

# Manitoba Historical Society

Keeping history alive for over 143 years

 Search[Quick Links](#)[About Us](#)[Resources](#)[Prairie History](#)[DONATE](#)

## Memorable Manitobans: Hamilton Mack Laing (1883-1982)

Naturalist, educator, author.

Born at Hensall, Ontario on 3 February 1883, son of William O. Laing (1840-?) and Rachel Mack (1852-?), he grew up three miles north of [Steinbach](#), near [Clear Springs](#), and attained his third-class teaching certificate (1900) from the [Central Normal School](#). He taught in rural Manitoba schools between 1901 and 1911, including in the vicinity of [Snowflake](#) (1901) and [Boissevain](#) (1904) as well as Principal of [Oakwood School](#) (1907, 1909-1910). When not in the classroom, he was often out exploring and observing the outdoors across western Canada and the northwest United States, sketching and taking notes on wildlife, collecting taxidermic specimens, and bird-watching. In 1905, he received a diploma from the National Press Association at Indianapolis, Indiana after which he returned to his parents' [Winnipeg](#) residence at 330 Carlton Street (1906). In 1907, he wrote his first fictional work, *The End of the Trail*. He took art classes at the Pratt Institute at Brooklyn, New York (1911-1914) and, upon graduation, he purchased a motorcycle and rode from New York to [Oak Lake](#).

He first visited British Columbia in 1909, eventually taking up long-term residence at Comox in 1922. During the 1920s and 1930s, he conducted field work for the National Museum of Canada. He authored over 700 articles and many books, including *Out With The Birds* (1913), *Wildfowling Tales* (1921), and *Allan Brooks: Artist and Naturalist* (1979). His writings also appeared in newspapers across the continent, including the [Manitoba Free Press](#) as early as 1922. In 1927, he married Ethel May Hart (c1896-1944) at Portland, Oregon.

He died in British Columbia in February 1982 and was buried in the Sandwich Cemetery at Courtenay. He is commemorated by the Mack Laing Nature Park at Comox, British Columbia and his collections are held at the Comox Archives and Museum.

### Sources:

Birth registrations [James Nicol Laing], [Manitoba Vital Statistics](#).

Death registrations, [British Columbia Vital Statistics](#).

1891 Canada census, [Library and Archives Canada](#).

1901, 1906, & 1911 Canada censuses, [Automated Genealogy](#).

[About Mack Laing](#), Mack Laing Heritage Society.

"Diplomas from the Norman," [Manitoba Morning Free Press](#), 29 November 1900, page 6.

"Oak Lake," [Manitoba Free Press](#), 15 June 1912, Western Section page 2.

"Out with the birds," [Boston Globe](#), 14 June 1913, page 4.

"Sportsman-author is rabid motorcyclist," *Binghamton Press*, 7 November 1914, page 7.

"Sportsman-author rides motorcycle," *Huntington Herald*, 20 October 1914, page 3.

"Sunset writer visits famous Oregon caves," *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 21 June 1917, page 4.

"How birds keep warm in their beds," *Edmonton Journal*, 15 March 1919, page 28.

"A winter hawk," *Manitoba Free Press*, 25 February 1922, page 9.

"The Snow Flake," by Hamilton M. Laing, *Manitoba Free Press*, 10 March 1922, page 11.

"Singers of the Fields," by Hamilton M. Laing, *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 May 1922, page 15.

"With the waterfowl," by Hamilton M. Laing, *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 October 1922, page 13.

"Oak Lake is located eight miles from water; district is fertile and prosperous," *Manitoba Free Press*, 18 September 1926, page 45.

"Interesting visitors at Cultus Lake on mission from National Museum, Ottawa," *Chilliwack Progress*, 21 July 1927, page 10.

"National Museum of Canada planning extensive research throughout West this season," *Baldur Gazette*, 28 June 1928, page 5.

"Raging cougar likes his deer," *Brandon Daily Sun*, 19 September 1930, page 11.

"Chickadee notes - No. 577, Ice-bound lake checks Blue Geese," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 16 April 1932, page 31.

"More rarities," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 17 June 1933, page 28.

"Chickadee notes - No. 1619, An invader from the west," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 30 May 1952, page 23.

"The Sandhill crane," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 13 October 1962, page 22.

"Hamilton Laing recalls childhood in Clearsprings," *Steinbach Carillon*, 29 November 1978, page 12.

"Exhibition is a dream come true for painter," *Brandon Sun*, 18 November 1980, page 13.

This page was prepared by [Nathan Kramer](#).

*Page revised: 22 December 2018*

## Memorable Manitobans

This is a collection of noteworthy Manitobans from the past, compiled by the [Manitoba Historical Society](#). We acknowledge that the collection contains both reputable and disreputable people. All are worth remembering as a lesson to future generations.



Search the collection by word or phrase, name, place, occupation or other text:

Search

Google Custom Search

Browse surnames beginning with:

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P  
| Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | Y | Z

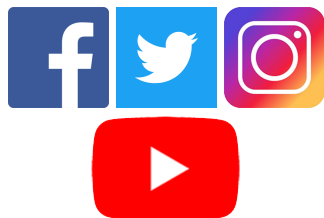
Send corrections and additions to the Memorable Manitobans Administrator at [biographies@mhs.mb.ca](mailto:biographies@mhs.mb.ca)

**Support the MHS**

**Donate**



[Criteria for Memorable Manitobans](#) | [Suggest a Memorable Manitoban](#) | [Firsts](#) | [Acknowledgements](#)



For queries on the above page, please contact the [MHS Webmaster](#).

[Home](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Donations](#)

© 1998-2022 [Manitoba Historical Society](#). All rights reserved.

[Back to top of page](#)