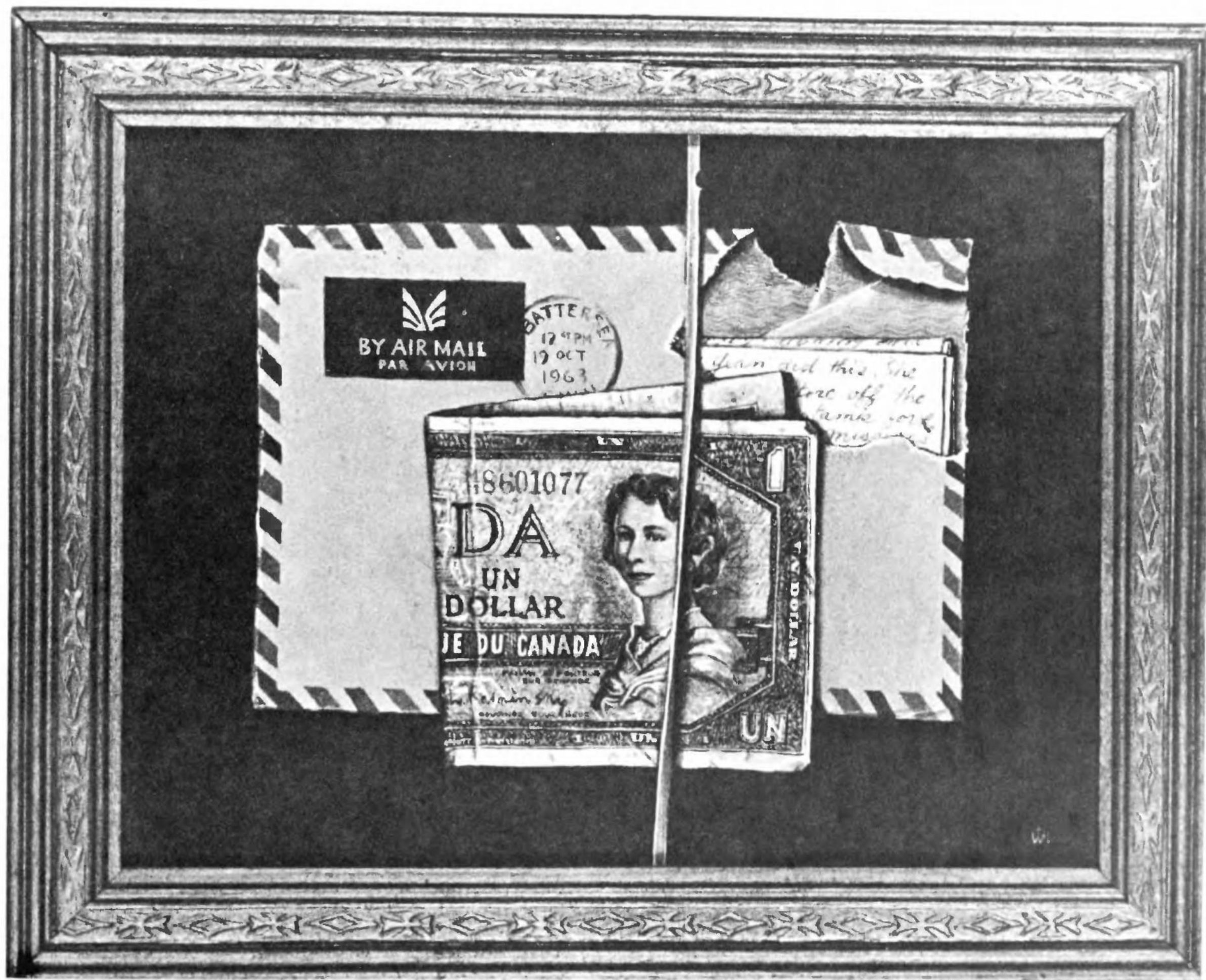


53 Slaughtering Pigs 1967

This is a Manitoba memory set beside our dairy barn. I recall most vividly pig slaughtering in winter although it was done at the other less busy seasons too. It was a family affair lasting a good part of the day. And a not always pleasant one as you can see me looking uneasily at my father scolding me; I was a dreamer and usually doing something or other wrong. Father killed the pig by sticking a butcher knife into its heart. (He knew exactly where — behind the front leg) — and that bled it (unbled meat is bad). And then came the second stage: burning off the pig hair. At first we used to burn it off with straw. Later we acquired a steam boiler and used it for that. While the flesh was still hot we all had to get busy and scrape off the hair stubble and scorched skin with knives. Difficult areas were the “arm pits”, in the ears, etc. Father heated up the hoofs extra hot with a blow torch and quickly twisted them off steaming. Then the whole pig was washed off with hot water you see waiting on the stone boat which then served as the “operating table.” I was always rather awed at the fearless way my father handled all those squishy innards. Nothing was wasted as the dogs and cats and chickens ate everything left over. Even the entrails were sometimes used for stuffing as sausages.

By the way can you spot the figure of Christ in the painting? Even when people are told He is there, they often can't. Likewise many people don't see Him today in their daily affairs.









Diary Notes

The old site of *The Barn* brought back a flood of memories — well perhaps not literally a flood — the volume was there, but it oozed in like a mass of sludge because it was so hard to believe this was really *it*! The life of the Kureleks was half lived in that old building so full of character with its crooked boards and square nails during our dairy farming years. It was just so when I visited the sites in the Holy Land of the major events in the life of Our Lord. It was hard to realize that these were really the actual sites where He has performed His miracles or died for us, or taught us. Those events and sites were infinitely more momentous and important than those of my life but because God had arranged my life so that my experiences would one day be recorded, some one barn in the west would have to be the one — and *this* was *it*!

On that pavement near the side door I had trundled straw for bedding for the cattle and carried pails of steaming fresh milk. . . . On those worn planks still there on the floor the horses had stood munching their oats, pounding with their hind feet once in a while in summer to shake off the obnoxious flies. Over in that corner had stood the chop bin. And in the other corner, partly submerged in the earth still stood that pinkish granite boulder that we children knew as “The Stone by the Barn”. Moving from the barn now I entered the old milk house still standing substantially the same because of its two-foot thick stone walls. Under the litter still stood that cement floor (broken at the edges by the weight of the stone walls sinking into the earth) which had been our natural barometer by beginning to sweat several days before a rain. The big steam boiler was gone — had we sold it at the auction sale? — but the water cooling tank was still there. It had been a trick accomplishment to pump just the right amount of water into it so when the milk cans had been dropped in it wouldn’t quite spill over. The coarse plastered interior

walls were still as coarse looking as they had appeared after the big fire. On the night of the fire I can still see my father dragging out the chicken incubator as tongues of flame and sparks were breaking through the ceiling here and there.

Michael drove me to *The Farm*, my “spiritual” home, aesthetically speaking. This was the first time I’d visited the farm since old man Unuk left it to his sons. . . . We drove in by “Memory Lane”. I call it that because that eighth mile gravelled road through the poplar bush from the highway to the house which stood smack in the middle of the end of it was crowded with a thousand memories of childhood. Down this lane we often went to school, to visit neighbors, to town, to pick berries, to leave home for a long time, and to return. With its crooked steel gate still there after all these years.

Well I recall that grey day that I rebelled, and left home for the first time to go to work in the lumber camp. I simply had to go if I was to mature, and learn to cope with the world, and find myself. And yet as mother stood weeping on the steps with baby Paul in her arms and dad drove me in the car up that lane, a stab of remorse went through my heart like a knife, as if I’d done a dastardly unforgivable thing. But a few hours later as I boarded the train for the Ontario bush camp all by myself the sense of exhilaration at freedom at last, and the relief after months of mental turmoil was equally intoxicating.

In later years my family and I moved east to the Niagara peninsula and I crossed the Atlantic to England where I entered psychiatric hospital to struggle even more painfully with internal difficulties. Yet home was not Vinemount, Ontario in my heart or my dreams, but that same palatial timber house at the end of that lane near Stonewall, Manitoba.

This has been a rather disappointing trip diary wise because the setup I expected to come to at Mr—'s didn't materialize. The studio separate from the house was unheated in winter so I had to muck in with the family in an upstairs bedroom and they wanted and expected me to socialize. It is not only a painting they want of each artist in return for lodgings, but the person of the artist himself with whom they'd exchange ideas, even experience to make up for a certain amount of cultural barrenness of living in a small city. I must say I am rather glad it turned out this way for once. Next time I'll make sure to go painting in the car in summer or in winter to get a private hotel room in some city from somebody in exchange for a painting. (Hey — that's an idea. I might even write to hotel managers!)

From DIARY OF A PAINTING TRIP

MANITOBA

July 17, 1967

I don't quarrel with the right of other artists to dedicate themselves to the search for pure artistic expression; I myself couldn't honestly do the same. This is because our age is one of deep moral crisis, and following on that — great physical danger. All of us who are merely exploring or enjoying the good things of this life are like children playing in a burning house. . . .

If one looks at man individually — and it is still so many individuals that make up mankind — morality, I feel, is seriously deteriorating. One of the symptoms peculiar to today's moral decay is confusion. In their writings following the Industrial Revolution, scientists, psychologists, anthropologists, philosophers, and economists have tended to shift about and to blur the old boundaries of good and evil, right and wrong. Modern man is thus made unsure about where to take a stand and so he throws up his hands, and inevitably takes the line of least resistance. . . .

To me, the Christian and Jewish teaching of original sin — that man is somehow fallen and twisted out of shape — rings true as true can be in the real life I see around me. And so I am convinced that only when man accepts this fact will he be able to make any genuine progress back to his original bright promise. . . . But I have no illusions about inspiring any mass movement to repentance. As an artist I have a particular vision of what will happen because of the things men are doing and becoming, and feel compelled to express it graphically in desperate hope that somewhere, sometime, someone may be moved to think again.

From the Exhibition THE BURNING BARN — *Hart House, University of Toronto, 1969.*

Catalogue

- 1 **Desk Top**
Wood done at the age of 12
13" x 23"
Collection of the artist
- 2 **Early drawings and lithograph**
7 in one frame 1947 — 1951
30" x 48"
Lent by the Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 3 **Depression in Toronto**
Oil 1949
24" x 20"
Collection of the artist
- 4 **Portrait of the artist as a young man**
Oil 1950
34" x 31"
Collection of Mr. H. Eckler, Toronto
- 5 **The Burning Barn**
Oil 1950
18½" x 23"
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. E. A. Sellers, Pickering
- 6 **Zhaporozian Cossacks**
Oil 1952
47" x 53"
Collection of Mr. Metro Kurelek, Vinemount
- 7 **My Sleeping Bag in Montreal**
Conté 1952
18" x 11"
Lent by the Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 8 **Lord that I may see**
Watercolour 1955
48" x 30"
Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Purchased 1963, the Saidye and Samuel Bronfman
Collection of Canadian Art
- 9 **Tomatoes and Eggs**
Watercolour 1955
19½" x 19½"
Collection of Mr. N. Olynyk, Port Credit

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| <p>10 Still life with Apple and Embroidery
Watercolour 1956
13" x 20"
Collection of Mr. John Kurelek, Brantford</p> <p>11 St. Matthew Passion
3 studies in one frame
Mixed media 1957 — 1963
22" x 20" (one of a series consisting of 160 paintings)
Collection of the artist</p> <p>12 Ukrainian Christmas Eve Supper
Watercolour 1955
23" x 29"
Collection of Mr. Metro Kurelek, Vinemount</p> <p>13 Behold Man without God
Watercolour 1955
43" x 28"
Collection of Mr. Paul Arthur, Toronto</p> <p>14 The Artist's Room
Pencil and tempera 1960
17" x 23"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Draper, Willowdale</p> <p>15 Russian Thistles Migrating
Oil 1961
26" x 16"
Collection of Mr. D. C. Matthews, Toronto</p> <p>16 Home on the Range
Oil 1961
6' x 4'
Collection of Dr. E. W. Gauk, Edmonton</p> <p>17 Hail Storm in Alberta
Oil on composition board 1961
27¼" x 19"
Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York
Gift of the Women's Committee of the Art Gallery
of Toronto, 1961</p> <p>18 Sunday Dinner Call in the Bush
Oil 1961
18" x 48"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. James G. Eayrs, Toronto</p> | <p>19 Christian Chastity
Oil 1962
28" x 27"
Collection of Sir George Williams University, Montreal</p> <p>20 Who is she that cometh forth as the morning riseth
Oil on gilded panel 1962
14½" x 27¾"
Collection of Prof. and Mrs. Paul Fox, Toronto</p> <p>21 The Rock
Oil 1962
48" x 48"
Collection of the University of St. Michael's College,
Toronto</p> <p>22 Agony in the Garden
Oil 1962
32" x 42"
Collection of Dr. N. Ostafichuk, Oshawa</p> <p>23 Dogs or People
Oil 1962
24" x 48"
Collection of Mrs. M. Martin, Baltimore</p> <p>24 Green Sunday
Oil 1962
22½" x 25"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Draper, Willowdale</p> <p>25 The Honeymoon
Oil 1963
18" x 12"
Collection of Mira Godard, Montreal</p> <p>26 The Auction Sale
Watercolour 1963
20" x 22"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Drache, Winnipeg</p> <p>27 Dairy Farming in Manitoba
Oil 1963
24" x 48"
Collection of the Rt. Hon. and Mrs. Lester B. Pearson,
Ottawa</p> |
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| <p>28 Dinnertime on the Prairies
Oil 1963
28½" x 17¾"
Collection of McMaster University, Wentworth House
Art Committee, Hamilton</p> <p>29 Ukrainian Orthodox Easter Vigil
Oil 1963
40" x 24"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Stefura, Sudbury</p> <p>30 The Atheist
Oil 1963
23½" x 48"
Collection of Dr. W. Ellis, Elora</p> <p>31 Manitoba Farm Series #2
Watercolour 1963
10" x 13"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. H. Klamer, Toronto</p> <p>32 Manitoba Farm Series #7
Watercolour 1963
8½" x 14"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. H. Klamer, Toronto</p> <p>33 Springtime at Sudbury
Watercolour 1964
20" x 30"
Collection of Dr. B. S. Zaputovich, Toronto</p> <p>34 In Search of the True God #5
Watercolour 1964
18½" x 17½"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Avrom Isaacs, Toronto</p> <p>35 Lest We Repent
Oil 1964
27" x 21"
Collection of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre,
Queen's University, Kingston</p> <p>36 Hauling Grain in Winter
Oil 1964
24" x 38"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Gurston Rosenfeld, Toronto</p> | <p>37 When the Bomb fell on Hamilton
Oil 1963-69
22½" x 48"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto</p> <p>38 Unloading Hay in Cowbarn Loft
Oil 1964
24" x 28"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Moore, London</p> <p>39 Plowing in the 30's
Oil 1964
24" x 16"
Collection of C. G. R. Dyer, Toronto</p> <p>40 Depression Diet
Watercolour 1964
24" x 36"
Collection of General Distributors, Winnipeg</p> <p>41 In the Autumn of Life
Oil 1964
24" x 48"
Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto</p> <p>42 St John the Baptist on my Father's Farm
Oil 1965
18½" x 15"
Collection of Mr. B. Cirka, Toronto.</p> <p>43 We Find All Kinds of Excuses
Oil 1964
47" x 72"
Collection of Mrs. Marshall Cohen, Toronto</p> <p>44 Fresh Start in Southern Ontario
Oil 1964
27" x 33"
Collection of Dr. E. A. Sellers, Pickering</p> <p>45 Coniston Clothesline
Oil 1966
18" x 18"
Collection of Prof. George Wallace, Hamilton</p> |
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- 46 **Pool of Sorrows**
Oil 1966
25¾" x 31¾"
Collection of The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg
- 47 **A First Meeting of the Ukrainian Women's Association in Saskatchewan**
Oil 1966
24½" x 31"
Collection of the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada, National Executive, Toronto
- 48 **Farmer's Wife Feeding her Baby in a Hayfield**
Oil 1966
18" x 30"
Collection of Dr. B. S. Zaputovich, Toronto
- 49 **Mama**
Oil 1966
14 ovals 10" x 8"
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. H. F. Zerweck, Grosse Pointe, Mich.
- 50 **Dogs Barking at Artist in Alberta**
Oil 1966
24" x 20"
Collection of Dr. G. Baldwin, Edmonton
- 51 **Uncle George's Grainery**
Oil 1966
12" x 16"
Collection of Mr. Lech Mokrzychi, Toronto
- 52 **The Devil's Wedding**
Oil 1967
53" x 48"
Collection of James Richardson and Sons, Winnipeg
- 53 **Slaughtering Pigs**
Oil 1967
24" x 36"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Cadsby, Toronto
- 54 **Mendelson in the Canadian Winter**
Oil 1967
42" x 32"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. D. Pimm, Edmonton
- 55 **Our World Today**
Oil 1968
48" x 70"
Collection of The Canada Council, Ottawa
- 56 **Evening Hymn Song at Madonna House, Combermere, Ont.**
Oil 1968
30" x 40"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. M. Yolles, Toronto
- 57 **Cross Section of the Vinnitsia in the Ukraine, 1939**
Oil 1968
23" x 30"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 58 **Unwanted Citizen in the Just Society**
Oil and Collage 1968
24" x 27"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 59 **Trompe l'oeil**
Watercolour 1964
5" x 9"
Collection of Mr. Metro Kurelek, Vinemount
- 60 **Pacem in Terris I**
Calligraphy
Gesso on board 1969
7" x 40"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 61 **Pacem in Terris II**
Calligraphy
Ink on linen 1969
17" x 18"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 62 **Deformed Destitute of India**
(Pacem in Terris)
Ink and watercolour 1969
19" x 25"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 63 **Nepali Mother before Father Abraham's Bus-Tee**
(Pacem in Terris)
Ink and watercolour 1969
25" x 19"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto

- 64 **Where do you go when you are old?**
(Pacem in Terris)
Pencil and ink 1969
19" x 25"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 65 **I knew how the clouds arise**
(Nature Poor Step Dame Series)
Mixed media 1969
48" x 48"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 66 **Remains of our Old Barn**
(Minnedosa Trip)
Mixed media 1970
16" x 26"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 67 **Winter's Last Fling**
(Minnedosa Trip)
Mixed media 1970
25" x 8"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 68 **Our Old Place in Manitoba Today**
(Minnedosa Trip)
Mixed media 1970
12" x 26½"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 69 **Melting Snow**
(Minnedosa Trip)
Mixed media 1970
17" x 12"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 70 **A House just like we had**
(Minnedosa Trip)
Mixed media 1970
25" x 8"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 71 **Two Grainers Far Apart**
(Minnedosa Trip)
Mixed media 1970
4¾" x 19½"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 72 **What dogs have joined together let man put asunder**
Mixed media 1970
12" x 16"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 73 **The Place of Christmas Pilgrimage — a Liquor Store**
(Pacem in Terris)
Mixed media 1970
8" x 27"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 74 **Glimmering Tapers 'round the Day's Dead Sanctities**
(from The Hound of Heaven)
Mixed media 1970
4" x 8"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 75 **Drop yon Blue-Veil of Sky**
(from The Hound of Heaven)
Mixed media 1970
4" x 8"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 76 **Float thy Vague Veil about me**
(from The Hound of Heaven)
Mixed media 1970
4' x 4'
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 77 **View of the Dnieper River from Shevchenko Memorial**
(Ukraine)
Oil 1970
13" x 10"
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 78 **Within the Little Children's Eyes Seems Something**
(from The Hound of Heaven)
Mixed media 1970
4' x 8'
Lent by The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto
- 79 **Self-Portrait**
Oil 1957
18¾" x 15"
Collection of the artist

