

THE LABRADOR INSTITUTE OF MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY  
& THE LABRADOR FILM FOUNDATION

present

## LABRADOR/ANS ON FILM

2014-15 SEASON

### SCREENING #2: A WOMAN'S WAY THROUGH UNKNOWN LABRADOR?

There are some things – people, events, stories – that the medium of film is ill-suited to represent. In such instances, critics are quick to judge directors. Certainly, if someone can make a compelling film about a font (see Gary Hustwit's 2007 documentary *Helvetica*), then the medium should only be bound by the vision of those working within it. The truth is more complex. For reasons that remain abstract (at least for those of us that do not identify as film or cultural theorists), our ability to tell and receive a compelling story with film is, perhaps more than any other media, intimately bound to our cultural and historical positions. Here, the person of Mina Hubbard and the narrative of her Labrador journey are illustrative. While the films that we offer today approach this narrative from decidedly different if not opposing positions, both feel like gestures towards some other larger narrative. Perhaps this is a function of how we have come to read Mina's memoir for its apparent gaps? Or, perhaps it is a narrative whose prose form more directly activates our imaginations about frontiers, gender and ethnicity?

*The Revenge of Mina Hubbard* (24 mins, My Country Productions, 1985) Dir. Nigel Napier-Andrews. This episode of the *Heritage Theatre* series visibly shows its age. Written by Lister Sinclair and hosted by Pierre Berton, this tele-play belongs to a tradition of Canadian historical narrative that is, at the very least, difficult to reconcile with some of our present sensibilities. Of course the form does not help here. Berton's narrative leaves little room for otherwise complex or ulterior motives. Mina is driven only by honour, duty and decency. Things are cut and dry.

*The Last Explorer* (49 mins, Rezolution Pictures, 2009) Dirs. Neil Diamond and Ernest Webb. Widely known for his 2009 documentary *Reel Injun*, co-director Neil Diamond's career as a director has been shaped by a drive to examine and reclaim aboriginal agency. Here, the object of Diamond and Webb's attention is neither a Hubbard or a Wallace but rather (and rightly) George Elson. Working against many of the ideas forwarded by Sinclair and Berton, *The Last Explorer* nevertheless feels constrained. Again, form is partly the culprit. In particular, the historical re-enactments seem intent on conveying a muted set of character motivations. But at the same time something is askew in the manner in which Diamond and Webb approach Elson's story.

Coordinated by Morgon Mills

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