Marius Barbeau

Frédéric Charles Joseph Marius Barbeau, (March 5, 1883 - February 27, 1969). Born in Sainte-Marie-de-Beauce, Québec, Canada, Marius Barbeau studied law at the Université de Laval in Québec, won a Rhodes Scholarship, then studied anthropology during its early academic and institutional beginnings at Oxford and La Sorbonne between 1907 and 1910. Influenced by R.R. Marett, Marcel Mauss, and Franz Boas, Barbeau was Canada’s most influential ethnologist and folklorist in the first half of the twentieth century. Alongside his voluminous ethnological writings and recordings, Barbeau published three novels, one of which in particular, *The Downfall of Temlaham* (1928) is an example of the convergence of ethnography and early modernist writing in Canada, and was translated and re-imagined as an avant-garde drama by Marguerite Frankel Doré in Paris during the 1930s. Barbeau’s interest in ethnology and folklore included the plastic arts, music, painting, language, and linguistics, and he helped establish a nationalist interpretation of modernist art in Canada. He collaborated with curators, artists, politicians, and industry to produce exhibitions and performances of the work he had both recorded, and helped produce through financial help for artists such Emily Carr, Langdon Kihn, and painters of the Group of Seven, sometimes exhibiting both together, and leaving a controversial legacy between his work as an anthropologist and his artistic vision of Canada.

**Selected Bibliography:**

*Huron and Wyandot Mythology* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1915)

*The Downfall of Temlaham* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1928)

*Totem Poles of the Gitksan, Upper Skeena River, British Columbia* (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1929)

“Kamalmuk: Pièce en Trois Actes et Sept Tableaux avec Chantes” (Marius Barbeau Fonds, B92 Folder 1)

*Mountain Cloud* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1944)

*Le rêve de Kamalmouk* (Montreal: Fides, 1948)

*Tsimsyan Myths* (Ottawa: National Museum, 1961)

*Indian Days on the Western Prairies* (Ottawa: National Museum, 1965)

Jessup, Lynda, Andrew Nurse, and Gordon E. Smith. *Around and About Marius Barbeau: Modelling Twentieth-Century Culture* (Gatineau: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2008)

Images to choose from: (1) Photo of Barbeau c. 1957, owned by McMaster University archives; (2) Barbeau preparing to record Gitk’san singers, a still frame from his film Saving the Sagas, 1927; (3) Barbeau (right) with Louis Saint-Laurent (later Prime Minister of Canada, 1948-57) in 1906; owned by Canadian Museum of Civilization and accessible online; (4) Cover of the first edition of *The Downfall of Temlaham*, 1928, a scan of the entry writer’s own copy.