

## WILLIAM LEROY “ROY” STEVENSON

### EXHIBITION HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

compiled by Chris Varley and Nancy Townshend

“I believe he [William Leroy Stevenson] was one of Canada’s greatest artists, especially as a landscape painter.”

Maxwell Bates in a letter dated February 19, 1976 to Terry Fenton, Art Gallery of Alberta Archives.

“We were of enormous help to each other; of that I am sure.”

Maxwell Bates, “The Painter WLS: a Memoir, 2” Maxwell Bates *fonds*, 439/89.1, Box/file 10.2, Special Collections, Taylor Family Digital Library, University of Calgary.

Illingworth Kerr; “Maxwell Bates, Dramatist”, *Canadian Art*, Vol. XIII, No. 4, Summer 1956:

“After high school he [Bates] became associated with his father in architecture, though his real passion was for painting. The idea of nationalism in Canadian art did not affect him. Self-taught, except for two years in evening classes, he became influenced by Gauguin, van Gogh and Cézanne. When his work was shown in Calgary in 1928 it shocked the local artists, public and press. Though he exhibited in Vancouver, Ottawa and New York, the home town remained unimpressed.”

His chief sustaining force was a fellow painter, Roy Stevenson, with whom Bates made a stimulating visit to the Chicago Art Institute.”

#### **1905**

May 25 - born in Guelph, Ontario

Born with infantile paralysis: had a lame club foot.

“Parents did not give him any encouragement to paint. Nonetheless he thought only about art.”

Gerry Stevenson (brother of Roy) in an interview with Nancy Townshend, October 31, 1988, as quoted by Nancy Townshend, *A History of Art in Alberta 1905 – 1970* (Calgary: Bayeux Arts, 2005) 2.

### **1910**

Arrived in Calgary with his parents.

Attended Cottage School (Grades 1 and 2) from 1912-14, Earl Grey School (Grade 3 to 8) from 1915-20, and South Calgary High School from 1920-22 of the Calgary Public Board.

Gerry Stevenson interview with Nancy Townshend, October 31, 1988.

### **1924 – 1925**

worked for the Royal Bank in Clive, Alberta.

Gerry Stevenson interview with Nancy Townshend, October 31, 1988.

### **about 1925-26**

Harry Hunt, the Calgary Art Club's secretary, introduced Maxwell Bates to Stevenson while they were examining some sixty books on art that librarian Alexander Calhoun had secured for the Calgary Public Library.

Maxwell Bates, "The Painter WLS: a Memoir, 1, 2" Maxwell Bates *fonds*, 439/89.1, Box/file 10.2, Special Collections, Taylor Family Digital Library, University of Calgary.

"It was my habit, in about 1925-26 to walk the four blocks to the public library on one or two evenings a week...A man introduced me to...William Leroy Stevenson, who was to be a good friend until his death in 1966."

Maxwell Bates, "The Painter WLS: a Memoir," 1, 2.

Maxwell Bates as quoted by P.K. Page, "The Self-Contained Castle,"

*Border Crossings*, 7 (October 1988) 78:

"That period in Calgary when I used to meet Stevenson [1925 – 1931] was a very important time in my life because I was developing my ideas on art and literature."

### **1926**

bank clerk and bookkeeper, Alberta Wheat Pool, 1926-1938

joins Calgary Art Club

ref.:

[http://www.archivescanada.ca/english/search/RouteRqst.asp?sessionKey=1232498170034\\_206\\_191\\_35\\_35](http://www.archivescanada.ca/english/search/RouteRqst.asp?sessionKey=1232498170034_206_191_35_35)

“Stevenson, until this period [to 1926/27], had worked mostly in watercolour, but now began to use oil colours.”

Maxwell Bates, “Biography: W. L. Stevenson”, in a letter dated February 19, 1976 to Terry Fenton, Art Gallery of Alberta Archives.

“Stevenson did considerable reading, in particular such authors as Balzac and Dumas, and the King James version of the Bible which he read throughout his life.”

Maxwell Bates, “Biography: W. L. Stevenson”, in a letter dated February 19, 1976 to Terry Fenton, Art Gallery of Alberta Archives.

“WLS: religious outlook – interest and respect for the Bible.”

Maxwell Bates, Maxwell Bates *fonds*.

### **1926-27**

"Exhibition. and estate sale of Roy Stevenson's works", *Calgary Albertan*, Oct. 16, 1976:

“He, along with his friend Maxwell Bates, studied art in the first class at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in 1926-27, and briefly at the Chicago Art Institute [Art Institute of Chicago].”

### **1926-27 and 1927-28**

takes drawing class two evenings per week at Provincial Institute of Technology and Art [Calgary] with Lars Haukaness. Figure drawing of plaster casts of Greek sculptures including *Venus of Milo*, and *Moses* by Michelangelo. “These two years comprised the only formal training Roy Stevenson was to have. For the most part both of us were self-taught....”

Maxwell Bates, "The Painter WLS: a Memoir," 6.

## 1927

Exhibits at the Opportunity Gallery in New York City.

This was a group exhibition "juried by Georgia O'Keefe, Rockwell Kent, Robert Henri, John Sloan and others" ref: AGGV archives.

[Bates exhibited at the Opportunity Gallery in 1930. See Bates, selected exhibitions, VAG 1973]

## 1928

Mrs. Roland Winter, "Paintings at Exhibit Show Vitality and Originality", *Calgary Herald*, May 4, 1928

"An interesting exhibit of pictures, the work of members of the Calgary Art Club is on view in the south room of the public library and is well worth seeing. The largest number are water colours; there are a few oils and pastels...." "Tropical Scenes" by W. L. Stevenson offer a welcome contrast to Calgary shows...."

**RCA 1928** (as W.S. Stevenson)

[invitation reads: W.L. Stevenson]

Art Gallery of Toronto, November 29 -

address: 117 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. E., Calgary

145. **Afternoon**, w.c., \$50

white sheets on a clothesline

**Calgary Art Club**, winter 1928

four oil paintings

"Both Calgary newspapers printed letters to the Editor which recommended that I be confined to an asylum.

Stevenson's paintings were less extreme, but annoyed many people; some of whom made some effort to prevent us exhibiting again in Calgary, and certainly not in a public building. Really, it was good to have reached these people, but we did not appreciate this at the time."

Maxwell Bates, “The Painter WLS: a Memoir,” 7, as quoted by Nancy Townshend, *A History of Art in Alberta 1905 – 1970* (Calgary: Bayeux Arts, 2005) 4.

“They [Stevenson and Bates] were...the two most advanced painters in Western Canada at that period. They could be called expressionist painters, perhaps, more exactly, Fauvist painters.”

Maxwell Bates, “Biography: W. L. Stevenson”, 1976, AGA Archives.

“About this time [1928] Stevenson exhibited in an international exhibition of watercolour, and was represented in a show at the Opportunity Gallery in New York City.”

Maxwell Bates, “Biography: W. L. Stevenson”, 1976, AGA Archives.

## **1929**

### **OSA 1929**

221. **Autumn**, oil, \$100

Spent a week with Maxwell Bates in Vancouver. “We found books on modern art in the Vancouver Public Library which we had never seen, and we both read Clive Bell’s *Since Cezanne*. This book delighted both of us.”

Then to Victoria. “We liked Victoria, and sketched every day in Beacon Hill Park. The Public Art Gallery yielded some new finds, particularly about Henri Rousseau and Gauguin. We did not go to see Emily Carr. I don’t believe the idea ever came up. Sketching in Beacon Hill Park, mostly in watercolour, we developed compositions using rhythmic repetition of shapes. We talked and argued about theories at all times. Rhythm was of immense importance to us.”

Maxwell Bates, “The Painter WLS: a Memoir,” 7.

Then for three weeks, to Chicago at the Art Institute of Chicago seeing especially the Helen Birch-Bartlett Collection [Van Gogh’s *Madame Roulin* 1889, Gauguin, Seurat, Cezanne, Matisse, Lautrec’s *At The Moulin Rouge* 1892/95, Picasso’s *Old Guitarist* 1903 and Segonzac’s *Still Life*]. “To see at first hand some of the better examples of the great moderns, left an intense impression on me.”

Stevenson as quoted by Rosemary Wood, “Local paintings to be Exhibited in Montreal,” *The Calgary Herald*, 2 February, 1957, 12.

“This [Chicago trip] was one of the most profoundly influential events in Stevenson’s life, followed by a lifelong admiration for Cezanne.”

Maxwell Bates, “Biography: W. L. Stevenson”, 1976, AGA Archives.

WLS was greatly impressed by a still-life, oil on panel [1926.194] by Andre Dunoyer de Segonzac (1884 – 1974) at the Art Institute of Chicago.

“Roy bought a Segonzac at an auction in the mid-1950s.”

John Snow cited Segonzac in an interview on November 1, 1988 with Nancy Townshend, Nancy Townshend archives.

“Roy’s hero was Segonzac”

Wes Irwin, in an interview with Janet Mitchell, Marion and Jim Nicoll, June 21, 1972, Glenbow Archives.

## 1930

Annora Brown, “Local Art Exhibit Shows Higher Standard of Work”, *Albertan*, April 29, 1930:

“...Of very great interest is the extreme modern note represented in the work of A. [Anthony] Tyrrel-John, W. L. Stevenson and Maxwell Bates.”  
[show at the Calgary Museum]

## 1931

Maxwell Bates moves to London, England. Left Calgary on a cattle train on June 4, 1931.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibit of Canadian Art, NGC 1931**

252, **Autumn**. oil, [described as 16”x 21” from another source]

117 14 Ave. W., Calgary

[Harry Hunt, secretary for the Calgary Art Club, wrote out the Temporary Entry Form for W. Roy Stevenson (and Bates, Bird, Dichmont, Harvey, Petrie and McKay = Marion Nicoll) stating that the oil **Autumn**, oil, 16” x 21” had been exhibited in an OSA show, NGC Archives, 5.5-A, Annual Exhibition of Canadian Art 1931, Entry Forms. Official form is typed out.]

March 21, 1931 A. C. Leighton secured a charter from the Alberta government for the inaugural Alberta Society of Artists and excludes W. L. Stevenson and Maxwell Bates from its membership.

Harry Hunt in a letter dated 23 July 1931 to Harry McCurry, as quoted by Nancy Townshend, *A History of Art in Alberta*, 13:

“...all you have is a Society started by Leighton (members and works chosen by him) and representing only his academic taste.

The most significant thing about this society is only those artists whose works suited Mr. Leighton’s taste have been chosen as associate members; all others have not been asked – have been completely ignored. These include Bates, Tyrrell-John, Stevenson, Miss Annora Brown, Miss Gwen Hutton, H.T. Christensen, myself and a number of others who have departed from the traditional English style.

Mr. Leighton...was also wild at the National Gallery for accepting Tyrell-John’s, Bates[‘s], Stevenson’s, Annora Brown’s and my paintings and turning down many of his choice[s]. He claims you know nothing down there and will not send his work again.”

## 1932

**Spring Exhibition**, AAM 1932

address: 117 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. E., Calgary

308. **Landscape with Figure**, watercolour, \$25

**Independent Alberta Artists Group**, Calgary, April and Edmonton Museum of Arts, September

F. H. Norbury, “Alberta Artists Create Fine Western Spirit”, *Edmonton Journal*, 2.9.32:

“W. L. Stevenson exhibits a body water-color of a homely garden in tender tones, quietly soothing, and a suggestive sketch of Chicago....”

**Alberta Artists' Collection**, Edmonton Museum of Arts, October  
**The Station**

F. H. Norbury, "Alberta Artists' Work on Tour of Province",  
*Edmonton Journal*, 21 October 1932:

Stevenson's The Station "succeeds in massing broad form and strong colour effectively."

NGC Information Form, pre-1946 move to Vancouver:  
 117- 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. East, Calgary

"Studied under Lars Haukaness at Calgary for a short time."

-claims to have exhibited with Manitoba Society of Artists  
 [NGC says not in 1929, 1933-40 or 1945-66 cats.]

**1933**

sketched locally with Miss M. MacKay (Marion Nicoll), H. Christenson and Harry Hunt.

**1934**

painted for eight days with Harry Hunt in the mountains

**1937**

his father died.

Gerry Stevenson, interview with Nancy Townshend, October 31, 1988.

**1938**

laid off by the Alberta Wheat Pool with other employees because of the drought

**1939**

Leaves Alberta Wheat Pool

Works as a book keeper for a short time at the CPR Banff Springs Hotel.

Geo Macfarlane, in a letter dated July 20, 1971 to Maxwell Bates, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, 14.2, Special Collections, Taylor Family Digital Library, U of C.



Then for CPR, Calgary until 1945

“He was unable to serve in the armed services because of severe lameness which he had endured since childhood.”

Maxwell Bates, “Biography: W.L. Stevenson.”

### **1946**

Maxwell Bates returns to Calgary

### **1946-53**

lives in Vancouver; works for “CPR as an accountant.”

Maxwell Bates, “Biography: W.L. Stevenson.”

address: 1121 West Pender St. (from label of verso of a ca. 1949 painting)

**Fifteenth Annual British Columbia Artists’ Exhibition**, September 21-  
October 13

114. **Still Life**, \$65

### **1947**

**16<sup>th</sup> Annual British Columbia Artists’ Exhibition**, September 20- October  
12, 1947

125. **Still Life**, \$50

J.W.G. Macdonald; “Heralding a New Group”, **Canadian Art**, Vol. V, No.  
1, Oct.- Nov. 1947:

“It is of importance to those who are interested in the art culture of the  
Dominion to hear of the formation of a new “Calgary Group” of painters  
which has now been formed....

Here are a number of painters who, having acquired a mastery of the  
rudiments of their art, react in diverse ways to the western environment  
common to all. In several of them the outlook is more cosmopolitan than  
regional. Three of them, at least, Maxwell Bates, W.L. Stevenson, and  
Clifford Robinson, may be called figure painters, although they also paint  
landscape....

Stevenson and Bates, somewhat older than the others, entered the modern movement as very young men in the last nineteen twenties. An unsympathetic environment caused Stevenson to develop his own ideas in isolation and Bates spent fifteen years in Europe- five years as a prisoner of war.

The first group exhibition will open at the Vancouver Art Gallery in November [note: January 20- February 15, 1948]. It will travel to Victoria and, in March or April it is planned to send it to eastern Canada”

repro.: **Still Life** (like an early Cézanne) (EAG 1995, p. 31, as **Still Life, Pears**, ca. 1947;  
**Still Life with Pears** in checklist, col.: F.J. Townley, Calgary)

Stevenson’s following quote was edited out of Macdonald’s article titled “A New Group...” in the *Canadian Art* article, though Macdonald included it in his original ms. to Kathleen Fenwick, July 22, 1947, NGC Archives, 4.21 – C, file 3:

“To me organization is the only single quality that a painting must have. The degree to which a picture departs from the imitation of nature is unimportant, but I prefer to retain the recognizability [sic] of the subject which, to me, has an emotional value. I look on a painting as a universal language of form and colour, and have seldom interested myself in its regional possibilities.”

W. L. Stevenson as quoted by Nancy Townshend, *A History of Art in Alberta 1905 – 1970* (Calgary: Bayeux Arts, 2005) 85.

November 18, 1947

VAG committee approves a solo exhibition in spring 1948; Stevenson paid \$5 rental fee for the space [discounted from \$10]

## 1948

**Exhibition of Paintings by the Calgary Group**, VAG, Jan. 20- Feb. 15  
- also included Cliff Robinson, Vivian Lindoe, Janet Mitchell, Marion Nicoll, Maxwell Bates, Wesley Irwin, L. O. Lindoe, H.B. Hill & Dorothy Willis

[according to Jock Macdonald, it then went to Victoria; made stops at London in December 1948 (London has an invitation to the preview on

November 18, and includes the exhibition in its annual report) and AGW in 1949 (see below) with minor changes]

Nancy Townshend, *A History of Art in Alberta 1905 – 1970* (Calgary: Bayeux Arts, 2005) 82:

“The VAG show organized by Maxwell Bates\* consisted of 53 oil paintings and attracted 10, 544 people. A smaller exhibition of 39 works toured nationally to UBC, Victoria, Calgary (Coste House), Saskatoon (the Saskatchewan Art Centre), London (Ontario), and Windsor (the Willistead Gallery) in March 1949.”

\* See endnote #14.

45. **Woman and Still Life**, \$50 [possibly **Still Life with Face**\*

46. **Flowers**, \$50\*

47. **Oranges and Pears**, \$75

48. **Mother and Daughter**, \$100

49. **Sunflowers**, \$75

\* not hung, according to handwritten note on VAG checklist

Mildred Valley Thornton, “Prairie Paintings Show Exuberance”, *Vancouver Sun*, January 23, 1948:

“W. L. Stevenson has a painting called Mother and Child in broad, simple spacing and flat color.”

I.H.K. [Illingworth Kerr], “‘Exciting Exhibition’ Now At Coste House”, *The Calgary Herald*, June 5, 1948:

“Undoubtedly the most challenging and exciting exhibition of paintings ever displayed by Western Canadian painters opened Sunday at Coste House....While these pictures received considerable acclaim when shown at the Vancouver Art Gallery and at the University of British Columbia....R. L. Stevenson is least extreme, a solid painter in the post-impressionist manner. “Flowers” and “Sunflowers” are both strong and satisfying. “Woman and Still Life”, though small, is masterly and reminiscent of Derain.”

J. S., “The Calgary Group at the Art Centre,” *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, September 11, 1948, pages 3, 6.

“Ten artists are represented with 39 pictures in the current exhibit of the Calgary Group at the Saskatoon Art Centre. The show...is, without question, one in which originality is combined with competence to provide an exhibition of genuine merit...The show is on a high level of creation generally and contains individual pictures of exceptional quality...There is vitality and excitement in this highly experimental exhibit.”

-, “Paint Life On Prairie With Skill”, *Hamilton Spectator*, undated  
[nothing re: WLS nor quotable]

**Exhibition by W.L. Stevenson**, VAG, April 20- May 9, 1948

address: 1121 West Pender St., no. telephone no.

all paintings \$35

1. **Landscape**
2. **Bouquet**
3. **Flowers**
4. **Pears**
5. **The Path**
6. **Buildings & Tree**
7. **Pommegranate** [sic]
8. **Little Girl**
9. **Autumn Flowers**
10. **The Bowl**
11. **On West Hastings**
12. **Still Life**
13. **Still Life with Cups**
14. **Bowl with Oranges**
15. **My Dresser**
16. **Boats**
17. **Lucille**
18. **Bouquet**
19. **Dead Trees**
20. **Flowers**
21. **The Window**
22. **China Vase**

M.B. [Maxwell Bates] “22 Oils on View at Coste House: W.L. Stevenson Works Showing Until June 30”, *Calgary Herald*, Calgary, June 11, 1948:

“Twenty-two oils by W. L. Stevenson, who painted in Calgary for many years prior to 1946, will be on view at the Coste House until June 30<sup>th</sup>. This collection has been shown recently at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Mr. Stevenson is a mature artist, who has thoroughly assimilated post-impressionism, and now emerges as a very individual painter. His work is original without being extreme, and it is evident that he must eventually be recognized as one of Canada’s leading painters.

He was a pioneer of modern painting in the West, and at twenty years of age, had exhibited with the R.C.A. and the O.S.A., and at the National Gallery.

“Little Girl,” a palpably solid painting, has a fresh quality of spring that greatly enhances the youthful subject. Of the landscapes it is hard to decide whether the finest is “The Path”, or “Landscape” with its rhythmic use of parallels. Flowers are a favorite subject. The artist himself says he paints bouquets rather than flowers, and it is the inter-related mass that he sees. The fine, rich color and verve of “China Vase” is a good example.

Characteristic of the painter’s vision is the glinting light in “Flowers No. 2”. There are not large, flat planes but gleaming or flickering light strikes objects here and there. All these pictures go beyond mere surface pattern. The artist draws spontaneously with the brush and is never satisfied to fill in flat patches of color.

Color is fine throughout and at times achieves great subtlety. Some of these pictures, Nos. 2, 13, 8 and 1, for instance, have that rarest of artistic qualities, a sense of style, style being a distinguished combination of strength and elegance with complete mastery of the technical means.”

**17<sup>th</sup> Annual British Columbia Artists’ Exhibition**, September 18- October 10

136. **Head and Flowers**, \$50

137. **Asters**, \$35

November 18, 8:30 p.m.- Calgary Group ex. preview in London- J.W.G. Macdonald the guest speaker  
(invitation in Museum London Archives)  
according to London Annual Report the ex. ran through December

**1949**

**Exhibition of Paintings by the Calgary Group**, Art Gallery of Windsor [Willistead Art Gallery], March 7- April 6, 1949

Cliff Robinson, Vivian Lindoe, Janet Mitchell, Marion Nicoll, Maxwell Bates, H.B. Hill, L. O. Lindoe, W.L. Stevenson, Dorothy Willis, Wesley Irwin

34. **Woman and Still Life**, \$50 [possibly **Still Life with Face**- see jpg]

35. **Flowers**, \$50

36. **Mother and Daughter**, \$100

37. **Sunflowers**, \$75

David Mawr, "Exhibits at Willistead", *Windsor Daily Star*, March 19, 1949  
 "Three exhibitions are featured at Willistead Gallery during March....The largest of these is a collection of paintings by 10 young Calgary artists which...includes several extremely worthwhile works...W. L. Stevenson's FLOWERS and his Picasso-like MOTHER AND DAUGHTER...."

**18<sup>th</sup> Annual British Columbia Artists' Exhibition**, October 8- 30

113. **Watercolour**, \$35

**1950**

**B.C. Artists 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition**, November 28- December 17

78. **Beer Hall**, \$75

**1951**

**4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Group Show**, VAG , Nov. 6- 25, with Harold Paxton, Gordon Kit Thorne and Harold Faulkner Smith

**Still Life**, \$50

**Toper**, \$45

**Café**, \$75

**Self-Portrait**, N.F.S.

**Woman**, \$550

**Night Life**, \$50

**Two**, \$50

**Sundae Dish**, \$75 [Glenbow Museum? Glenbow's painting is on masonite.

**Still Life With Toby Dish**, \$90

**Night Club**, \$50

Palette, "In the Realm of Art: B.C. Artists Exhibit at Gallery [VAG press clipping]":

“Oil paintings by Mr. Stevenson art also rather sombre in tonal effect but impressive. Out of his obscurity come brilliant flashes of color, as in his two still-life compositions, or in the more numerous canvases dealing with people. It is a pleasure to see a group of pictures by this artist who has frequently shown in Gallery displays as elsewhere in Canada.”

Mildred Valley Thornton, “Paintings by Local Artists”, *Vancouver Sun*, November 16 (?) [VAG press clipping]:

“W.L. Stevenson’s work has many promising features, but he has not yet developed his finest capacities. Best efforts in his collection are two studies of café interiors which show lively imagination and good organization. Paintings by Mr. Stevenson have been shown at many exhibitions in Canada.”

## 1952

**B.C. Artists 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Exhibition**, October 21- November 16

83. **Woman**, \$100

84. **Bouquet**, \$60

## 1953

**B.C. Artists 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Exhibition**, September 15 - October 4

57. **Bouquet on a Chair**, \$100

58. **Little Boy**, \$60

October 22, 1953, letter to Woman’s Auxiliary, VAG

-home address: 786 Bute St.

“I am a self trained painter, have exhibited regularly in the Vancouver Art Gallery for the past few years. Have exhibited in the East in the Canadian Royal Academy, OSA, Montreal Art Association & the National Gallery.

My duplicate entry forms are enclosed.”

[no evidence that he exhibited]

“very homesick for Calgary”

Geo Macfarlane, in a letter dated July 20, 1971 to Maxwell Bates, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, 14.2, Special Collections, Taylor Family Digital Library, U of C.

**1954**

returns to Calgary; works for Allied Art Centre; lives in top floor room of mother's house, also his studio

“Former Calgary Artist Returns”, *The Calgary Herald*, August 27, 1954

“As soon as Coste House exhibition halls awake after the summer sleep in September the local gallery goers will see the oils by W.L. Stevenson, a Calgary artist, who has recently returned to the city after eight years spent in Vancouver.

The self-taught 47-year-old artist resumed his attic studio at 212 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. W., at his mother's home. It is filled with elegant still lifes [sic], dramatic figures and poetic landscapes in post-impressionist and expressionist style.

His works were several times admitted to important national exhibitions such as Royal Academy of Art shows and Ontario Society of Artists exhibitions. During his stay in Vancouver her had two one-man shows there.

Mr. Stevenson is an admirer of the modern French school and Cezanne, Picasso and Bracque [sic] are among his favorite masters. He believes that the purpose of contemporary painting is to grasp invisible qualities and ‘to intensify basic things of the scene.’

‘Although I realize that subject matter is completely irrelevant in painting, I still think that art will always retain some of the subject matter,’ he said.

One of his artistic ambitions is to be able to do sometime a large mural work. Not a commercial assignment but a painting where he ‘could let himself go.’

In spite of this desire he does not think modern painting is going away from pictures to be framed and hung on the wall.

‘Easel painting and rectangular form of pictures will always remain as the most satisfactory form of art of painting,’ he said. ‘One might be tempted to produce a large painting but the size is really unimportant. Many people tend to appreciate a painting according to its size rather than to its pictorial values but his is a wrong concept.’



The artist worked as an accountant in Vancouver. In Calgary he would like to earn his living by painting at least for a while. He will also teach painting at Coste House night classes.”

Joslin, p. 15, “[left] the employ of the CPR. Over the next twelve years he taught art classes for such organizations as the Allied Arts centre in Calgary, the University of Calgary Extension Department, and the University of Alberta Department of Extension in Edmonton...”

“Painting Well-Known Artist on Display”, **St. Paul Journal**, St. Paul, Alberta, May 6, 1965”:

“He taught painting for seven years at the Calgary Allied Arts Centre.”

John Snow met him after his return to Calgary, through Maxwell Bates (Snow/Joslin interview, Feb. 5, 1988, transcript courtesy Nancy Townshend):

“**I printed [Stevenson’s lithographs]** and showed him how to attack the stone. He had a **game leg**... so I did all the grinding, heavy work.... We used to go out and paint. **Most of his things were from nature.** He used to take a big panel of masonite, prop it down beside a rock and sit on a little canvas sort of stool he had and his game leg out and his box of paints and a big can with turps in it and one brush and... in a couple of hours he had quite a big [painting] done.... I went out with him once or twice - went out south by Okotoks... he was [a] very direct painter, very direct.”

**Oil paintings by W. L. Stevenson**, Calgary Allied Arts Centre, Coste House, September 12- 28, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 204

1. **Still Life with Toby Jug**, \$100
2. **Café**, \$75
3. **Bouquet on a Chair**, \$100
4. **Suburban Landscape**, \$55
5. **View from my Studio**, \$75
6. **Sundae Dish**, \$75
7. **Head**, \$60
8. **Little Girl**, \$60
9. **Woman in a Café**, \$150
10. **In the Georgia, Vancouver**, \$80
11. **Night Club**, \$55
12. **Still Life with Head**, \$60

13. **West of Calgary**, \$70
14. **Woman**, “kindly loaned by Maxwell Bates”
15. **Lane**, \$50
16. **Still Life**, \$55
17. **Barns and Bushes**, \$70
18. **Iris**, \$70
19. **Asters**, \$70
20. **Woman**, \$60

artist’s statement:

“I believe that each new painting should give the artist a new visual problem, not merely representational, but rather to make of any subject the motif or stimulus to bring into being a work of art whose quality lies in the interplay of tonal contrasts and the relationships of color and form, all brought together in a satisfying unity to give the painting its own unique character. The literal copy of a scene, or the exact likeness of the sitter and nothing more, is but a reproduction, a copy, which has nothing more than a documentary value.”

Dushan Bresky, “Unique Art Show Opens Season at Coste House”, *The Calgary Herald*, September 3, 1954.

“Paintings by Leroy Stevenson, Calgary expressionist...will cover the rest....”

“Still Life Paintings To Be Shown”, *The Calgary Herald*, September 3, 1954.

“Variety of balanced still life is the best one can find among the 20 honest works at W.L. Stevenson’s one-man show which will officially open Sunday at Coste House.

...The most significant in his still life series seems to be “Still Life with Head”, a small study, just radiating luminous warmth: his poetic “Still Life”...dramatizes the attractive classical simplicity of a dark jug with a few lighter contrasting flowers on a checkered table cloth.

His portrait of a mediating “Woman In a Café” in brown and blue is perhaps a symbol of resignation....

“Barns and Bushes” and “West of Calgary”, two landscape simplifications, convey the heavy pulse of rural scenery rather than its objective likeness....”

## 1955

**Spring Exhibition**, MMFA 1955

address: 212 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. W., Calgary

75, **Landscape with old house**, \$150

**Jubilee Exhibition of Alberta Paintings**, Coste House, Calgary Allied Arts Centre, [City of Calgary, Civic Jubilee Committee]

June 19 - Sept. 18, 1955

described as “Art instructor at Coste House”

100, **Landscape with old house**, oil, \$150

101, **Still life and woman**, lithograph, \$12

102, **Autumn**, 1931 (loaned by artist), oil

103, **Washday**, 1929 (loaned by artist), w.c.

Maxwell Bates; “Some Reflections on Art in Alberta”, *Canadian Art*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, Autumn 1955:

“In the nineteen twenties, when the environment was extremely unsympathetic to the innovating artists, W.L. Stevenson began to paint figures and odd bits of townscape with the freedom won by the modern movement; his inspiration stemmed from modern French painting he had seen in the Art Institute of Chicago and not at all from the Group of Seven. A painter of light, as it sparkles and flashes in trees, groups of buildings and tavern interiors, Stevenson’s brushwork, evocative and suggestive, contemporary and individual, is rare anywhere and especially in Canada.”

repro.: **Sundae Dish**

**The First Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Painting**, NGC 1955

51, **Bouquet on Chair**, oil on board, 24”x 18”, signed l.l.: W.L. Stevenson [previously exhibited: B.C. Artists 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Exhibition, September 15-October 4, 1953]

“5 City Artists In National Show”, *The Calgary Herald*, undated

“Five Calgary artists are represented in the National Gallery biennial show which opened this week in Ottawa, The Herald learned today.

These artists are: Janet Mitchell, Maxwell Bates, Roy Kiyooka, Roy Stevenson and Gregg [sic] Arnold.

The National Gallery will purchase for its permanent collection the works of Mr. Kiyooka and Miss Mitchell.

Before selection for this special show organized other year by the National Gallery, the paintings of Calgary artists had to pass four successive juries, for Calgary, for Alberta, the Prairie Provinces, and finally the National Gallery jury in Ottawa.

Evidence of the caliber of these local artists is the fact that only one painting from Saskatchewan, one from Alberta, and two from Manitoba were selected for the show, from the Prairie Provinces.

Following exhibition in Ottawa, the show will make a trans-Canada tour.”

**The Winnipeg Show**, November 2- 15, 1955

described as “mainly self-taught”

92, **Still Life With Sundae Dish**, oil, \$150

[previously exhibited: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Group Show, Vancouver Art Gallery, Nov. 6 - 25, 1951]

93, **Women In A Tavern**, oil, \$100

Peter Daglish, 1976:

“In the summer of 1955 I met Roy while we were both working at the Banff Springs Hotel...Roy was a timekeeper.

...I...saw Roy, recounted my day’s activities [in Calgary] and showed him the postcards [of portraits and landscapes by Soutine that he had bought at “Jack Turner’s Gallery Shop” [Canadian Art Galleries]. Roy’s response to the Soutines was immediate and passionate and he went on to tell me about his experience as a painter (I hadn’t been aware that he was a painter until that time) how he and Max had made a trip to Chicago to see “real” paintings in the 1930s etc. Totally marvelous – transposed by latent interest in painting which until that date had been accommodated through exhibitions into one of action.

That was it! Roy wrote down what colour he felt would be useful and what to paint on and I made a start!”

## 1956

Tommy Primrose, “Coste House Plays Host To Major Art Exhibit”, unidentified Calgary newspaper, February 4, 1956

“Described by Archie Key of Coste House as ‘The most important Canadian art exhibit in many years,’ the first biennial exhibition of Canadian painting goes on display at the Coste House this weekend to begin the arts agenda for Calgary in the week ahead.”

“...Five Calgary artists are represented in the exhibition: W.L. Stevenson....”

“Artists And Their Works”, unidentified Calgary newspaper.

“Judges W. L. Stevenson, Max Bates and Murray MacDonald had a long and difficult job Friday judging the 196 entries in the Fine Arts exhibition at the Stampede Corral...”

### **Four Alberta Artists: Bates, Mitchell, Stevenson and Kiyooka**

unidentified Sask. public art gallery [Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery. See review by Richard Simmins following]

“Art Gallery Society assisted in the negotiations for this exhibition and provided financial assistance....”

21, **Woman in a Café**, oil

22, **Woman in a Tavern**, oil

23, **Bouquet**, oil

24, **Mixed Flowers**, oil

25, **West of Calgary**, oil

26, **Across the Road**, oil

27, **Houses near the Sea**, oil

28, **Old St. Mary’s**, oil

29, **Woman**, oil

30, **Man’s Head**, oil

quote by WLS included in the pamphlet [no new information, states that the 1929 AIC as “left an intense impression on me.” Updates exhibition record.]

Illingworth Kerr, “Maxwell Bates, Dramatist”, *Canadian Art*, (XIII, 4 Summer, 1956) 325:

“His chief sustaining force was a fellow painter, Roy Stevenson, with whom Bates made a stimulating visit to the Chicago Art Institute [sic].”

Joslin [Townshend researcher-on-contract]: “Exhibits at Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina with Roy Kiyooka, Janet Mitchell and Maxwell Bates.

“Art display in city offers color and drama”

“Strong Influence”, *Regina Leader Post*, September 29, 1956 [NGC clipping]

“If any of these four artists are to be pigeon-holed then Roy Stevenson would have to be classed as an expressionist- reflecting strong influences from artists like the early Andre Derain. His paintings are also small in scale yet strong and freely worked up.

His main subjects are landscapes, portrait heads and flowers- none of them large but all possessing a fine feeling for proportion and form value.

A few paintings have a rather interesting “old world” quality about them and “Woman in a Café” and “Houses Near the Sea” can bear the same prolonged study and renewed visual experiences with each new approach as some of the old master-moderns.

Perhaps “Across the Road” has the most verve and brilliance of his selection and is a fine work. Had I to choose four important works from this exhibition this Stevenson would be one... Stevenson’s output is fine as far as it goes though he stops short in many cases, without passing on to major problems which he knows must exist beyond his limited format.

...This exhibition provides us with a good opportunity of studying 10 chosen works by four of Alberta’s best artists.”

RBS [Richard Beaufort Simmins]

Stevenson an accountant at the Coste House as well [Archie Key] from 1956 to 1960.

### **1956-57**

**30 Calgary Artists**, “on the Calgary Community Centres Circuit”, Joslin/Townshend

### **1957**

**Five Calgary Artists**, Hélène de Champlain Restaurant, St. Helen’s Island, Montreal, Feb. 15- March 5

- Maxwell Bates, Janet Mitchell, Ken Spickett & Roy Kiyooka

Rosemary Wood, “Local Paintings to be Exhibited in Montreal”, **Calgary Herald**, Feb. 2, 1957:

“Five prairie artists have been invited...in French Canada. This is the first time a group of Western artists has been honored with an exhibition of this kind. The showing opens in the Montreal Art Gallery, St. Helen’s Island Feb. 15 and continues until March 5.

...Roy Stevenson’s work shows a marked influence of the contemporary European painters. It is more conservative than that of the other artists in the present exhibition. His oil paintings indicate diversity of approach and he employs a very free fluid style.”

The main subjects of his paintings are landscapes, flowers and portrait. Done on a small scale they are well proportioned.”

-, “Exhibition of Calgary Painters This Evening”, *La Presse*, Montreal, February 15, 1957:

[all five Calgary artists mentioned with a total of 46 works of art]

Robert Ayre, “Calgary Painter’s Exhibit”, *Montreal Star*, February 23, 1957, 20:

“...William Leroy Stevenson is another man who takes a look at life, and he attempts to convey some of its rawness, but lets you down because he doesn’t follow through...”

Phil S. in a letter dated February 26, 1957 to Maxwell Bates, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, Taylor Family Digital Library, University of Calgary:

“I liked Roy Stevenson’s **West of Calgary**, the road with strong reds in the foliage beside it and his **Woman in a Tavern**.”

Rodolphe de Repentigny, “Variety in Calgary Painters [translated]; **La Presse, Montreal**, March 2, 1957, p. 66:

“Le peinture de Stevenson est plus banale [que celle de Mitchell]; L’on n’y trouve pas ce souci de l’invention des artistes precedents. Il ya a du Goodridge Roberts ou du Vlaminck dans ses paysages traites avec emportement, mais ou l’on trouve l’universe retreci a un point. L’atmosphere est celle d’Utrillo.”

Translation:

The painting of Stevenson is more commonplace [than Mitchel]. One does not find this concern for the invention of the previous artist. There was the Goodridge Roberts or Vlaminck in his landscapes treated with rage, but where we find the universe narrows to a point. The atmosphere is that of Utrillo.

Stevenson’s painting is more commonplace. One does not find there the care of invention of former artists. There are Goodridge Roberts or Vlaminck in these landscapes, executed in a frenzy, but there one finds the universe contracted to one point. The atmosphere is that of Utrillo.”

Rosemary Wood, “Outdoor Art Classes Find Popularity At Coste House”, *The Calgary Herald*, July 26, 1957:

“during the summer months the grounds at Coste House have become a haven for artists of all ages. From three to 75 years of age as a matter of fact.

...Mr. W.L. (Roy) Stevenson...has been conducting art classes two afternoons a week...Mr. Stevenson has had amazing results with his students in a short time...

The instructor prefers to teach in oil....”



Dave Colville, “The Lively Arts”, *The Calgary Herald*, September 21, 1957, 8.

“Adult Art. Member of the Coste House staff and an artist himself, W. L. (Roy) Stevenson, is seen here instructing members of an adult class in oil painting.” [photo of Stevenson with class members at their easels]

**3<sup>rd</sup> Winnipeg Show**, November 9- 30, 1957  
117, **Last Snow**, oil, \$125

**CGP 1957**

68, **Autumn near a Slough**, \$150

69, **October**, \$150

**1958**

March 15, elected to ASA [\* see minutes of Council Meeting] [April 14, 1961 NGC Information Form claims 1956; in a post- 1963 NGC Information Form states “about 1956” – This 1961 NGC form also states “compd” as in compiled by someone other than W. L. Stevenson.]

ASA [Alberta Society of Artists] 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Open Exhibition  
36. **West of Calgary**, oil, \$125

-, “Indian Arts And Crafts Display Now Featured At Coste House, *The Calgary Herald*, 22, July 2, 1958:

[photo of Stevenson with masks]

Traditional masks: Roy Stevenson, art instructor at the Allied Arts Centre, is pictured studying a few of the masks....”

“W.L. Stevenson”, *The Calgary Herald*, August 27, 1958, quotes artist:

“The purpose of contemporary painting is to grasp the invisible qualities and to intensify basic things of the scene.”

**CGP 1958**

as an “invited contributor”, 212 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. W., Calgary

106. **October Morning**, \$200

107. **Alberta Landscape**, \$200

**1959**

nominated for membership in CGP, proposed by Gordon Smith

[Canadian Group of Painters Candidate for Election Document, 1959, p. 5, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, Special Collections, University of Calgary]  
 Joslin/Townshend: “Smith eloquently spoke of Stevenson’s influence...”

**Alberta Society of Artists Winter Open Show**, EAG, April 27- May 6

23. **Evening Trees**, oil, \$150

24. **End of Day**, oil, \$200

**Alberta Society of Artists Summer Exhibition**

**Trees**, oil

**West of Calgary**, oil

**Alberta Landscape**, oil

**CGP 1959**

as an “invited contributor”, 212 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. W., Calgary

64. **Plant**, oil, 30”x 24”, \$200

65. **Alberta Landscape**, oil, 24”x 30”, \$200

66. **Autumn**, oil, 24”x 30”, \$200 (illustrated)

-also nominated for CGP, proposed by Gordon Smith, seconded by W.P. Weston. [CGP: Biographical Notes respecting Candidates for Election 1959, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, Special Collections, Taylor Family Digital Library, U of C.]

July 1959, entry in Bates’s Notes: “Went out with Stevenson to paint a sketch of the country west of town. Very rich panorama: deep blues and intense green under a glittering sky.”

**1960**

solo exhibition, Bowness Recreation Centre, Calgary

“Centre Features Painting Display,” *Albertan*, 9.11.60

“Bowness recreation centre is featuring a display of 27 oil paintings by Calgary artist Roy Stephenson [sic] this month. Included are 10 landscapes shown for the first time. They are in the auditorium which is open from 9 am to 9 pm.

Stephenson [sic], mainly self-taught, has lived in this district for years. A regular exhibitor with many art associations, he is a member of the Alberta Society of Artists, and instructor at the Allied Arts Centre.”

**Four-man show** by Calgary Allied Arts Centre staff: W. L. Stevenson, Katie Ohe, Harold Patton and Roy Wreggitt, *the Calgary Allied Arts Council Courier*, vol. 16, no. 10 (June 1960).

**6<sup>th</sup> Winnipeg Show**, November 12- 30, 1960  
146. **An Old Trail**, oil, \$175

nominated for CGP, proposed by Gordon Smith, seconded by Maxwell Bates. [CGP: Biographical Notes respecting Candidates for Election 1960, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, Special Collections, Taylor Family Digital Library, U of C.]

### **1960-66**

Joslin, “Employed by the University of Calgary to teach classes in rural Alberta

### **1961**

“Calgary Artist to Hold Exhibit”, *Albertan*, January 22, 1962:  
“He has had one-man shows in both Edmonton and Calgary, the last being the Alberta College of Art last March.” [i.e. March 1961]

### **PITA [Provincial Institute of Technology and Art] Art Gallery**

March 5 – 22, 1961

- 1 **Bouquet on a Chair** \$125
- 2 **Evening** \$200
- 3 **Old Bridge** \$200
- 4 **Self-Portrait** NFS
- 5 **Autumn Near High River** \$200
- 6 **October Morning** \$200
- 7 **Edge of a Town** \$200
- 8 **Evening Trees** \$200
- 9 **Windy Afternoon** \$200
- 10 **Fish Creek, Burns Ranch** \$200
- 11 **An Old Trail** \$175
- 12 **Autumn Pool** \$200
- 13 **Old Trees** \$175

- 14 **Summer Afternoon** \$200
- 15 **October Trees** \$175
- 16 **Autumn Splendor** \$200
- 17 **Bend in the River** \$200
- 18 **Woodland Creek** \$200
- 19 **Valley North of Cochrane** \$200
- 20 **Shady Landscape** \$200
- 21 **Foothills Cabin** NFS
- 22 **Trees** \$200
- 23 **Misty Mountain** \$200
- 24 **September Landscape** \$200
- 25 **Flower on a Chair** \$75
- 26 **Alberta Landscape** \$200
- 27 **Trees Near Okotoks** \$200
- 28 **October Pool** \$200

[George Wood] “This exhibition represents his first major Calgary Showing in several years and marks his first appearance at the “Tech” Gallery.

Over a three-year period, he had eight out of eight paintings which he submitted, accepted and shown by the Canadian Group of Painters.”

NGC Information Form, April 14, 1961, “compd”  
212 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W.

- claims membership in ASA [Alberta Society of Artists] since 1956  
[Kathy E. Zimon, **Alberta Society of Artists: The First Seventy Years** (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000) states that W. L. Stevenson was only a member of the ASA in 1958 and 1961. Please see: Appendix C5, 153]
- “self-taught”
- 2 one man shows in Vancouver Art Gallery
- “In 3 consecutive years had 8 out of 8 paintings accepted by Canadian Group of Painters” [1957- 59; 7 paintings exhibited]
- Art Instructor at Calgary Allied Art Centre

**The Seventh Winnipeg Show, 1961**  
no. 152, **October Trees**, oil, \$200

**Alberta Artists**, Allied Arts Council, Calgary 1961

described as “Former staff member and art instructor Calgary Allied Arts Centre

21. **Fish Creek**

22. **Trees**

**CGP 1961**

as an “invited contributor”, 212 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. W., Calgary

64 **Valley Farm**, oil, 30” x 24”, \$200

**1962**

solo exhibition and sale of oil paintings, January 25 – February 15, Calgary Allied Arts Centre, sponsored by the Art Rental and Sales, Women’s Committee

1 **Big Tree** \$35

2 **Red Barns** \$35

3 **Lake, September** \$35

4 **Autumn Foliage** \$35

5 **November** \$35

6 **Autumn Path** \$35

7 **Autumn Trees** \$45

8 **October** \$45

9 **Autumn** \$45

10 **September Pool** \$45

11 **Lake Windermere** \$125

12 **Stormy Day** \$200

13 **Summer Afternoon** \$200

14 **Autumn Show [sic]** \$200

15 **Foothills Farm** \$200

16 **October Trees** \$200

17 **September Foothills** \$250

“Roy Stevenson Exhibit”, **Gallery**

“The Art Rental and Sales of the Women’s Committee of the Calgary Allied Arts Centre are sponsoring an Exhibit and Sales of paintings by Calgary artist W. L. Stevenson. This exhibit was opened Jan. 25 and will remain open until Feb. 15. Mr. Stevenson uses deep, rich colors and his paintings are full of bright vivid autumn tones. These landscapes range in price from \$35.00 to \$200.00...”

“Calgary Artist to Hold Exhibit”, *Albertan*, January 22, 1962:

“Over a three year period, he had eight out of eight paintings which he submitted accepted, and shown by the Canadian Group of Painters....

Recently he has concentrated on landscape mainly because there is more demand for this type of painting....

While in Vancouver, Mr. Stevenson exhibited regularly with the B.C. Society of Artists and had two one-man shows at the Vancouver Art Gallery. He has had one-man shows in both Edmonton and Calgary, the last being the Alberta College of Art last March.

The Art Rentals and Sales of the Women’s Committee of the Calgary Allied Arts Centre are sponsoring an exhibit and sale of his paintings starting Thursday and continuing through to February 15. Included in this show will be approximately 16 landscapes....

This winter he has had two paintings in the Winnipeg Show and one in the Canadian Group of Painters. Again he is exhibiting at Aviva Chapter, Hadassah, Toronto.”

“Painting Exhibition Scheduled”, *The Calgary Herald*, January 23, 1962:

“An exhibition and sale of paintings by Calgary artist W.L. (Roy) Stevenson will be held from Thursday until Feb. 15 at the Allied Arts Centre....

He is an admirer of the early French moderns....

Included in the show here will be 16 landscapes.”

untitled clipping, NGC files:

“Roy Stevenson Exhibit- The Art Rental and Sales of the Women’s Committee of the Calgary Allied Arts Centre are sponsoring an Exhibit and Sale of paintings by Calgary artist W.L. (Roy) Stevenson. This exhibit was opened Jan. 25 and will remain open until Feb. 15. Mr. Stevenson uses deep, rich colors and his paintings are full of bright vivid autumn tones. These landscapes range in price from \$35.00 to \$200.00. The Gallery in the Centre is open week days from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.”

solo exhibition, EAG [Art Rental and Sales Gallery]

**Alberta Society of Artists Winter Exhibition**, Calgary and Edmonton

18. **Spring Trees & Pool**, oil, N.F.S.

19. **Autumn Near High River**, oil, \$200

20. **Foothills, Evening**, oil, \$200

J. McL. Nicoll, “How We Got This Way”, ASA, *Highlights*, Winter 1962, 57:

Maxwell Bates and Roy Stevenson of the Calgary Art Club (1922 – 32) were barred from local shows for deviation from the accepted canons.”

[photo of W. L. Stevenson with regular bio info on its left]

Gregory Arnold, President, ASA, *Highlights*, Winter 1962:

“An early look at the 1963 Winter Open Show is indicative of our new vigour. Approximately 40 works were selected from over 100 submitted and a jury of one member – Roy Stevenson – [note WLS an ASA member in 1963 according to Arnold] and two non-members – Harry Kiyooka and George Wood selected painstakingly and knowledgably.”

“Members who reside in the Calgary-Bowness-Montgomery area are: W. L. Stevenson....”

May 31, 1962- Paul Arthur, Managing Editor, *Canadian Art*, wrote to Stevenson c/o. Maxwell Bates, 1411 7<sup>th</sup> St. S.W., Calgary:

“I am enclosing a questionnaire form which I would be very glad if you would fill out and let us have back as quickly as possible together with, as we have requested, a good photograph of one of your works plus a portrait. You will, along with four or five other painters, be included in a section of the issue on Art in the West devoted to the contemporary scene in your province. It should be a very lively and informative issue, and we are trying to give it as much as possible a coverage in depth.”

[Nancy Townshend thinks “The purpose of the *Canadian Art* article was to provide info for Bates's article on Calgary artists which was cancelled when the Greenberg opportunity arose. It is my opinion that this article (a copy of which I have) was one of the reasons for Bates's massive stroke in Nov. 1961. (Townshend to Varley, October 21, 2004, 11:14 a.m.)]

**Contemporary Canadian Paintings 1962, Art Rental and Sales Gallery,**  
 sponsored by the Junior League of Edmonton, first Thursday, October  
 600 Valley Farm oil, \$200  
 973 Bouquet oil \$45  
 974 Edge of Town oil \$200

**solo exhibition, Canadian Art Galleries, October 25 – November 10**

**An exhibition of Oil Paintings by W. Leroy Stevenson, A.S.A.**

811 Seventeenth Ave. S.W., Calgary

1 Bouquet on a chair \$125

2 In Queen Elizabeth Park No. 1 \$100

3 In Queen Elizabeth Park No. 2 \$100

4 September Morning \$100

5 In Okotoks Park \$125

6 Autumn Tapestry \$110

7 Asters \$75

8 Autumn \$250

9 On Prince's Island \$250

10 Peonies \$250

11 Tree Trunks \$200

12 Reflections in a Pool \$200

13 Alberta Farm \$200

14 Bend in a River \$200

15 Three Trees \$200

16 Mixed Flowers \$200

17 Plant \$200

18 Summer Afternoon \$200

19 Autumn Landscape \$200

20 Windy Afternoon \$200

21 Shades of Poe \$175

22 In the Foothills \$175

23 Creek Near Okotoks \$175

24 Autumn Near High River \$175

25 Fish Creek \$175

26 Foothills Town \$250

27 Foothills Evening \$200

28 October Evening \$45

29 Farm Buildings, Evening \$45

30 Spring Bouquet \$45



- 31 **Trees, St. Georges [sic] Island** \$45
- 32 **Peonies in a jug** \$45
- 33 **Blue Barn** \$35
- 34 **Reflections** \$35
- 35 **Bouquet of Pink Flowers** \$35
- 36 **Flowers** \$35
- 37 **Autumn Evening** \$35
- 38 **Landscape with Barns** \$35
- 39 **The Pond** \$35
- 40 **Bouquet with Oranges** \$35
- 41 **Old Trees** \$35

“On his recent visit to Calgary and Edmonton, Mr. Clement Greenberg, well known New York Art Critic and Writer, spoke most enthusiastically in both cities of Mr. Stevenson’s work.”

[private invitation to this show held on October 24, 1962. “This is the second (Bates was the first on September 5, 1962) of a series of important exhibitions to be held during the season and will continue until Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>.”]

“One Week Art Course for Westlock”, **Westlock News**, Westlock, Alberta, June 9, 1965:

“Mr. Stevenson has taught for the past three summers for the Extension Department in Edmonton...”

Exhibition, Focus Gallery, Edmonton, 1962

“Clement Greenberg’s View: Painting and Sculpture in Prairie Canada Today”, *Canadian Art*, Vol. XX, No. 2, March-April 1963:

“My discovery among landscape painters in Calgary was W.L. Stevenson, whose style does not suffer by its closeness to Goodridge Roberts’. I had the good fortune to see a show of Stevenson’s at the Focus Gallery in Edmonton, and can’t understand why he is not known all over Canada.”

repro.: **On Prince’s Island** (front cover)

from an undated [early 1963] ASA *Highlights*:

“has exhibited with many major canadian art societies, including the royal canadian academy, the montreal museum of fine art, the ontario society of artists, winnipeg shows, the biennial of canadian art and the canadian group

of painters. In three consecutive years he submitted eight paintings to the canadian group and had all eight accepted. He has had numerous one man shows in western canada. The march-april issue of canadian art magazine will feature a colour reproduction of one of mr. stevenson's paintings on the cover."

**art rental and sales: 1962-1963 collection**, Calgary Allied Arts Centre

287 <b>Winter Bouquet</b>	oil	\$200.00
288 <b>Autumn Near High River</b>	oil	\$200.00
289 <b>Landscape with Old House</b>	oil	\$60.00
446 <b>The Path</b>	oil	\$200.00
447 <b>Valley North of Cochrane</b>	oil	\$200.00
456 <b>Quiet Pool</b>	oil	\$200.00
607 <b>October</b>	oil	\$45.00
611 <b>Autumn</b>	oil	\$35.00

**1962-63**

**Group show**, St. Paul, Alberta

**1963**

"Two Local Artists Make National Headlines", Calgary Allied Arts Council, *Courier*, February 1963, 6.

William Townsend, "Art Gallery Exhibit Quality Shows Albertans Improving," *Edmonton Journal*, March 1963:

[one of Stevenson's landscapes is] one of the best of his work I have seen. The handling of the paint is so lively and yet so controlled to the purpose it serves, the color is fresh and decisive and however one approaches this picture one finds that all its elements are beautifully adjusted to the artist's feeling for the landscape and the form in which he presents it."

**Canadian Art Auction**, Aviva Chapter Hadassah, King Edward-Sheraton Hotel, Crystal Ballroom, March 23  
**Alberta Landscape**, oil, 29" x 23"

Joslin, p. 15, "In 1963... he taught ten classes a month, which would take about two weeks. That year, every month, he travelled over the foothills and

to High River, Taber, Medicine Hat, Cluny, Cochrane, Drumheller, Innisfail and Olds. Stevenson constantly visited and painted spots around Alberta, but favoured the foothills southwest of Calgary.”

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, 9 April 1963, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, Taylor Family Digital Library, University of Calgary.

N.B. All letters are transcribed exactly as they appear in their original form. 212- 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary:

“It is sometime since I wrote to you and it is surprising how little has really transpired in that time. My exhibition at Woodwards looked very good to me, and a great many people saw it and seemed to enjoy it, but the sad result was that I sold nothing from it. There lighting and hanging was exceptionally good and it was to me personally informative to see many of the same pictures I had had at Turner’s in a different aspect and if anything I thought the Exhibition at Woodwards Looked better.

As the present time I have a small exhibition at Turner Valley and aside from that have nothing on. Turner sells the odd small painting but has sold no large ones of late.

Thus far Greenberg’s article and the fact of one of my paintings being on the cover has done nothing in the way of improved sales or the acquiring of a reliable Eastern Dealer. Before the issue came out I had Alty return my paintings as I am afraid he is not much of a business man.

I enjoyed Greenberg’s Article and was surprised just how much his ideas on Western Canadian Art agreed with my own.. When Russel Harper was in Calgary he went out of his way to evade me; just why I am at a loss to know. Both Jack Snow and Jack Turner Tried to have him see my work, but to no avail. It is quite possible the National Gallery is Fearful of their positions and are playing safe as long as possible in their desire to retain their sinacures. It is too obvious that Richard Simmons is also playing politics in his cowardly fashion, and I think the letter you once sent to Comfort did you no good politically speaking. Isn’t it all disgusting. Perhaps the new government may rectify things somewhat, but I have my doubts. I remember years ago about Clive Bell saying that Art and Politics dont mix.. They still try to do it and sure make a mess of things. I guess I have rambled on in this vain long enough, but it is interesting phsycologically.

Hope you and Charlotte are O.K. Things are about the same with me.

I see Pete Daghish is having Two simultaneous shows in Montreal..”

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, June 22, 1963, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, U of C.  
212- 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary:

“Well I’ve been home almost a week now and it seems like some time since I had my very enjoyable visit with you and Charlotte in Victoria. On my way back I spent the eVENING IN Bellingham Wash. Just to see the American way of life and got in Vancouver the next morning at eight o'clock. I went around to Gordon Smith’s again and had a nice afternoon with him. He’s doing quite a lot of sculpture and is coming up to the Banff School of Art for 6 weeks commencing the 1st of July. I staid in Vancouver for three or Four days and stayed off in Kamloops for a couple of days with my cousins Lois and Bruce. In Vancouver I met Simmons who was quite Friendly and it so happened that Colin Graham was at the Vancouver Art Gallery at the time. Since I got back I have received an invitation to send to the Women’s Committee Picture Loan in Vic. I sent in two Paintings.

Key is on his holiday’s and is in San Francisco. I just took 20 Paintings down for a one man show for the summer and Hear that you have been invited to have one also. Cooke asked to have one of [?] paintings submitted to the Gallery at Fredrickton. Apparently Lady Dunn is Now Lady Beaverbrook. So the world wags.

A new gallery is opening in Edmonton and the proprietors came down [?] my basement and took away 15 things. I hope they manage to make a success of their venture. Edmonton certainly needs a better gallery and their ideas seem high. They are going to try to run an exclusive [?] Gallery.

I am enclosing a Clipping from th Proence, just in case you didn’t see it. I picked it up while in Kamloops on my way back. Its not an Art Criticism but think you may enjoy it.

Again I want to say how much I enjoyed my visit and am sure glad I took it. Hope you are both O.K.”

**Canada On Canvas, The Stratford Shakespearean Festival, June 22 – September 14**

Paintings Collected and Arranged by Alan Jarvis

**Foothills Town \$250**

solo exhibition, Calgary Allied Arts Centre, July

**One-Man Show, W.L. (Roy) Stevenson**, Calgary Allied Arts Centre,  
July 2 – August 30

- 1 **Big Tree** \$200
- 2 **By a River Bank** \$40
- 3 **Granaries** \$40
- 4 **September** \$45
- 5 **Creek Near Okotoks** \$250
- 6 **Near Bragg Creek** \$300
- 7 **Evening Trees** \$125
- 8 **Flowers** \$300
- 9 **In Queen Elizabeth Park** \$125
- 10 **Autumn Woods** \$250
- 11 **Evening-Old Farm** \$50
- 12 **Mountain Lake** \$50
- 13 **Old Farm** \$55
- 14 **Woodland Pool** \$250
- 15 **Tangled Foliage** \$250
- 16 **Mixed Roses** \$85
- 17 **Mixed Bouquet** \$250
- 18 **Peonies** \$70
- 19 **Summer Afternoon** \$300

“On his recent visit to Calgary and Edmonton, Mr. Clement Greenberg, well-known New York Art Critic and Writer, spoke most enthusiastically in both cities of Mr. Stevenson’s work.”

“W. L. Stevenson Has One-Man Show”, *Albertan*, July 6

“W. L. “Roy” Stevenson, one of Calgary’s most noted painters, has a one-man show on now...A collection of 19 oils they are executed with the familiar Stevenson flourish and confidence.”

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, July 6, 1963, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, U of C.  
212 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W.

“Glad to receive your letter and the notice of your exhibition with the other Victoria artists. It was nice selling your painting to the National Gallery. I

got a check for the one Cooke took to the Beaverbrook Gallery and he said it would be on display for the summer with other Canadian Works.

I sent 5 paintings to Denver and hope the dealer there likes them. I am leaving the pricing up to him. I notice in another clipping from London that one of the critics there couldn't understand why more landscapes weren't shown in the exhibition. I still cannot understand Harper's unwillingness to see my work. Perhaps you can find out something about it from Simmins.

Next Saturday I am going to Edmonton to teach for two weeks. I will see what the new Gallery is like while up there and expect to have a Private show there in the fall.

Stampede is starting again. It is a period of westernism I am not too taken with. With its hoots and smells and rawcusness [sic]. Sounds as if I'm [sic] getting old and staid or perhaps it's just the same monotonous mid summer thing which happens to Calgary that grows tedious and monotonous.

Hope you are getting some painting done and that things in general are going well. Look forward to seeing your show when it is hung."

Robin Neesham, "Painting 'Mood' Held Important By Artist Now Holding Show", *The Calgary Herald*, July 12, 1963:

"A small exhibition by Calgary painter William Leroy Stevenson is now on show in the foyer of the Calgary Allied Arts Centre, where it will remain until September.

The majority of the works on view are landscapes, approximately 24 by 30 inches in size with a few smaller paintings and one or two flower pieces thrown in for good measure.

Mr. Stevenson dates his artistic development from 1929, when he visited Chicago and saw a major exhibition of Post-Impressionist paintings. From that year until this he has been diligently refining rather than developing the Cezannesque style he so admired in the Windy City.

He exhibits frequently: apart from the Arts Centre his work could have been seen in the last year or so in the Edmonton's Art Gallery and Focus Gallery, and in a shopping centre and at the Canadian Art Galleries in Calgary.

There was, however, no noticeable change in his works during this period.

Mr. Stevenson attempts to capture the ‘mood’ of a scene in his paintings, and he is very conscious of the passage of time, both within a 24-hour period and of the seasons.

An easel painter in the strictest sense, he still goes into the wilds of southern Alberta, and most usually in the area south of Calgary to find his inspiration, though quite frequently he composes from memory or invents compositions.

His brushwork is incisive, relatively free, and usually applied with a heavy load of paint- he jokingly says his work “looks like Cezanne but is done like Van Gough [sic]”.

Mr. Stevenson is somewhat unusual in his dedication to style and subject in that he has avoided aping any of the popular art styles that have arisen during the many years that he has been painting. But, by the same token, he appears trapped within his own self-imposed limitations. While he consciously strives for freer brushwork and more impressionistic [sic] feeling, he is always brought up short by a bush or a bridge or something.

While this painter is aware of a certain tightness in his work, he is prepared to let his style “develop itself”, with the result that his work is almost imperceptibly [sic] edging towards the romantic and away from his erstwhile more classical approach.

Mr. Stevenson’s credits are considerable, having exhibited with virtually all the major Canadian art societies...

His work appeals to New York critic Clement Grenberg [sic] who said during a whirlwind visit last year (and in the same breath that he dismissed practically every other Alberta painter): “My discovery among landscape painters in Calgary was W.L. Stevenson, whose style does not suffer from its closeness to Goodridge Roberts. I can’t understand why he is not known all over Canada...”

Robin Neesham, “W. L. Stevenson at the Calgary Allied Arts Centre,”  
*Canadian Art* 20: 270, September 1963

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, July 30, 1963, , Maxwell Bates *fonds*, U of C.  
212- 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary:

“Well I’ve been home from my two week’s in Edmonton for a couple of days and I enjoyed the change getting up there for awhile. The Jacox Gallery is quite an elaborate affair and occupies 1500 square feet of floor space. I was around several mornings visiting with the Jacox brothers.

My classes were not as large as last year but if anything were more enthusiastic and I enjoyed myself as well.

Last Sunday Jerry Morris stopped over on his return to Toronto from Vancouver, to look at some of my paintings. He got me up at 9 in the morning and as his plane was delayed had until 6 pm to put in. I showed him around the city and country and took him up to Jack snow’s for a drink; which I didn’t have. I was surprised that Jack and Kay Allen were Married. Morris seems to understand his business very well and is well informed. I was pleased that he picked out 18 of my paintings for me to send him.

I Have had a bit of customs trouble with the few I sent to Denver so cannot know what the dealer thinks of them yet. The customs has sure been a nuisance and an expense to me.

Turner has a couple of your newer paintings hanging on his main floor walls.

Hope you are both keeping well and enjoying the summer. I want to get a lot done the next couple of months.”

Exhibition, Focus Gallery, Edmonton, October 1963

**The Works [Paintings] of William Leroy Stevenson**, Jacox Galleries,  
Edmonton, October 14- 30, 1963

**Old Bridge Pier** illustrated on announcement

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, November 19, 1963, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, U of C.

212- 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary:

“Was glad to get your letter today and hear that you are both O.K.



My show at the Jacox Gallery was a modest success although not quite as good as I had at first hoped for. I was up there for an evening while it was on as a sort of delayed preview and it looked well I thought and the Jacox Brothers were very pleased with it. I took a class outside on the afternoon in Edmonton of 24 pupils for the university so it gave me a pretty full day.

I am taking about 10 classes a month at various Southern Alberta towns with the Extension dept. of the University of Edmonton. It keeps me more in touch with people and occupies about two weeks of each month. I Go to High River, Taber, Medicine Hat Cluny Cochrane Drumheller Inisfail and Olds.

Mr. Carswell and the local art dept. manager came up to my studio about a week ago and took 5 paintings 3 little ones and an 18x 24 and a 24x30. at half price. I have doubled my prices on the small ones about 4 months ago. and raised the large ones 50%.

Last Tuesday a week ago I managed to get in touch with Arnold Mazelow just before heading off for Drumheller and He made a \$2500.00 purchase of my paintings. This is by far the best streak of selling I have ever had and hope it continues at a fair pace.

Have not heard From Jerry Morris but Mazelow said he had seen 6 or 7 of my paintings down there, but wanted to buy off the artists.

Turner has not sold anything of mine for months although he has about a dozen of my paintings.

We are having extremely cold weather right now, or maybe we're just not used to it. as we had a very nice autumn.

I saw the show at Simpsons Sears and it was varied, both abstract and representational. I hear they sold about 80 paintings in Vancouver. Mazelow also bought a few of the Teck Teachers paintings 1 Kerr 4 Woods 700.00 of Marian Nicols and one or two of Neesham's.

Am enclosing another Jacox Brochure. It was quite Expensive, and they said they wouldn't charge me with it. I think the painting reproduced quite well.

In many ways it doesn't seem as if Victoria is the place for sale, although I think the exhibitions may lead to some sales.

This is about all the news I have at present. This letter is sure full of typographical errors.

Mazelow is Vincent Price's representative in Canada.

Mrs. H. G. (Patricia) Gordon, "The First Twenty Years of the Medicine Hat Community Art Club 1945 to 1965":

"During Helen Gibson's tenure of office, 1963-64, W. L. Stevenson undertook the Club instruction once a month with local instructors filling in the other three Friday evenings... In March, the Club hung a one-man show of W. L. Stevenson's work."

As a new September arrived, a new President, Cootje Rozenhart, assumed office. Mr. Stevenson agreed to continue as the Club's instructor."

#### **CGP 1963-64**

MMFA, November 8- December 1

Calgary Allied Arts Council, January 3- 23, 1964

as an "invited contributor", 212 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary no. 76, **Edge of Town**, oil, 24"x 30", \$350

#### **1964**

Morris Gallery, Toronto

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, January 26, 1964, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, U of C.

212- 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary:

"Thank you for your last letter, I was glad to get it. I enjoyed my evening at the Palliser with Russel Harper, Hunt also came down and he always enjoys discussing the early days in Calgary Art.

I was not too taken with the Canadian Group show at the Allied Arts. It didn't have anything of a vital new interest as far as I was concerned, and I must say I couldn't say it was a good show.

As you will see from the enclosed catalogue, I am trying a show downtown in Calgary. Turner has sold practically nothing of mine for five months so I'm seeing if I can do better downtown on my own at Pain's.

Jerry Morris sold one recently for 300.00 and I got the check the other day.

Am enjoying my classes at the country points and am glad I took them on. I have eight nice groups once a month."

**W. L. (Roy) Stevenson,**

Gainsborough Galleries, February 3 – 22, 1964

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, May 4, 1964 [handwritten], , Maxwell Bates *fonds*, U of C.

212- 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary:

"It was nice receiving a letter from you a short time back. Am glad you made some sales at your show with Jack at the New Design Gallery. I sold three also at my show at the Gainsborough Galleries- one to N. de Grandmaison- who paints Indians.

My town classes are now over. I enjoyed them very much although in the last round the engine of my old car broke down in Taber and I traded it in Taber for a 1957 Station wagon which seems to run quite well. Had a show in Medicine Hat for a month- but nothing there sold.

Want to get a lot of painting done this summer. Am going up to Edmonton again the last 2 weeks in July to take some landscape classes.

There is still lots of building going on in Calgary- mostly apartments and 2 new large hotels. One for 7,000,000 is almost complete. Colonel Greene who used to be with Glenbow is taking Keys job at the Art Centre. I think Key is going to Lethbridge for awhile.

It's been raining quite a lot the past couple of days, and we really need it as the country has been very dry the past winter. I guess it will be looking like summer in Victoria by now."

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, May 28, 1964

212- 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary:

“It was nice visiting you for a short while a week or so ago and I enjoyed my whole visit very much. The weather was not too nice on my way back. I went up the Hope Princeton highway and to Kelowna the first night. I left three paintings in Kelowna with Jack Hambleton who is an artist and has quite a nice Gallery there. The next day I went to Kamloops and stayed over night visiting some distant cousins.

While I was away some people from Montreal came around to the house and my brother happened to be here from Edmonton and sold one of my small paintings.

It would be nice if you and Charlotte could get down to Seattle and show Fuller your Scrolls. He is a very nice person.

Now that I'm back I want to get out and catch up with a lot of painting. I took a couple more down to Pain Today at the Gainsborough.

The New Canadian Flag seems to be creating quite a controversy. I still think a more simplified design such as we both submitted would be more in keeping with some sense of unity.

I got the letter from the A.S.A. you said you received and am ignoring it and the annual meeting as the whole local A.S.A. seems to be dominated by the Tech.

It was sure nice seeing you both and I hope things permit that may again get out in the fall.”

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, undated [before October 6, 1964], Maxwell Bates *fonds*, U of C. (handwritten)

letterhead: The Alice Hotel (Camrose) Ltd. [5078- 50 St.]:

“I haven't heard from you since I got back from the coast last May. Hope you and Charlotte are O.K.

Haven't sold much this summer but hope things get a bit better in the fall. Am having another show at the Jacox Gallery in Edmonton starting October the sixth and will go up for the opening. Was up in Edmonton for a couple of weeks in July and enjoyed teaching the two weeks. Right now I am taking a week of classes in Camrose & Wetaskiwin on my own, and have a

couple of good classes. Am teaching around Southern Alberta during the winter again for the Extension dept out of Edmonton.

Jack & Kay & Johnny were over in Spain & Great Britain for a month and enjoyed it.

Was hoping on getting out to the coast again this fall but don't think I'll make it as my winter classes start pretty soon.

Saw Newt [?] for a few minutes a couple of weeks ago and he was looking OK. He's still at the Post Office."

"Alberta [illegible] L. Stevenson Opens Art Show Monday", *Edmonton Journal*, October 2

**Paintings by W. L. Stevenson**, Jacox Galleries Ltd., Edmonton, October 5, 1964 (Preview, October 5, 7 – 10 pm)

**Toper**, \$80

**Woman in a Café**, \$250

**Still Life with Flowers**, \$140

**Picnic Still Life**, \$95

**Night Life**, \$125

**September**, \$75

**Tree on a Bank**, \$100

**Foothills Cabin**, \$100

**West of Calgary**, \$400

**Lake Country**, \$150

**Stem of a Spruce**, \$150

**September Trees**, \$150

**Still Life with Sweet Potato**, \$150 (illustrated)

**Near Windermere**, \$150 (illustrated)

**Mixed Flowers**, \$150

**Alberta Ranch**, \$300

**Shady Path**, \$300

**Flower Still Life**, \$300

"This showing will feature a selection of works completed by Mr. Stevenson during the past twenty years and will include portrait, still life, landscape and a wide variety of graphics...A selection of graphics, ranging in price from \$20 to \$40, will be included in the exhibition."

“Alberta’s W.L. Stevenson Opens Art Show Monday”, *Edmonton Journal*, October 2, 1964:

“The Edmonton showing will feature a selection of works completed by the artist over the past twenty years, including portraits, still lifes, landscapes, and a wide variety of graphics.”

Dorothy Barnhouse; “Stevenson Reverses Procedure- First a Critic, Then a Painter”, *Edmonton Journal*, October 7, 1964:

“...this city has had little opportunity to view his work.

The artist was on hand Monday at Jacox Galleries for the opening of his retrospective, covering roughly the past two decades....

Artists, for whom he has always had a strong affinity, sought his advice and criticism. When they began following it, he decided it was time to put some of his theories into practice....

A brief excursion into print-making with John Snow of Calgary, produced the lithos which are here exhibited for the first time in Canada. One hopes that the present boom in prints and the proficiency shown in these, will spur Mr. Stevenson to explore this medium further. Lacking the element of color, he leans more heavily upon tonal contrast and simpler patterning.

In “Two”, he holds the central figure in shadow, focusing attention upon the two lighted figures behind. In “The Dungeons” he uses the same device plus a dark frame for added dramatic effect....

He is a master of the windy sky and the moving branch, particularly when, as in “October” and in “September Trees”, these elements combine to form a symphony in gold. A tendency in this last painting to slide toward lower right is deftly countered by a rising slope and dark foliage masses. In “Alberta Ranch” the remedy for the same fault is less successful.

Earlier genre subjects, like “Night Life, show how far this artist has progressed in his mastery of color and paint application. A later, brilliant still life points it up most forcibly. It is a canvas which owes a debt to Gaughin [sic], which in turn owed it to the Japanese print maker- but the color and handling are pure Stevenson.”

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, October 23, 1964, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, U of C.

212- 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary:

“It was nice getting your letter a short while back.

I saw your show up at Teck the other day and it looked real well. The show stood out very strongly indeed and I also thought the variety of paintings you had sent were very well selected. I am glad to see you have been working so large. I have never got up to that size yet. I like the color and was glad to see so many figurative paintings.

My show at the Jacox Galleries did not go as well as I had hoped but then maybe I hope for too much. I was up at the opening and thought they had made a good job of the opening as to hanging etc. Dorothy Barnhouse gave me a very good write up in the Journal, with My Photograph at the opening.

I had left on picture at the Art Centre and Townsend picked it but I hear he is to give a final jurying in Ottawa. So it will really be some time before I really know if I am in or not.

My winter Classes Have started around the southern part of Alberta so I am away quite a lot of the time. I go to Cochrane, Drumheller Stettler High River Vulcan Ralston and Medicine Hat.

The weather here the past week has been good Although the Autumn leaves are pretty well gone.

Submitted to the Winnipeg Show but both entries were turned down. I would prefer to get a good dealer in Montreal than to waste time on the exhibitions in public Galleries, but do not see my way clear to making the trip east at this time or during the winter.

How is your dealer in Toronto doing?”

**Vancouver Art Gallery**, Women’s Auxiliary 16th Annual Contemporary Exhibition and Sales September 25 - October 4, 1964

44 **Autumn Foliage** oil \$200

**1964-65**

“One Week Art Course for Westlock”, *Westlock News*, Westlock, Alberta, June 9, 1965:

“has instructed the Community Art Classes in Cochrane, Drumheller, High River, Medicine Hat, Ralston, Steller [Stetler] and Vulcan during the past winter season.”

## 1965

Stevenson to Maxwell Bates, January 25, 1965, Maxwell Bates *fonds*, U of C.

212- 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W., Calgary:

“Thanks for your note at Xmas time. I have not much news but am dropping you a few lines all the same.

My show at the Jacox Gallery was not too much of a success despite the very good advertising and write up I got in the Edmonton Journal. I sold only one painting, but it was for \$300.00 to a lady who already has a couple of mine.

I was never able to find out how many pictures Townsend selected to go east from Calgary, nor have I heard as yet who were finally selected at Ottawa on Jan 8<sup>th</sup> when he was to go over those he had picked up on his trip. Jacox said he only took one from Edmonton by Haynes. The only ones I heard he took in Calgary were Harry Kyooka Janet Middleton and myself. Green the New Director at the art centre said there were about seven altogether but wouldn't commit himself exactly.

Have you ever done anything about your Chinese scrolls.

The Large one I still have is signed “Made by Chui Ying” who is incidentally one of the most copied artists in all China. I had photos made and sent them to Trubner who gave me this information but said he would have to see the original to say if it were authentic or not. Did the woman from the Royal Ontario museum come out to Victoria in December? I have not arranged any shows for the near future and had best get down to work on it pretty soon.

Enjoy getting around to the small towns of Southern Alberta once or twice a month as it breaks the monotony of Calgary Life.

We have had very severe weather except for a short break of about a week, and I am sure looking forward to Spring. Have been doing quite a number



of 16x 20 landscapes lately as I never did have many of that size. I sent one this size to the Vancouver Art gallery sale and was fortunate enough to sell it.” (one I showed you last year) handwritten: who wrote this?

Group show with Thelma Manarey, Rosemary’s Gallery, St. Paul, Alberta  
 “Painting Well-Known Artist on Display”, *St. Paul Journal*, St. Paul, Alberta, May 6, 1965”

“Paintings of Thelma Manarey and W.L. Stevenson, two well known Alberta artists, are on display at the Elementary School this week. They will be exhibited at Rosemary’s Gallery commencing May. 10<sup>th</sup> ....

Mr. Stevenson resides in Calgary, Alberta, and has been referred to as master of the winy [sic] sky and the moving branch. Mr. Stevenson has been referred to as having a tendency to let his paintings slide towards the lower right and one of his paintings on display this week demonstrates this.

These two selections of paintings from two well known artists comes to us compliments of Jacox Galleries Ltd., in Edmonton."

“One Week Art Course for Westlock”, *Westlock News*, Westlock, Alberta, June 9, 1965:

“Oil painting enthusiasts of the Westlock area are pleased to learn that the Department of Extension has secured the services of one of Alberta’s foremost landscape painters, Mr. W.L. Stevenson, for a one week intensive course in landscape painting, to begin here June 21<sup>st</sup>....

He taught painting for seven years at the Calgary Allied Arts Centre. Mr. Stevenson has taught for the past three summers for the Extension Department in Edmonton and has instructed the Community Art Classes in Cochrane, Drumheller, High River, Medicine Hat, Ralston, Steller [Stetler] and Vulcan during the past winter season.”

## 1966

**William Leroy Stevenson,**  
 Canadian Art Galleries, April 4 – 16, 1966

title unknown, *The Calgary Herald*, April 22, 1966 [NGC clipping]:  
 - review of exhibition at Canadian Art Galleries, 811 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.W.

“This month, the work of Canada’s foremost landscape artist, W.L. Stevenson, is being featured...

In 1963 a major New York critic toured the Prairie provinces and highlighted Stevenson’s landscape paintings, wondering why American audiences weren’t familiar with such excellent work.

This collection also includes some interesting sketches.

There are a few winter scenes in heavy textured oils which are spoiled by pink tones that are out of character. Mr. Stevenson uses a complete palette and is able to introduce brilliant oranges and blue tones without destroying the unity of the compositions....

His flower groups are refreshing- these are not the trite photographic arrangements so often encountered and here the pink tones are well used. Perhaps the reasons that his splashes of strong color are successful is that they are always in the background. A good example is the scene which has a brilliant blue pool tucked away in the centre.

The lack of labelling or numbering makes definition of each work very difficult; presumably selection can be made by the “third from the right” method.”

December 14- fatal car crash in Clive, Alberta  
(north-east of Red Deer)

“Stevenson”, December 16, 1966 [Glenbow clipping]:

- still living at 212 17 Ave. S.W.
- survived by his brother Gerry J. Stevenson of Edmonton
- killed 4:30 pm when his car in collision with another on Highway 12, 1 ½ miles west of Clive
- son of Mrs. W. E. Stevenson
- predeceased by father William E. in 1937

Alberta Artist’s Rites Held, *The Calgary Herald*, December 20, 1966:

“service was held during the weekend... taught painting for seven years at the Calgary Allied Arts Centre. At the time of his death he was an instructor in the extension department of the university of Calgary.

Recent acquisitions of Mr. Stephenson's work have been made by the Glenbow Foundation, the Calgary Allied Arts Centre, the Lord Beaverbrook Gallery (\*) in New Brunswick and the world-famous Vincent Price collection....

**\* Foothills Farm, before 1963**

oil on masonite

60.96x 76.2 cm

Purchased with funds from The Canada Council for the Arts (Director's Choice Programme) and Friends of The Beaverbrook Art Gallery

Burial was in Burnsland Cemetery.”

Russell Harper mentions Stevenson's and Bates's rejection from the Calgary Art Club in his book, *Painting in Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966).

**1967**

elected (posthumously) to Canadian Group of Painters in a letter dated April 3, 1967 to Stevenson from George Hulme, Secretary-Treasurer, CGP.

**The Vincent Price Collection of Fine Art, Exhibition and Sale, Simpson-Sears, Calgary [undated]**  
**Trees & Underbrush, \$275**

**Paintings by Leroy Stevenson (1901- 1966)**, organized by the Western Canada Art Circuit

itinerary:

Kelowna Art Exhibit Society, October 23- November 12, 1967

Yorkton Art Centre, December 1- 22, 1967

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, January 16- February 4, 1968

Calgary Allied Arts Council, February 12 - 26

Weyburn Public Library, March 4- 20, 1968

Banff, June 1- 22, 1968

statement from WCAC, dated December 1967:

“During his lifetime, he enjoyed a certain amount of local and national recognition but this did not influence his style of painting which has not changed perceptibly over the years. ‘Quiet and conscientious’ best describe

this painter's perseverance with his almost sold preoccupation- landscape. Mainly concerned with the southern Alberta landscape, which he knew so well, he did not always leave his studio but allowed the weather and the seasons to dictate his moods for him. Sombre and brooding, this man's vigorous brushwork and mastery of colour caused the New York critic and writer to [sic] Greenberg, to say of him in 1964 "he is my discovery among landscape painters in Calgary."

This exhibition has been assembled by the Calgary Allied Arts Council with the aid of the Glenbow Foundation, and has been made possible by a grant from the Centennial Commission. The Western Canada Art Circuit is deeply grateful to Mr. D.P. Young, to the Calgary Allied Arts Council and to the Glenbow Foundation for the loan of works from their collections, and to Mr. Derek Whyte, of the Calgary Allied Arts Council; without his hard work and enterprise, this exhibition might never have been realized."

Checklist, dated December 1967:

1.	<b>Shades of Poe</b>	oil	26"x 22"
2.	<b>Untitled (Still Life)</b>	oil	26"x 22"
3.	<b>Untitled (Landscape with Red Barn)</b>	oil	26"x 22"
4.	<b>Autumn Snow (The Glenbow Foundation)</b>	oil	26"x 22"
5.	<b>Big Tree</b>	oil	26"x 22"
6.	<b>Alberta Landscape</b>	oil	26"x 22"
7.	<b>Untitled (Landscape)</b>	oil	26"x 22"
8.	<b>In the Woods</b>	oil	26"x 22"
9.	<b>On Prince's Island (C.A.A.C.)</b>	oil	26"x 22"
10.	<b>Spring Trees in a Pool</b>	oil	26"x 22"
11.	<b>Self Portrait</b>	oil	24"x 18"
12.	<b>Farm Yard</b>	oil	24"x 18"
13.	<b>Untitled (Trees)</b>	oil	24"x 18"
14.	<b>Untitled (Red Barn)</b>	oil	24"x 18"
15.	<b>Still Life with Sweet Potato</b>	oil	20"x 16"
16.	<b>Untitled</b>	oil	20"x 16"
17.	<b>Tree Stems</b>	oil	20"x 16"
18.	<b>Study for Autumn Lake Country</b>	oil	20"x 16"
19.	<b>Untitled</b>	oil	20"x 16"
20.	<b>Untitled</b>	oil	20"x 16"
21.	<b>Untitled</b>	oil	20"x 16"
22.	<b>Untitled</b>	oil	20"x 16"
23.	<b>Barns and Bushes (D.P. Young)</b>	oil	20"x 16"

24.	<b>Portrait of a Lady</b>	oil	16"x 12"
25.	<b>Head of an Old Woman</b>	oil	16"x 12"
26.	<b>Autumn 1931</b>	oil	16"x 12"
27.	<b>Untitled</b>	oil	12"x 14"
28.	<b>Flowers</b>	oil	11"x 14"
29.	<b>Trees</b>	oil	11"x 14"
30.	<b>Landscape</b>	oil	9"x 12"
31.	<b>Untitled</b>	watercolour	6"x 8"

(cost of show was \$2744.87, according to J. M. Wright, Director, Calgary Allied Arts Council, in a letter dated March 29, 1968 to Andre LeBlanc, Assistant Director of Planning, Centennial Commission, Calgary Allied Arts Foundation *fonds*, Glenbow Archives.

## 1968

**The Landscapes of Leroy Stevenson**, AGGV Jan.16- Feb. 4, 1968  
**Bulletin**, AGGV Jan.- Feb.:

“the Western Canada Art Circuit organised [sic] this touring show of Stevenson’s thickly and lusciously painted landscapes.”

“Stevenson paintings on exhibit”, *Weyburn Review*, March 7, 1968:  
 “Paintings by the late Leroy Stevenson (1901- 1965), of Calgary are being shown at the Weyburn Public Library from March 4 to 5. It is brought here by the Weyburn Arts Council....

His main concern was the southern Alberta landscape. He worked both in his studio and from nature, allowing the weather and the seasons to dictate his moods for him....

The exhibition has been assembled by the Calgary Arts Council.”

**Art Rental and Sales** [undisclosed which one, likely the Calgary Allied Arts Council], September 1968

1171 **Fish Creek**, oil, \$300

866 **Mixed Bouquet**, oil, \$300

1035 **In The Woods**, oil, \$150

1174 **Edge of West Coast Town**, oil, \$150

1341 **Fall’s Last Day** oil, \$100

1355 **Mt. Rundle**, oil \$300

1357 **Bend in the River**, oil, \$300

1358 **Fish Creek #2**, oil, \$300

1359 **Edge of Town** oil, \$300

### **1971**

Ronald Bloore: “Stevenson and Bates were the most advanced painters in Western Canada during the late 1920s.”

### **1973**

a Stevenson painting was purchased for the Alberta House, London, UK.

### **1976**

#### **William Leroy Stevenson**

exh. organized by Edmonton Art Gallery and curated by Raymond Ouellet. It offers the show for circulation in Western Canada through funding by the National Museums Corporation of Canada.

Includes:

**Nocturne**

**Untitled**

**Old House, Southern Alberta**

**Woman**

**Deep Pool**

**Untitled**

**Autumn Last Days**

**Shady Landscape**

**Young Girl**

**Autumn Bushes**

**Mountain Stream in Autumn**

**Winter**

**Natures Wonder**

**Untitled Landscape**

**Lake, September**

**Old Trees**

**Little Girl**

**Near Lake West of Edmonton**

**Landscape with Buildings #2**

**Self-Portrait 1928**

**Autumn Colours**

**Goblet and Bananas**

**Topper**

**Autumn Mountain  
Landscape With Buildings  
Flowers in Glass**

circulated to:

Kelowna Art Gallery, October 1976

Southern Alberta Art Gallery, May 10 – 29, 1977

Illingworth Kerr Gallery, Alberta College of Art, July 1977

Fort McMurray Public Library, January 1978

Prince George Art Gallery, July 1979

“100 works in bulldozer sale”, *Albertan*, April 24, 1976, “special to the *Albertan*”:

-at Canadian Art Galleries Ltd. on 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.W.

“On the sale counter are some 100 hitherto unseen Stevenson oil landscapes and still lifes, priced to go for unlikely bargains from \$250 to \$750, depending on size....

Gerald Stevenson, W.L.’s brother, and custodian of the entire collection, has succeeded in securing an outlet to dispose of the entire stocks. In the 10 years that he had these paintings, one wonders why he had not managed to organize some workable sequence and coherence on the pieces. It could have made this estate sale more meaningful than a 15- minute special....

Questions. Questions. Questions.”

"Exh. and estate sale of Roy Stevenson's works", *Albertan*, Oct. 16, 1976:

“In April 1976, the Canadian Art Galleries Ltd. was commissioned by Executor of the estate of the late W.L. Stevenson to hold an exhibition and sale of all the available [sic] paintings of this renowned painter. The success of the sale was beyond all expectations - a near sellout.

Since then the gallery has been most fortunate in obtaining newly acquired oil paintings from galleries, travelling art exhibitions, and rentals. This collection may well represent the last of Roy’s paintings; it certainly represents some of his best works!....

He was truly one of the major landscape artists of Western Canada especially in the eyes of most artists....

His pure, honest brushwork with his vibrant, almost violent use of color transforms our view of nature and inanimate surroundings.

L.E. Render, Curator of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute has a colored Stevenson painting in his book... and says that Stevenson's paintings suggest "the rich feeling of the earth."

Mr. Stevenson taught at the Calgary Art Centre, Banff School of Fine Arts and at the time of his tragic car accident in December 1966, was teaching at the University of Calgary- Extension Division.

The exhibition and estate sale previews October 17, from two o'clock, and runs until October 23."

"Estate Sale of newly acquired paintings by the late W. L. Stevenson, ASA", preview: October 17, 1976. Sale continues to October 23<sup>rd</sup>, Canadian Art Galleries, Calgary.

"Stevenson and his work", William Leroy Stevenson, Alberta College of Art Galleries, through August 14. **Albertan**, July 23, 1977

## **1979**

**W.L. Stevenson – Exhibition and Sale of Portraits**  
Art Rental and Sales Gallery, Edmonton Art Gallery  
December 15, 1978 – January 12, 1979

## **1981**

**Bates, Stevenson and Kerr**  
Shell Gallery  
curated by Gordon Snyder

**William Leroy Stevenson**  
Canadian Art Galleries  
show of woodcuts, lithographs and watercolours  
October 24, 1981



**1984****Painters of the West**

Robert Vanderlee Gallery, Edmonton

Feb. 29 – March 11, 1984

**1985****“Focus on Five”: Artists from the EAG Collection,**

January 12 – February 3, 1985

curated by Maggie Callahan

**Urban and Rural Landscapes of Western Canada**

Prairie Gallery, Grande Prairie

Feb. 9 –

**1986****Founders of the Alberta College of Art,**

October 24 – November 19, 1986

“ACA Gallery”

pages 8, 9, 102 of catalogue

**1992****W. L. Stevenson: 1926 to 1966****Painter of Light/Painter of Darkness**

August 8 – September 27, 1992

curated by Mark Joslin

researcher on contract: Nancy Townshend

**W. L. Stevenson, 1926 – 1966**

FAB Gallery, (Fine Arts Building),

Department of Art and Design, University of Alberta

September 30 – October 18, 1992

(This show was) “organized for the Provincial Extension Programme by the EAG with funds from the AFA.”

**2015/2016**

**Rough Country:** The Strangely Familiar in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Alberta Art.

Art Gallery of Alberta and The Glenbow Museum.

curated by Mary-Beth Laviolette and Ruth Burns.

