

Wood lover's hands turned part of Ned Hanlon's bed into cabinet

Frank Lomax learned to use his hands in Scotland skilfully enough to win a prize for handwork when he was 11 years old in 1902. His hands haven't been still since.

In the Lomax dining room he can point proudly to a beautifully scaled china cabinet. "It was made from the walnut that had been Ned Hanlan's (Toronto's famed sculler) marriage bed. The headboard was 10 feet tall."

Old wood is spoken of with reverence. It's not easy to find a piece of walnut today to form the top of a kneehole desk, he said.

Not only does Mr. Lomax collect old wood, which he fashions into fine examples of furniture, but he has acquired early Ontario examples of craftsmanship, which he has refinished to their original beauty.

He is precise in his identification and has authentic records to back his collection of antique furniture and the wood used in his own work.

There is a drop-leaf table made of sweet chestnut before the trees became extinct in Ontario. The grain of the wood is striking with the strong, distinctive marking, rarely seen today.

An imposing sideboard bears the label of Robert Hay before the Scottish cabinet-maker went into partnership to form the Jaques and Hay furniture company. The piece dates back to 1834 when Toronto was still York.



Frank Lomax checks hardware on curate he made after seeing an antique example.

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Frank Lomax, a Scot from Edinburgh, was "imported" with a group of young educated Scots by a Canadian bank about 1910 and remained in the local financial business for the rest of his career.

Frank, his wife Gladys and son Don, moved to 204 Lakeshore and lived there until the Clearances. Don, now 90 and an active member of the RCYC reside in their home on the Harbour Front overlooking the Bay and the Island.

(Editor's comments continued on Page 2)

Globe and Mail article
continued on page 2

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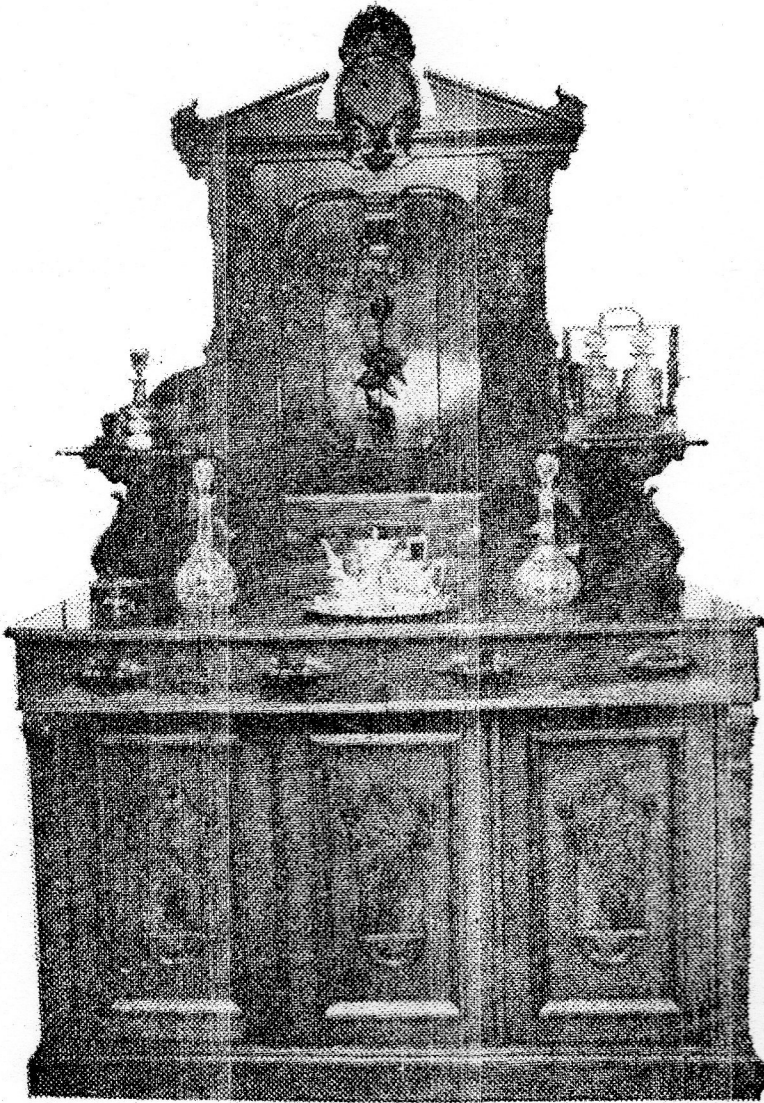
A simple walnut chair is impressed with the identification that it was made in Canada West. And there are cabinet clocks. One from an old school. It bears the legend Canadian Time. A wag-on-the-wall clock comes from Mickie's, the provisioner for years to Toronto's carriage trade.

But it is the pride in his own work that is evident around the house. A Davenport desk has been made of three-quarters fir ply and veneer. It is a copy of an original piece.

The rich glow of mahogany is emphasized in a small chest of drawers inlaid with striping and in various table tops with inlaid designs. One small stand has the Union Jack inlaid with dyed wood. "It's not painted," he said, "the wood had to be dyed to get the right colors."

Mr. Lomax can point to the comfortable pair of beds he made and the chesterfield and lounging chairs.

He still resents the loss of his house on Toronto island. "They burned it to the ground. The whole house had pine floors I finished by hand—there wasn't one knot in that pine."



Of interest to Islanders were their next-door neighbours at 202 Lakeshore, Charles And Edith Hanlan Michie. Edith was Ned Hanlan's eldest daughter. Charles and his brother John were grocery suppliers to Toronto's "carriage trade" from their store at 1 King Street West. Michies was family operated from 1835 to 1947, and was honoured with an historical plaque by Heritage Toronto.

Don Lomax thinks that next-door neighbor Edith Hanlan Michie gave her father Ned's "marriage bed" to his father Frank rather than leaving it to be destroyed when 202 was vacated in the Clearances.