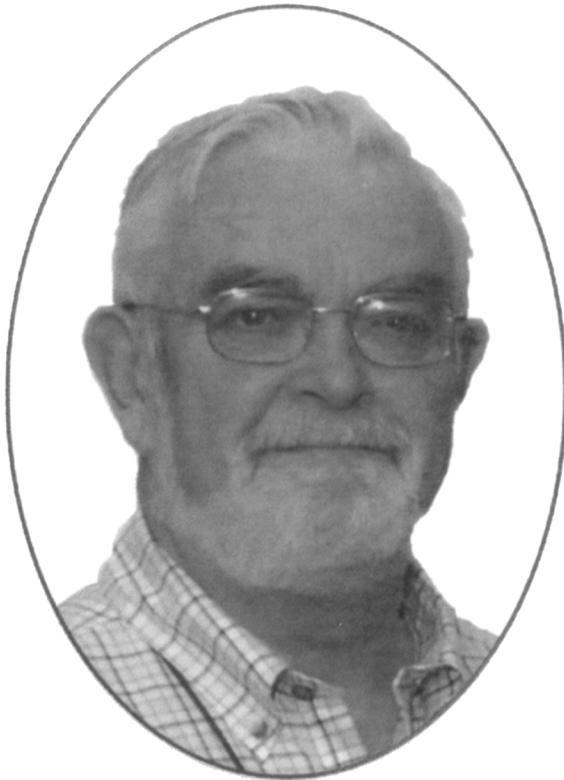


James “Jim” Stewart Pritchard

11 May 1939 – 14 April 2015

Jim Pritchard, (BA, Carleton University; MA, University of Western Ontario; PhD, University of Toronto) was president of the Canadian Nautical Research Society/Société canadienne pour la recherche nautique from 2002 to 2005 and an active member of the executive council from 1996 until shortly before his untimely passing during the preparation of the present number of The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord. He worked tirelessly for the journal – to ensure its survival during challenging times of transition, and, always, to keep its contents vital. His book reviews were numerous, the first appearing in volume I. He nurtured the highest standards of scholarship, invariably with good humour, good sense, and generosity. In recognition of Jim’s leadership, and his willing labours in the trenches of administration and peer review, the editors have gathered tributes from a few of his many friends – leaders in scholarship in their own right – whose lives and work he touched.



Jim Pritchard, 1939-2015.

James Pritchard, Professor Emeritus in the Department of History at Queens University, a distinguished member of the Canadian Nautical Research Society, was fully engaged in a new and original research project when his life was cut short by an unexpected and fatal illness in April, 2015. He was a dedicated and meticulous historian. We shall miss the rigour he brought to his work, and the pleasure of welcoming him and his charming lady, Suzanne, to our conferences.

Jim’s university career began in engineering, which was not to be his calling, but his service in the University Naval Training Division

did introduce him to seagoing life, and he went on to excel in the field of maritime history. Under the direction of William Eccles, at the University of Toronto, he chose as his field the French navy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is not too much to say that he brought many aspects of the subject out of obscurity, with the gaps he has filled, and the correctives he has made to existing interpretations. *Louis XV's Navy* (McGill Queens, 1987); *Anatomy of a Naval Disaster; The 1746 French Expedition to North America* (McGill Queens, 1995); *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge, 2004), represent an imaginative and eloquent reinterpretation of events. Having published these three major contributions in the field, he turned, after retiring from teaching, to the twentieth century in order to bring yet another subject out of obscurity. *A Bridge of Ships: Canadian Shipbuilding in the Second World War* (McGill Queens, 2011) is the kind of treatment that the shipbuilding industry deserves, and that it never received in the cursory accounts published just after the Second World War, under the direction of C.D. Howe, nor in the various accounts of Canadian wartime shipbuilding that appeared between 1945 and 2011. In this period, only one treatment of the subject attempted to cover more than a particular segment, and no really scholarly history had dealt with the entire story.

I first met Jim shortly after he had joined the history department at Queen's University, in the late 1960s. My subject dealt with the Royal Navy and Nova Scotia in the eighteenth century, something not too far removed from Jim's interest in the French navy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, the Directorate of History at the Department of National Defence, where I was then situated, was directing my attention to the twentieth rather than the eighteenth century, and Jim's duties were directing his energies to teaching more than publishing. In fact, in 1973 he did produce a translation of Count Frontenac's seventeenth century journey to Lake Ontario, but somehow this event escaped the notice of a newly minted historian trying make the transition from sailing navies to the Royal Flying Corps of the First World War.

When in 1987 *Louis XV's Navy, 1748-1762* appeared, it marked the culmination of exhaustive research in French archives, notably in 1967-1968 and 1974-5, and at least three further periods, in 1977, 1979, and 1981-2. His first research trip was a somewhat hair-raising experience. Not only did it coincide with a drastic fall in the value of the Canadian dollar, but with student riots in Paris. On the second visit, accompanied not only by Suzanne but by his newly arrived daughter Laura, born in France and a true Parisienne, he was now established in one of the the more reasonably priced arrondissements of Paris. Their one-room apartment encouraged frequent evening walks to help their little girl drop off to sleep! It was testament to their marvellous ability at adjusting to unusual circumstances that in 1974 they had no problem in welcoming this visitor to Paris with great hospitality, and accompanying him to a wonderful nearby restaurant.

Subsequent research trips to France, accompanied by their children, took them to the archival deposits in the coastal cities of France, followed by research at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich in 1988. Indeed, the Pritchard research programme, always a family affair, had as widely spread a compass as studies in North Atlantic

history are likely to embrace. Not many scholars, moreover, will have had the travel and gourmet adventures that Jim Pritchard encouraged his family to provide him with. When he turned his attention to Canadian shipbuilding in the Second World War Jim, whether he knew it or not, was following the advice he gave to his children. “I remember” said his son Michael, “that he recommended that Laura and I, and all undergrads, ...explore as many academic paths as possible... He did not see education as just job training.” Jim was insatiably curious, as he wanted his children to be, and as all historians ought to be. The outcome was a truly remarkable contribution to Canadian maritime historiography.

He wrote in the preface to this book:

How did the demand for ships emerge and develop in Canada, and how did the government respond? Who owned the shipyards, where were the ships built, and how did industry expand to meet the demand? How important was ship repairing within the larger context of the shipbuilding industry? Whence came the thousands of workers? How were they recruited and trained? Why did men and women keep working in the shipyards? How was the labour force organized? Did trade unions help the worker in their struggle with companies and governments for recognition, better wages, and improved working conditions? How did the shipbuilding industry acquire the steel for all the ships built in Canada? What role did the United States play? How did numerous foundries, structural steel firms, engineering and machine shops, and parts manufacturers across the country meet the demands of the rapidly growing industry? What significance ought to be attached to the various boatbuilding programs that were introduced during the war? Finally, can a definitive summary of Canadian ship production be assembled. And presented?

Some of these questions had already been asked, and some answered, at least in part, but, as historians of the Canadian navy had long known, the information was scattered, hard to find and often unreliable. There simply was no comprehensive account of wartime shipbuilding in Canada until Jim set his mind to the task. He not only filled tremendous gaps in the historiography, but set the pattern for future scholarship in the field. Others, it is true, had already identified important historical questions that still had to be asked, and we look forward to the results of those enquiries. When they see the light of day, it will be difficult to see them as anything but part of the historiographical trend that Jim Pritchard has started. It is indeed encouraging to know that work by today’s president of the CNRS, and at least two members of Council, is already in preparation, and that the research Jim had been carrying out on the shipowner Roy Mitchell Wolvin has been, as one of Jim’s final requests, passed on to Michael Moir, the archivist of York University.

We must all share a great sense of loss, and we will all, I am sure, want to convey our deepest sympathy to Suzanne, Michael and Laura.

W.A.B. Douglas, Ottawa, Ontario.

Jim Pritchard, my colleague and friend at Queen’s University history department, almost never shut up about his latest research. At our frequent post-retirement lunches he would explode with lengthy accounts of what he had only recently discovered during a foray into documents at an archive, often Library and Archives Canada. He would

overflow with information about the growth of Great Lakes shipping companies that morphed into Canada Steamship Lines and about its creative genius, Roy Wolvin. Leaning massively over the lunch table he would detail at great length the transformations that made this development possible and the life of the man who created it. His eyes alight, his words tumbling out, he would go on too long but never endangering the friendship and admiration for a scholar, a real scholar so strongly committed to his next book.

That was Jim, a real historian engaged in creating a meaningful understanding of an important segment of the Canadian past through the publication of a book. Not for him a higgledy piggledy article in an obscure journal to satisfy a mindless dean. He knew what historians of whatever description should do – publish books that embrace big topics, books that advance an argument, books that make a difference, books that invite a readership and books that attract a reaction. A big man, Jim did big books. He was widely recognized and praised for his four books on naval history, the chiefest of which was the *In Search of Empire* which won him the highly prestigious Wallace K. Ferguson prize in 2005. And you know what? Jim forgot to turn up for the award ceremony. He was just too busy with his research. That was Jim Pritchard.

Gerald Tulchinsky, Kingston, Ontario.

James Pritchard touched my life in a number of ways. Thirty years ago, at Queen's graduate school, where I was frequently depressed and miserable, I met him and immediately felt his warmth. He praised my marine art efforts at a time when my resolve to continue painting hung by a thread. He was strident in his encouragement, urging me to think big, that I must persevere, that I should seek government grants for my important work. That stance was a surprise to me, was huge at the time, and I will always remember him for it.

Jim was a demonstration that one can mix a sharp intellect with kindness and generosity of spirit. His down home, common sense approach to things and impish sense of humour, with Suzanne in company, made him a harbour of escape for me, and I came away from our meetings strengthened, and more ready to turn a blank canvas into something worthwhile.

I was intrigued with his research topics. It seemed that he was drawn to those murky forgotten episodes in history, botched expeditions, national embarrassments. I regarded that as leading by example – you tackle a tough subject, then probe relentlessly until you make some sense of it. And Jim's further addendum, you then generously share sources.

Jim is gone, but his work lives on. These are no idle words of comfort; in a few months, I am set to complete a painting showing a French Naval squadron in action in the Caribbean, and I will be relying on Jim's solid research to guide me. I'll give it my best shot, because good work lasts; Jim taught me that.

Peter Rindlisbacher, Katy, Texas.

I first encountered Jim Pritchard when he worked in the map division of the



Jim Pritchard as a student ... of the culinary arts. Picton, November 2013.

Parisian winter night. He and Suzanne understood that living in France was an opportunity for adventure not to be missed. The result was, no doubt, a lot of fun, but it also meant that Jim developed a real feel for the country that was at the centre of so much of his writing.

Dale Miquelon, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Jim Pritchard was unanimously nominated an Honourary Member of the Canadian Nautical Research Society/Société canadienne pour la recherche nautique at the Society's Annual General Meeting, Québec, 2008. He was awarded the Keith Matthews Award for best scholarly article in 2009, and the Keith Matthews Award for best book published in 2011. We will greatly miss his unbounded enthusiasm, his scholarship, and his most gracious friendship.

P.A. and R.S.

Public Archives of Canada and I was a young researcher for National Historic Sites in the early 1960s. I liked going to Jim with my map queries because he was so disarmingly friendly. A few years later I encountered him at the University of Toronto, where we were both Ph.D. Students. After finishing our comps we were both headed to Paris. Jim and his wife Suzanne left first. By the time I arrived there, Jim had developed a thorough grasp of the Archives Nationales and the Bibliothèque Nationale. He passed on to me what he had learned and told me about a cache of papers he thought very interesting and encouraged me to dig into them and perhaps come out with a dissertation. I followed his advice, to my great advantage. It was working side by side in the archives that I first understood Jim's ability to ferret out documents and his capacity for continuous desk work, as the Germans say, his *sitzfleisch*. He began counting the French ships crossing the Atlantic in colonial times. This was the arduous beginning of the stream of publications for which we historians of New France are so greatly indebted. But Jim was not all work. He was not adverse to stopping on the way home from the Archives for a grog on a chilly

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and in this journal, in addition to more than forty book reviews that appeared in very nearly every one of our twenty four volumes to date:

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