What happened to Tom Thomson?

New mystery coming for student sleuths

Research and development on one of the final three mysteries of the University of Victoria-based Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History Project is nearing completion at the Robarts Centre.

“Death on a Painted Lake: The Tom Thomson Tragedy,” revolves around the great Canadian painter who went out alone for a fishing trip on a lake in Algonquin Park on July 8, 1917, and never returned. His empty canoe was sighted on the lake that afternoon, and his body was found afloat in the lake eight days later.

What happened to Thomson? Was it an accident caused by bad luck? Or did he meet a more sinister end as a result of debt, his support of the First World War or a love interest?

The research director for this mystery is Gregory Klages, PhD candidate in Communication and Culture at York University in Toronto. Klages has provided investigators with a wealth of on-line information about Tom Thomson and the circumstances surrounding his demise (see www.canadianmysteries.ca).

The Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History projects have been selected by a national competition. Student sleuths will soon have a total of 12 whodunits with which to hone their historical and detective skills.

To date, the project includes these nine mysteries:

- Where Is Vinland?
- Torture and the Truth: Angélique and the Burning of Montreal
- Jerome: The Mystery Man of Baie Sainte-Marie
- Who Killed William Robinson? Race, Justice and Settling the Land
- Who Discovered Klondike Gold?
- Aurore! The Mystery of the Martyred Child
- Explosion on the Kettle Valley Line: The Death of Peter Verigin
- Where Is Vinland? NEW!
- Torture and the Truth: Angélique and the Burning of Montreal
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www.canadianmysteries.ca
Visit the Robarts Centre’s website at www.yorku.ca/robarts for past issues of Canada Watch

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Also available on the website, the Robarts lecture series:

- “English Canada and Quebec: Avoiding the Issue” by Kenneth McRoberts – Sixth Annual Robarts Lecture 1991
- “1492 and All That: Making a Garden out of a Wilderness” by Ramsay Cook – Seventh Annual Robarts Lecture 1992
- “Politics on the Boundaries: Restructuring and the Canadian Women’s Movement” by Janine Brodie – Eighth Annual Robarts Lecture 1994
- “Defining Aboriginal Title in the 90’s: Has the Supreme Court Finally Got it Right?” by Kent McNeil – Twelfth Annual Robarts Lecture 1998
- “The Writer’s Conscience: or why reports of the death of the author have been greatly exaggerated” speaking notes by Susan Swan – Fourteenth Annual Robarts Lecture 2000
- “Canadian Movies, eh?” by Seth Feldman – Fifteenth Annual Robarts Lecture 2001
- “Citizenship After Orientalism” by Engin F. Isin – Distinguished Robarts Lecture Series 2002
- “The Digitalization of Knowledge: Tribal Ignorance and the African Diaspora” by Paul E. Lovejoy FRSC – Distinguished Robarts Lecture Series 2002