

= John Wilson Bengough =

John Wilson Bengough ( / ʒbʰnʰʰʰf / , 7 April 1851 ? 2 October 1923 ) was one of Canada 's first cartoonists , as well as an editor , publisher , writer , poet , entertainer , and politician . Bengough is best remembered for his political cartoons in Grip , a satirical magazine he published and edited , and which he modelled after the British humour magazine Punch . He published some cartoons under the pen name L. Côté .

Born in Toronto in the Province of Canada to Scottish and Irish immigrants , Bengough grew up in Whitby , where after graduating from high school he began a career in newspapers as a typesetter . The political cartoons of the American Thomas Nast inspired Bengough to direct his drawing talents towards cartooning ; a lack of outlets for his work drove him to found Grip in 1873 . The Pacific Scandal gave Bengough ample material to lampoon , and soon Bengough 's image of prime minister John A. Macdonald achieved fame across Canada . After Grip folded in 1894 , Bengough published books , contributed cartoons to Canadian and foreign newspapers , and toured giving chalk talks internationally .

Bengough was deeply religious and devoted himself to promoting social reforms . He supported free trade , prohibition of alcohol and tobacco , women 's suffrage , and other liberal beliefs , but was opposed to Canadian bilingualism . Bengough had ambitions to run for office , though Liberal leader Wilfrid Laurier convinced him against running for Parliament ; he served as alderman on the Toronto City Council from 1907 to 1909 . The Canadian government listed Bengough as a Person of National Historic Significance in 1938 and he was inducted into the Canadian Cartoonist Hall of Fame in 2005 .

= = Life and career = =

= = = Early life ( 1851 ? 73 ) = = =

Bengough 's grandparents John ( d . 5 April 1867 ) , a ship 's carpenter , and Johanna ( née Jackson , d . 18 March 1859 ) were born in St Andrews in Scotland in the 1790s and immigrated with their children to Canada at an unknown date ; they are known to have been in Whitby on Lake Ontario in the Province of Canada by the 1850s . They brought with them at least three children , including Bengough 's father John ( 23 May 1819 in Scotland ? 1899 ) who became a cabinetmaker . John Bengough was politically active : he advocated social reforms such as the Georgist single tax and had several Town Council appointments , though he never held political office . He used the title Captain , which suggests he may have sometime sailed ships out of Port Whitby .

Bengough 's father married Margaret Wilson , an Irish immigrant born in Bailieborough in County Cavan , and the couple had six children : five sons and a daughter . John Wilson Bengough was the second , born into the deeply Protestant family on 7 April 1851 in Toronto , where the elder Bengough had run a shop on Victoria Street in the 1840s . It is not known when they moved to Toronto , but it is known that by 1853 the family had moved back to Whitby .

Bengough attended Whitby Grammar School , where he was an average student ; he won a prize one year for general proficiency , for which he received a book titled Boyhood of Great Artists . He was an avid sketcher , a talent which caught the notice of his teacher , who presented Bengough with a set of paints one Christmas . Bengough credited this act with setting him on the path to a career as an artist . Whitby residents later reminisced of the young Bengough drawing chalk portraits of his neighbours on fences . He described himself as a " voracious reader " , particularly of the Whitby Gazette , a didactic weekly that stressed Christian values .

After graduation , Bengough tried his hand at a number of jobs , including photographer 's assistant , and he articulated to a lawyer for some time before getting a typesetting job at the Whitby Gazette . The Gazette 's editor was George Ham , an extroverted journalist who later worked as public relations chief for the Canadian Pacific Railway . Bengough contributed short local @-@ interest articles . In mid @-@ 1870 , Ham issued a four @-@ page daily to capitalize on interest in the

Franco @-@ Prussian War and commissioned Bengough to provide a serialized novel for it . The popular reception of The Murderer 's Scalp ( or The Shrieking Ghost of the Bloody Den ) encouraged Bengough to devote himself to a journalism career . The serial went unfinished because Ham cancelled the daily when the war died down . The papers and magazines that came into the Gazette offices , in particular Harper 's Weekly , introduced Bengough to the growing field of cartooning . Bengough reminisced ,

I divided my time between mechanical duties for sordid wages and poetry for the good of humanity , and meanwhile I kept an eye on Thomas Nast the cartoonist .

Bengough considered the politically and socially aware Nast a " beau ideal " whose " moral crusade against abject wrong " ? in particular his relentless Boss Tweed cartoons ? inspired the young Bengough to " emulate Nast in the field of Canadian politics " . Bengough so admired the cartoonist that he sent a cartoon to Harper 's of Nast confronting the Tammany Hall political machine , rendered in Nast 's style , to which the editor returned a positive response and an acknowledgement from Nast .

At twenty , Bengough moved to Toronto and became a reporter on politician George Brown 's newspaper The Globe . The Liberal paper was the most influential in the country ; Bengough 's family had supported the Liberal Party since before Confederation , and these connections probably played a role in his getting the position at the paper . Editorial cartooning had no presence in Canadian newspapers at the time and was not to have one until Hugh Graham brought the practice to his Montreal Star in 1876 ; Bengough stated he did not consider the possibility of editorial cartooning at the time . The lack of cartooning opportunities disappointed him , and he enrolled briefly in the Ontario School of Art , which he found pedantic and stifling ; he quit after one term .

= = = Grip ( 1873 ? 94 ) = = =

The legitimate forces of humor and caricature can and ought to serve the state in its highest interests , and that the comic journal which has no other aim than to amuse its readers for the moment , falls short of its highest mission .

Bengough told the following story of how he took up publishing : He had made a caricature of James Beaty , Sr. , editor of the conservative Toronto Leader , and Beaty 's nephew Sam found it so amusing that he made a lithographic copy for himself at the printer Rolph Bros. Impressed with his first exposure to lithography , and frustrated with the lack of opportunities to have his cartoons published , Bengough asked himself , " Why not start a weekly comic paper with lithographed cartoons ? " His brother Thomas remembered a somewhat different story in which Bengough first began distributing copies of his cartoons on the street . Of his printed cartoons , only one of Liberal member Edward Blake has survived .

In 1849 ? 50 John Henry Walker 's short @-@ lived weekly Punch in Canada provided the first regular outlet for Canadian political cartooning ; others such as The Grumbler ( 1858 ? 69 ) , Grinchuckle ( 1869 ? 70 ) , and Diogenes ( 1868 ? 70 ) did not last long , either . George @-@ Édouard Desbarats 's more conservative , Montreal @-@ based Canadian Illustrated News ( 1869 ? 83 ) lasted much longer . Bengough was to found the first major humour magazine in English Canada .

A raven character in the Charles Dickens novel Barnaby Rudge inspired the name of the magazine Grip . Its pages carried political and social commentary along with satirical cartoons , and its debut issue of 24 May 1873 declared : " Grip will be entirely independent and impartial , always , and on all subjects . " Bengough set the editorial policy and was the lead cartoonist .

Grip 's initial financing came from Toronto publisher Andrew Scott Irving . Later in the year Bengough set up an office on 2 Toronto Street and with his four brothers formed the Bengough Brothers company . Bengough continued to work at the Globe until Grip established itself . He used pseudonyms until he left the newspaper later in the year . The editor 's name appeared as a " Charles P. Hall " until Thomas Phillips Thompson took over as editor on 26 July under the pseudonym " Jimuel Briggs " ; he lasted until the 6 September issue , when he printed a pro @-@ alcohol article despite Bengough 's prohibitionist views . The Toronto Globe 's R. H. Larminie then

took on co @-@ editing duties as " Demos Mudge " with Bengough as " Barnaby Rudge " . Regular contributors other than Bengough included R. W. Phipps , who produced the greatest amount of Grip 's poetry ; Tom Boylan , who Bengough considered Grip 's best humourist ; Edward Edwards , who wrote sombre topical articles in contrast to the humour of the rest of the magazine ; and William Alexander Foster who wrote scathing editorials about Oliver Mowat 's Ontario Liberal Party , which contrasted with Bengough 's position and lent credibility to the magazine 's assertions of non @-@ partisanship . Writers such as Peter McArthur got their start with Grip .

Grip 's early issues attracted little notice . The Hamilton Spectator declared it " dull ... When Grip dies , which will be soon , Toronto will be much more cheerful . ... Grip is what Punch would be with all the spirit left out " . Events arising from the Canadian federal election of 1872 shortly gave Bengough sufficient popular material to lampoon : accusations of bribery and other improprieties involving prime minister John A. Macdonald and business magnate Hugh Allan inflated into the Pacific Scandal , the most closely followed scandal in the young nation 's history . Macdonald 's features lent themselves to caricature and gave Bengough the chance to proselytize . Circulation rose to about 2 @, @ 000 copies per issue at the time ; Bengough 's brother Thomas reported that each new issue was eagerly awaited at the House of Commons . A 23 August 1873 cartoon entitled " The Beauties of a Royal Commission : When shall we three meet again ? " drew praise from newspapers across Canada , as well as from Liberal MP Lucius Seth Huntington in a speech to the House of Commons .

Despite their Liberal leanings , in 1878 Bengough and Grip took the side of the proposed Conservative National Policy of high tariffs on trade with the US , against the governing Liberal stance of free trade . The issue contributed to the loss of Alexander Mackenzie 's incumbent Liberals to Macdonald 's Conservatives in the election of 1878 , despite Grip 's prediction that Mackenzie would win again . The magazine supported no party officially in its early years , but made its support for the Liberals explicit in the elections of 1887 and of 1891 , after Wilfrid Laurier had become party leader . In the mid @-@ 1880s the Grip Printing and Publishing Company took on printing duties for the Ontario Liberal government . This support , however , resulted in no federal election wins .

Grip had considerable influence on the public perception of politicians . That it was slanted in favour of Liberals and against Conservatives drove Conservative supporters to launch rival publications . The first was Jester , begun in 1878 , which featured cartoons by Henri Julien that painted Macdonald in a benevolent light . Jester failed to find an audience to match Bengough 's and folded the following year . In 1886 , Bengough reported a weekly circulation for Grip of 50 @, @ 000 .

In March 1874 , in the music hall of the Toronto Mechanics ' Institute , Bengough began giving comic chalk talk performances , which he later toured across the country . He impressed audiences with his ability to capture the likeness of members of the audience in a single penstroke . He continued his chalk talks throughout his life and travelled with them to the US , Australia , New Zealand , and Britain . He published an autobiography titled Chalk Talks in 1922 , the year before his death .

Early Canadian feminist writer Sarah Anne Curzon made regular contributions to Grip . At Bengough 's request in 1882 , she wrote the closet drama The Sweet Girl Graduate for the book The Grip Sack . The drama tells of a woman who disguises herself as a man to attend university at a time when women were barred in Canada from post @-@ secondary education .

In 1883 , Frank Wilson took over management of the printing of Grip . Thomas Phillips Thompson became associate editor . He shared with Bengough a radical political outlook and a taste for satire , though was less open to new ideas than Bengough , who was quick to attach himself to new causes . Thompson was anti @-@ imperialist , anti @-@ capitalist , and anti @-@ militarist . In 1892 , the managers of Grip passed the editorship from Bengough to Thompson and Bengough 's cartoons stopped appearing after the 6 August 1892 issue . Years later , Bengough 's brother Thomas blamed the board of directors at Grip , Inc . , for the falling out over " general mismanagement " , which may have involved losses incurred in relation to a government contract .

Grip 's tone became increasingly strident : anti @-@ French , anti @-@ Catholic , pro @-@ socialist . This , and an increased use of racial caricature , seem to have alienated readers . Under

the new editorship readership fell until Grip ceased publication in July 1893 . Grip , Inc . , sold off assets , such as its printing machines , to repay debts .

Bengough revived Grip in 1894 under a new company called Phoenix Publishing with a partner named Bell who had newspaper publishing experience in Belleville . They softened Grip 's tone , but the content appeared rushed and it lasted only from 4 January to 29 December 1894 . Macdonald had died in 1891 , and Bengough blamed the publication 's ill fortunes on the loss of such a target .

= = = Later life ( 1895 ? 1923 ) = = =

After Grip ceased publication , Bengough worked for the next quarter @-@ century as a cartoonist for a variety of newspapers , including the The Globe , The Toronto Evening Telegram , the Montreal Star , Canadian Geographic , the American The Public and The Single Tax Review , The Morning Chronicle and Daily Express in England , and the Sydney Herald in Australia .

Bengough continued to devote himself to political causes . He supported the Liberals ' successful campaign in the federal election of 1896 with cartoons in the Toronto Globe and with a song he composed titled " Ontario , Ontario " . He belonged to numerous political and social clubs . He was a founding member of the Royal Society of Canada in 1880 , to which the Governor General appointed him an Associate . He was professor of elocution at Knox College from 1899 to 1901 . He served as director of the Toronto Exhibition , auditor for the Canadian Peace and Arbitration Society , member for three years of the board of directors of the Victoria Industrial School , and president of the Toronto Single Tax Association , and took part in the People 's Forum social activist group .

In 1907 , Bengough campaigned to join the Toronto City Council as an alderman for Ward 3 . Major newspapers such as the Toronto Star promoted him , and the Toronto Daily World ran a photograph of him on its front page when he won . He won again in 1908 and 1909 . He counted future Toronto mayor Horatio Clarence Hocken amongst his reformist allies on the Council and promoted issues such as public ownership of hydroelectric power , but found little support for his ideas . His successes included legislation restricting the issuing of liquor licenses , which found support when he made it an election issue in his 1909 campaign .

In March 1909 , Bengough took a leave of absence from the Toronto City Council to tour Australia and New Zealand and gave up his post when he returned . When the First World War broke out , he devoted his energies to promoting patriotism and the war effort , and supported conscription , a cause that was popular in English Canada but unpopular in Quebec and which ran counter to the Liberal Party position . Bengough nevertheless continued to support the party and used his cartoons to promote party leader William Lyon Mackenzie King in the federal election of 1921 .

Following a chalk @-@ talk performance in Moncton , New Brunswick in 1922 , Bengough suffered an attack of angina pectoris , attributed to overwork during a previous tour of Western Canada . He died of it on 2 October 1923 at his drawing board at his home on 58 St Mary Street in Toronto while working on a cartoon in support of an anti @-@ smoking campaign . At his memorial service on 22 November , the editor of the Hamilton Herald , Albert E. S. Smythe , declared him the " Canadian Dickens " and one of Walt Whitman 's " great companions " .

= = Personal life = =

Bengough was of average height and had grey eyes and dark hair . He married twice ; neither marriage produced children . He married Helena " Nellie " Siddall in Toronto on 30 June 1880 ; she died in 1902 . He remarried to a friend from his school days , the widow Annie Robertson Matteson , in Chicago on 18 June 1908 . Neither appears to have written about Bengough .

= = Style = =

Bengough drew mainly political cartoons . His cartoons and writing tend towards the preachy and didactic ; he believed that humour should serve the interests of the state rather than merely to amuse . Bengough tended in his writing towards satirical humour and puns , which George Ramsay

Cook called " sometimes sophomoric " . He read Dickens , Shakespeare , and Carlyle with particular devotion .

Bengough had little exposure to formal art education aside from one term at the Ontario School of Art . His sketchy cartoons derived from a mid @-@ 19th century engraving style ; while often drawn well , they were crowded in composition and sometimes borrowed from other sources . Bengough could draw in contrasting styles , as evidenced by cartoons he did under the pseudonym of L. Côté . As typical of political cartoonists of the time , Bengough aimed less at laughter than at social satire and depended more on readers ' understanding of densely packed allusions .

No other political figure came to life so vividly beneath Bengough 's pen ; no other cartoonists , even those who were far better draughtsmen were able to capture Macdonald 's style and mannerisms as effectively .

Bengough 's cartoons are best remembered for fixing his renditions of Macdonald in the public imagination . Bengough 's bulbous @-@ nosed politician often appeared baggy @-@ eyed with bottles of alcohol in his hands as a sombre symbol of corruption , in contrast to the work of John Henry Walker , another prolific caricaturist of Macdonald who depicted the prime minister 's drunkenness to make light of him . Bengough continued to hone his draftsmanship after Macdonald 's death , but the wit and inspiration of his Macdonald cartoons continue to draw the most attention .

Bengough 's chalk talks have left less of a mark on the public memory , though audience members have passed down Bengough 's renditions of them as heirlooms . Bengough delivered humorous anecdotes and made impressions as he caricatured audience members and well @-@ known locals in a flamboyant manner , adding the identifying details only at the end .

= = Politics = =

There was a premier named John A.

Who , wishing in office to stay ,

To one Allen did barter a great railway charter ?

And dated his ruin from that day .

Bengough 's reputation was as a supporter of the Liberal Party of Canada and its pro @-@ democratic platform . His family had been supporters since before Confederation ; his father had supported Oliver Mowat and both his brother Thomas and sister Mary worked in Mowat 's provincial government . Members of his family were to play roles in the Liberal Party into the twentieth century ; Bengough and his brother Thomas had ties close enough with Wilfrid Laurier to ask for favours , and both were also close to William Lyon Mackenzie King . Bengough had ambitions to run for Parliament , but Liberal leader Laurier convinced him against it ; Laurier also turned down a request of Bengough 's for a Senate appointment as reward for a lifetime of Liberal support .

Grip 's political stance was one of disinterest , but a large portion of Bengough 's income came from Liberal publications , and Macdonald and his Conservatives were favourite targets of Bengough 's cartoon attacks , notably during the Pacific Scandal . His association with the Liberals was so strong that Charles Tupper quipped in Parliament that Grip should change its name to Grit ? a popular nickname for Liberal Party members . His best @-@ remembered cartoons were those aimed at Macdonald and the Conservatives , but his criticisms targeted Liberals as well ? Edward Blake had his subscription cancelled when he was the victim of a particular cartoon . Macdonald 's Conservative Daily Mail , launched in 1872 , provided a rivalry with the Liberal Globe that provided fuel for Bengough 's satire , as did infighting in the Liberal Party over The Globe , which allowed Bengough to distance himself to a degree from criticism of Liberal partisanship .

Bengough was a proponent of such issues as proportional representation , prohibition of alcohol and of tobacco , the single tax espoused by Henry George , and worldwide free trade . He held progressive views on women 's suffrage ; in 1889 supported the Dominion Women 's Enfranchisement Association efforts to have a bill proposed by Liberal MP John Waters that would have granted suffrage to Canadian women . He expressed anti @-@ imperialist ideals until the mid @-@ 1890s , after which he supported imperialism . He supported Canada 's involvement in the Second Boer War and First World War . Bengough contributed to the ongoing debates concerning

the development of a Canadian identity during the nation's early years . He showed a marked ethnic nationalism in that he promoted English as the nation's sole official language , and the separation of church and state , a view that was directed particularly at the Catholic , French @-@ speaking Québécois . He depicted the Québécois as backward and Quebec politicians as always demanding money . Bengough declared he looked forward to :

when the monstrosity of a double official language and dual schools will be done away with throughout the whole country . Our real national life will date from that day .

Bengough had liberal views on race relations , and painted a picture of Canada as being more open to integration than the US during the Reconstruction Era ; according to David R. Spencer , his views on race were not likely widely shared in Canada at the time . While Bengough sympathized with the plight of Canada's native peoples , he condemned the 1885 North @-@ West Rebellion and called for the execution of Métis rebel leader Louis Riel , and celebrated Major @-@ General Frederick Dobson Middleton's victory at the Battle of Batoche in Saskatchewan with a poem . His racial caricatures could , according to Carman Cumming , lead a modern reader to see him as " a racist chauvinist bigot " : they distort facial features and behaviour in ways typical of cartoons of the era and employ such derogatory terms as " coon " for blacks and " sheeny " for Jews . Bengough called for restrictions on Chinese and Irish immigration and his work shows a bias against immigrants who did not conform to Anglo @-@ Saxon Protestant ideals .

Bengough intended his didactic cartoons to impart moral instruction . He expressed a deep devotion to religion . He had a Presbyterian upbringing , though as an adult he subscribed to no denomination . He promoted Christian ideals as solutions to social issues and thus , for example , opposed streetcars running on Sundays . He proclaimed a Protestant work ethic widely expressed by Canadian artists and intellectuals of the late 19th century . In his writing he frequently made statements about the role of Man in God's world , and insisted that politics should conform to the will of God . The editor of Canadian Methodist Magazine William Henry Withrow declared Bengough " an Artist of Righteousness " who was " always on the right side of every moral question " .

= = Legacy = =

As Nast had in the US , Bengough succeeded in establishing editorial cartooning as a force in journalism in the late 19th century . The church minister and Queen's College principal George Monro Grant called Bengough " the most honest interpreter of current events [ Canada happens ] to have " and declared he had " no malice in him " but had " a merry heart , and that doeth good like medicine " . The reformist English newspaper editor William Thomas Stead considered Bengough " one of the ablest cartoonists in the world " .

Outlets for political cartoons were mostly limited to illustrated magazines until they found a home in daily newspapers in the 20th century . Bengough's busy , moralizing style began to fall out of favour by the 1890s in contrast to the cleaner style practised by such cartoonists as Henri Julien and Sam Hunter . His caricatures nevertheless left an impression on the public consciousness in Canada for generations to follow .

Bengough's caricatures continue to illustrate Canadian texts ? examples in which they are prominent include Creighton's biography John A. Macdonald ( 1952 ? 55 ) , Armstrong and Nelles' The Revenge of the Methodist Bicycle Company : Sunday Streetcars and Municipal Reform in Toronto , 1888 ? 1897 ( 1977 ) , and Waite's Arduous Destiny : Canada 1874 ? 1896 ( 1971 ) . Historians use the cartoons to demonstrate issues and attitudes of Bengough's era , as well as for their artistic qualities , removed from their satirical contexts . Historian Peter Busby Waite considered Grip " one of the most interesting sources for the social history of Ontario in the latter nineteenth century " .

Bengough's artistic legacy rests chiefly on his caricatures of Macdonald . To Peter Desbarats and Terry Mosher , Bengough's bulbous @-@ nosed caricatures of Macdonald as " ungainly , boozy , and corrupt ... engraved itself on the public mind , particularly in the days before newspapers published photographs of politicians " . Macdonald nevertheless deflated much of the power his caricaturists might have had as he often made light of his own alcoholism . Bengough met the prime

minister in person only once .

Though his cartoons have continued to thrive , Bengough 's life and career as a writer has drawn far less attention . Bengough biographer Stanley Paul Kutcher considered his poetry " undistinguished " . Historian George Ramsay Cook commended Bengough 's approach to have " nurtured the growth of social criticism in late Victorian Canada without much of that humourless self @-@ righteousness that so often characterizes reformers " . Historian Carman Cumming 's Sketches of a Young Country prvides an in @-@ depth analysis of Grip 's politics .

The town of Bengough , Saskatchewan , incorporated 15 March 1912 , was named after the cartoonist . On 19 May 1938 , the Canadian government listed Bengough as a Person of National Historic Significance and dedicated a plaque to him at 66 Charles Street East in Toronto . Bengough was inducted into the Canadian Cartoonist Hall of Fame in 2005 . The McMaster University Library in Hamilton , Ontario , holds the J. W. Bengough papers in its Division of Archives and Research Collection .

= = Published works = =

1875 ? The Grip Cartoons . Rogers and Larminie

1876 ? The Decline and Fall of Keewatin . Grip Publishing Co .

1882 ? Bengough 's Popular Readings : Original and Select . Bengough , Moore and Bengough

1882 ? The Grip @-@ Sack : A Receptacle of Light Literature , Fun and Fancy . The Grip Printing and Publishing Co .

1882 ? Grip 's Comic Almanac for 1882 . Bengough , Moore and Bengough

1886 ? A Caricature History of Canadian Politics ( two volumes ) . The Grip Publishing and Printing Co .

1895 ? Motley : Verse Grave and Gay . William Briggs

1896 ? The Up @-@ to @-@ date Primer . Funk & Wagnalls

1897 ? The Prohibition Aesop . Royal Templar Book and Publishing House

1898 ? The Gin Mill Primer . William Briggs

1902 ? In Many Keys . William Briggs

1908 ? On True Political Economy ( The Whole Hog Book ) . American Free Trade League

1922 ? Chalk Talks . The Musson Book Co .

No copies remain of the comic opera Hecuba ; or Hamlet 's Father 's Deceased Wife 's Sister , a comic opera with score by G. Barton Brown . Publisher F. F. Siddall registered it for copyright in 1885 . The opera may have been an earlier version of Puffe and Co . , or Hamlet , Prince of Dry Goods , for which an undated and possibly unpublished script exists , and for which Clarence Lucas had written a score that Bengough appears to have rejected .