

SHORT STATEMENT CONCERNING SAMUEL de CHAMPLAIN's BUST.

As the sculptor and author responsible for designing a new look of this illustrious pioneer, let it be known that these efforts weren't easy. Herewith as follows, I will briefly describe this journey.

From the onset, I have always known that the image (the physiognomy) given to Champlain was false. The sad part is that historians and educators were all aware that the false image was that of Michel di Particelli, who was responsible for the finances of the king of France. This hoax dating back to 1854, was discovered in 1900. Still to this day, our school books, drawings and sculptures continued to project the ridiculously false image.

It wasn't until 1980, that I was able to obtain a collection of books (written in old French) which Champlain wrote during his journey in this part of the continent which became Canada. Throughout this lecture, I was able to draw an image of the man, character-wise, ambitions, outlooks and relations with the first people. From many of his daily accounts, written descriptions of the man at that time and the genetic looks plausible, I have given him a revised physiognomy. While I'm fully aware that the image given will never be true, I firmly believe however, that mine is less false !

Throughout my lecture of Champlain's memoirs, I was able to discover the Algonquin Chief Tessouat. A strong leader with whom Champlain had a relationship built on mutual respect. It wasn't until 2002, while in my newly built studio in Mount Pleasant, Ontario, that I began drawing different images of Champlain and Tessouat. As a sculptor of public figures, we normally start a sculpture once given a contract. In the case of Champlain and Tessouat, I undertook the task of trying to approach different individuals to finance a three metres high sculpture of both historical figures.

After many unsuccessful efforts, I decided to undertake and complete a three meter high sculpture of Champlain in clay, hoping to begin some kind of positive reactions. No such luck ! Then I asked the city of Hull if they would allow me to exhibit my clay sculpture at the City Hall, hoping to attract the attention of potential supporters.

Transporting a highly delicate clay sculpture from my studio to the City Hall was a very delicate operation indeed. After three months of exposure, I was able to find the needed fund to cast in bronze Champlain's sculpture. Then Moving the clay sculpture to the foundry in Inverness Quebec for moulding and casting in bronze. From that first casting, I had a mould made of a bust which was donated to Champlain College. The statue was inaugurated in 2004 in Hull.

From my present studio in Jonquière, Quebec, I kept busy trying to find the funds and a proper site for the Tessouat's sculpture. Again and again, I taught of sculpting a clay model and try my luck in finding a place to exhibit as I had done for Champlain, but instead, I continued my approach with the Algonquin community. It wasn't until later in the year 2000, that I was able to meet the right people at the right time. It's with much support and enthousiasm that the Algonquin community was able to find the needed funds for the sculpture.

Again, a proper site had to be found to exhibit the sculpture. With much diplomacy and convincing arguments, we were finally able to negotiate a highly prestigious site on the grounds of the Canadian Museum of History. It is worth noting here that Grand Chief Tessouat, is the first and only historical figure located on the grounds of this institution. The sculpture was inaugurated in september 2017.

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