

## The Sun Worshippers Painting

In 2006 the County of Prince Edward was presented with the historically significant painting 'The Sun Worshippers' by Canadian pre-Confederation primitive painter, Ira B. Barton. The presentation was made by Professor Thomas H.B. Symons, Chairman of the Board for The Perkins Bull Collection Inc. of Peterborough.

The "Sun Worshippers" painting depicts a shoreline scene with a canoe and an Indian encampment in the foreground, and other canoes and encampments grouped at several locations in the background. The painting hangs on display at Shire Hall on a permanent loan basis.

Ira Barton (1820-1888) was born and raised in the Bay of Quinte-Valley of the Trent community, the son of a hat maker and minor municipal official. Censuses taken in 1861 and 1881 list Mr. Barton as a 'painter resident' in Demorestville, Sophiasburgh Township, County of Prince Edward.

"We are honoured to have such an important work of art on permanent display in Shire Hall," said Mayor Leo P. Finnegan. "The opportunity for our citizens, both present and future, to enjoy this painting by a former resident is extraordinary."

One of Mr. Barton's paintings is in the Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, another is at Upper Canada Village. The Upper Canada Village painting was borrowed by the National Gallery of Canada for a 1973 exhibition. A self-taught and highly imaginative painter, one of his paintings received, in its time, something like world acclaim as an illustration for Harriet Beecher Stowe's classic Uncle Tom's Cabin.

