

Letters handwritten by the acclaimed Nova Scotia folk artist Maud Lewis (1901-1970) will be auctioned online, April 13th

The letters -- a discovery of rare correspondence into Maud Lewis's secluded life -- are being sold by Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd. in Canada, online-only.

NEW HAMBURG, ONTARIO, CANADA, April 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In 1965, The Star Weekly magazine and CBC-TV both shone a spotlight on the little-known, self-taught Nova Scotia folk artist [Maud Lewis](#) (1901-1970). Her world suddenly changed.

“

A few months before his death in 2003, my father and I opened the trunk together. I remember his smile as we recalled the days gone by, and the little old lady who painted pretty pictures.”

Sheila M. Kinnear

Now, Ms. Lewis's letters handwritten to a friend in London, Ontario will come up for bid at Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd., this coming Saturday, April 13th, beginning promptly at 10 am Eastern time. The auction will be online-only.

Details of Maud Lewis's secluded and impoverished life in Marshalltown – where she and her husband Everett shared a tiny one-room house with no electricity or running water

– became public knowledge. She complained about receiving more than 300 letters after all the publicity and evidently had no plans to answer them.

When the White House wrote to secure two paintings, her response was concise: she would send the paintings after receiving payment. Her work was suddenly in great demand, but she seemed impervious to the fame.

While it's believed Maud Lewis had few correspondents during that time, there is one man she confided in. She wrote to him, and he wrote her back. He also sent her packages of badly-needed art supplies. His name was [John H. Kinnear](#), of London, Ontario.

In his book *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis*, author Lance Woolaver writes, “Maud was not a careerist, and she valued those friends, like Ontario painter John Kinnear, who corresponded with her regularly, far more than an order from a Premier or President.”

An artist himself, Kinnear had read The Star Weekly story and was captured by Lewis's plight. He was deeply moved by her circumstances, her poverty and her severe disabilities. But he also recognized her extraordinary talent and took it upon himself to do what he could to help.

And so began their friendship and rare correspondence, which lasted five years until Lewis died of pneumonia in 1970.

Kinnear's daughter [Sheila M. Kinnear](#), also an artist, remembers that relationship and inherited many of the letters sent to her father by Maud Lewis. Dating between 1966 and 1967, the remaining six handwritten letters she saved are being offered in Miller & Miller's April 13th Canadiana & Historic Objects sale. The group carries an estimate of \$3,500-5,000. Each letter provides a rare window into Lewis's life and her daily struggle as a modest artist with newly found fame.

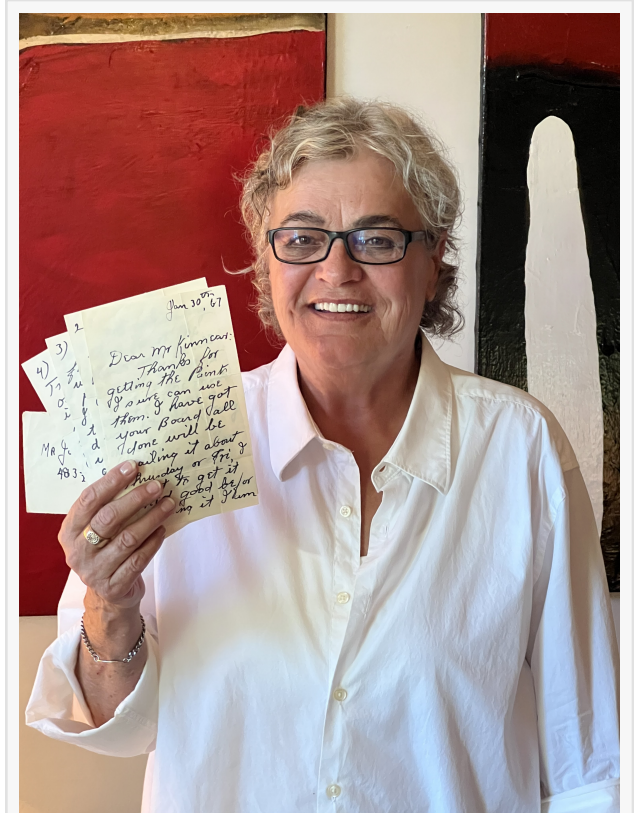
Maud Lewis lived most of her life in abject poverty. She sold paintings from her tiny roadside home, and never for more than ten dollars. Since her death, interest in her work has skyrocketed and a world record was set at Miller & Miller's May 14, 2022 auction, when the hammer came down at \$350,000 (Canadian) for a rare Maud Lewis painting, Black Truck. Remarkably, the painting had been traded by its owner in the 1970s for a few grilled cheese lunches.

"A few months before his death in 2003, my father and I opened the trunk together," wrote Sheila in her story that appeared in Reader's Digest in 2021. "I remember his smile as we recalled the days gone by, and the little old lady who painted pretty pictures."

Ms. Kinnear went on to describe her father's affinity for Maud Lewis and his desire to help her. She explained he was a World War II veteran who'd fought the Nazis and had been a prisoner of war three times. "He knew pain and hardship," she wrote. "He also valued kindness and believed in lending a hand to others less fortunate."

Reflecting on her father's relationship with Maud Lewis, Sheila Kinnear offered the words her father repeated many times throughout his life: "It is never too late to help someone. You may be the only one that does."

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Sheila Kinnear, the daughter of the late John H. Kinnear, holds a group of letters written to her father by the acclaimed Nova Scotia artist Maud Lewis. The letters will be sold this Saturday, April 13th, by Miller & Miller Auctions Ltd.

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