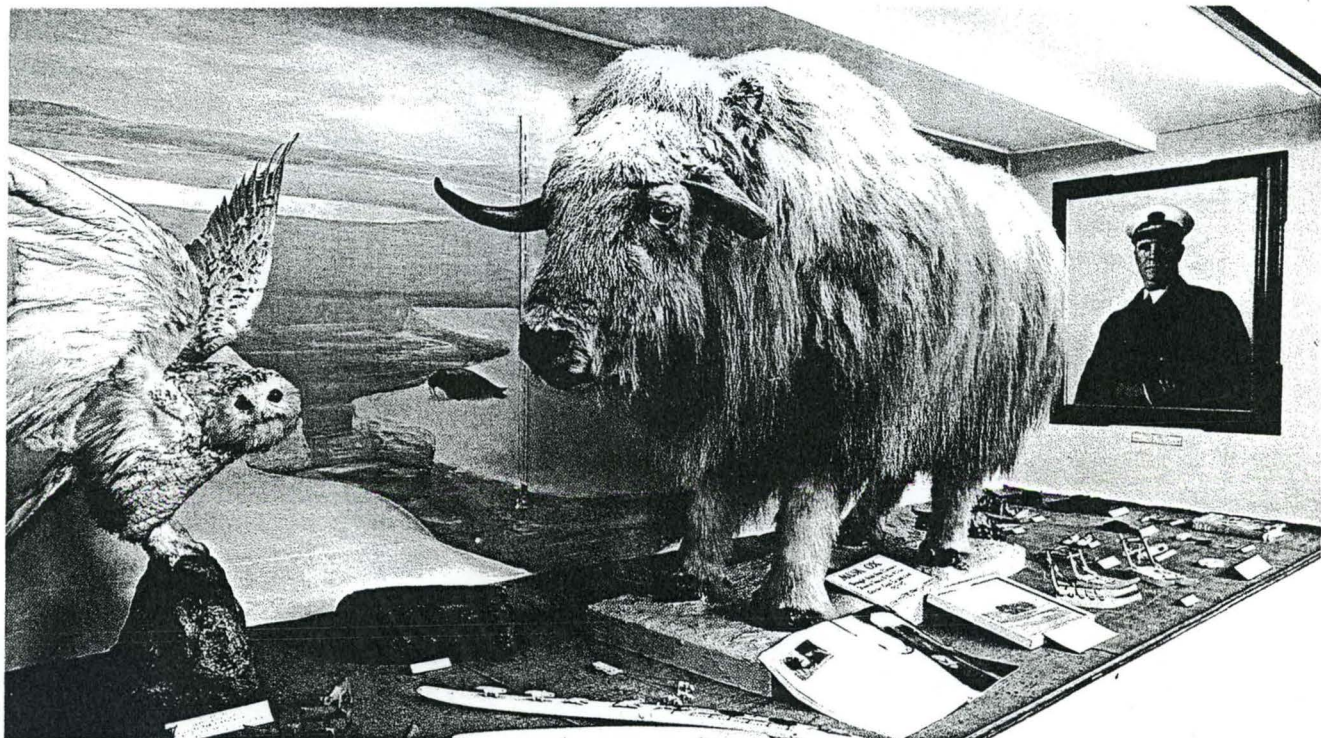


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The Provincetown Museum offers the viewer many displays from MacMillan's journeys to Baffin Island, Labrador and Greenland.

# WILLIAM BOOGAR'S

## Arctic Art and Adventure

Anyone who has survived the summer of 1988 is probably ready to start thinking cool thoughts. The special exhibition at the Provincetown Museum, *William Boogar with MacMillan in the Arctic: Watercolors, Drawings, and Bronzes*, a part of the Provincetown Fall Arts Festival, is just what the doctor ordered.

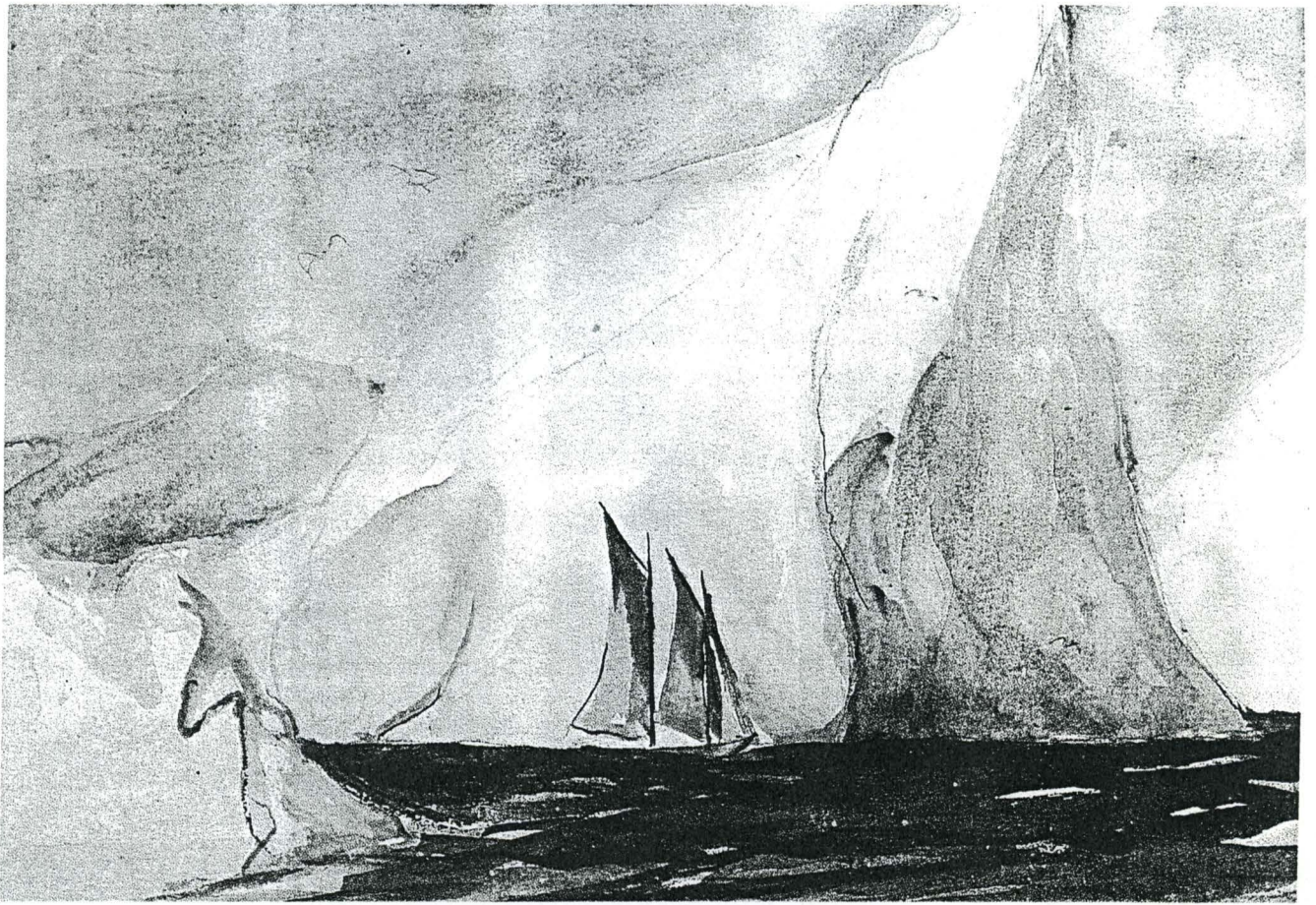
A handbill provided by the Museum describes Donald B. MacMillan as "Provincetown's most famous native son," a claim that could be safely anchored in the fact that he was with Perry in 1909 at the discovery of the North Pole. MacMillan led some 26 Arctic expeditions of his own, established the base at Etah in North Greenland, took more

than 10,000 photographs of the Arctic wilderness, and became a Rear Admiral in the United States Naval Reserve. In 1944, the Congress of the United States rewarded him with the Medal of Honor, and a few years later the folks in Provincetown named the wharf for him — which did more to ensure his fame, at least on Cape Cod, than the medal. He died in 1970 at the age of 96.

Bill Boogar (pronounced Bōgar) was every bit as much his own man as MacMillan. Just as the Admiral's career was shaped by his commitment to the Arctic, Bill Boogar's life was defined by the clear vision, sweetness and whimsy that characterized his art. The painter Edwin

Dickinson said of his friend that "he led the most amazing life of anyone I ever met." Both the Admiral and the artist were American originals.

Boogar was almost two decades younger than MacMillan when the two met in Provincetown in 1926. The artist was on his way to a teaching job in Maine and he stopped on the Cape to look in on old friends — his first exhibition had been at the Provincetown Art Association six summers earlier, when he was only 22 — and someone told him at a party that MacMillan was organizing another trip to the far North. The next day, Boogar went to the Admiral's house with that same friend and the two men were introduced.



"Ship and Iceberg," 13 1/2" x 19 1/2"



"Kayaks," 13 1/2" x 19 1/2"

Despite his youth, Boogar had impressive credentials. He had graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; established in 1801, it was the oldest and one of the most respected art institutes in America. At the age of 18 he had worked as a crewman on a cargo ship to Russia, on the eve of revolution. He had returned in time to volunteer for the crew of the *Josephine*, which a private American citizen donated to the British as a subchaser. After America entered the Great War, he had served as a scout with Company E of the Ninth Infantry, and had received the Croix de Guerre from France and the Purple Heart from the United States.

MacMillan wasn't looking for an artist or a war hero, and all he really wanted to talk about with Bill Boogar was food. He asked what dishes the younger man was familiar with, and when Boogar gave the right answers, MacMillan hired him on the spot as the ship's cook. The Admiral gave Bill two weeks "to put his affairs in order," a high compliment which amused Boogar for many years after. "It would have been possible to put Bill's affairs in order," his widow, Alice, recalled recently, "in ten minutes. He was very flattered."

Traditionally, explorers have in common with other tourists that they read up on their subject before undertaking any great journey of discovery. Various works on the Arctic were recommended to Bill Boogar to while away the idle hours during the ship's transit and through the long Arctic twilight, but the more he thought about it, the less he was inclined to read other people's stories of polar bears, frostbite and cannibalism while he himself was shivering below decks. The book he finally settled on was *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne's 18th-century comical masterpiece now regarded as the progenitor of the 20th-century stream-of-consciousness novel. It was a telling choice, and more to the point of his own life's journey than any tale of the frozen North.

The expedition was a scientific one, sponsored by the Field Museum of Chicago, and it took them to Baffin Island, Labrador and Greenland. The two men returned to Cape Cod in the Fall, and the following summer the Provincetown Art As-

sociation exhibited 12 Arctic watercolors and five Arctic drawings by William Boogar. MacMillan got his cook, but he got an artist as well.

Boogar exhibited those and other products of that trip farther afield over the following years — in Delaware after Provincetown, in Newport in 1928, at the Art Center in New York in 1931, and at the Children's Museum in Boston in 1939. A quarter century after the trip ended, he showed 23 Arctic drawings, 12 Arctic watercolors and an unspecified number of bronzes at a gallery in Osterville.

Lest this give the wrong impression about the main body of his work, while the trip with MacMillan was certainly an important event in William Boogar's artistic life and one on which he drew for many years after, he didn't dine out on that single experience for the rest of his days. Far from it. The Arctic works comprise only a small percentage of the very long list of exhibitions that embrace his lifetime output. William Boogar is best remembered for his bronzes, and while a handful of those are included in the exhibit this fall in Provincetown, the great majority of such sculpture has no direct connection with the North.

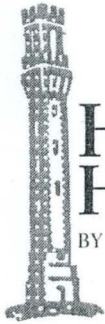
However, during the Arctic voyage Boogar met Ashley Hine, who served as the ship's naturalist and instructed the young artist in the lives of the animals and birds they encountered on the trip. What Boogar learned from Hine stayed with him for the rest of his life and may comprise the greatest part of his Arctic legacy, appearing as a major motif in his sculpture for the next three decades.

William Boogar's artistic output didn't end with his death in 1958. Many of the existing bronzes were cast by Boogar's wife, Alice, in the following 20 years in which she continued to operate the foundry he established in Provincetown. Although the foundry has finally closed, Alice still lives in Provincetown (at an age that is "nobody's business"), and played an important role in assembling the show.

The exhibit will be on display through October 30. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. TR

— Henry Scammell

# William F. Boogar Jr.



## History Highlights

BY LAUREL GUADAZNO

At the foot of MacMillan Wharf is a bronze plaque and memorial stone that often goes unnoticed in the hubbub of people and cars in the area. It is an example of the bronze work of William Boogar, created in honor of the naming of the pier after his friend Donald MacMillan.

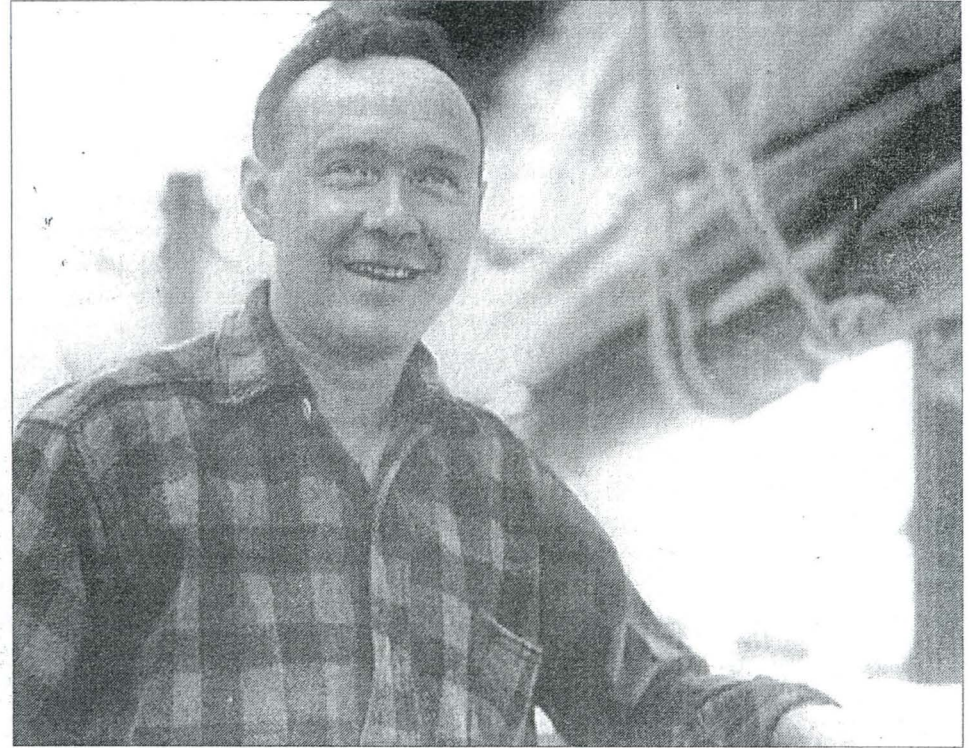
On his way to Maine in 1926, Boogar stopped in Provincetown to visit with friends and met Donald MacMillan. MacMillan was organizing a scientific expedition that summer to Labrador, Greenland and Baffin Island sponsored by the Field Museum of Chicago. It surprised Boogar that all MacMillan wanted to talk about was food. He asked Bill what dishes he was familiar with and when Boogar gave the right answers he asked him to join the expedition as cook. When the two men returned from the expedition in the fall, William Boogar brought back several watercolors and drawings he had done during the trip. The next summer they were exhibited at the Provincetown Art Association. Many years later, in 1988, these same watercolors were exhibited at the Provincetown Museum.

William Boogar — most people called him Bill — walked to Provincetown from Philadelphia in 1915 to study painting

with Charles Hawthorne. He paid his room and board along the way by painting portraits of people he met. During the next few years he served in the Infantry during World War I, in the Coast Guard at Peaked Hill Station, and eked out a living teaching art and working at a summer camp in Maine.

William Boogar is best known for his bronzes. He had impressive credentials, having graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, one of the oldest and most respected art institutes at that time. He returned to Philadelphia and ran a foundry in New Jersey for a time where he cast his own work. In 1933 he moved to Provincetown with his bride and \$2.45 in cash, according to information in the catalog that accompanied the exhibit at the Provincetown Museum in 1988. His friend, painter Richard Miller, convinced him to open a foundry in a former blacksmith shop near the Beachcombers Club at the foot of Bangs Street. The catalog says, "He rebuilt the building, made a furnace out of an oil drum, and a drying oven for his molds and for burning out wax from a ship's water tank that had been discarded in the harbor."

Boogar was the first artist to open his studio to the public. Over the years many people visited, watched him work, and purchased small items to take home with them. Finally, important commissions began to come in and William Boogar began to achieve some fame for his sundials and bronzes of animals. At his death in 1958, his work had been widely exhibited and was in many public collections.



*William Boogar*

For many years after his death, his wife, Alice, continued to operate the foundry and produce what she called the "bread and butter items." These were small items, like paperweights, sold to people who came to the foundry and made a selection from the items displayed for sale.

In an interview in the Cape Cod Standard-Times in 1969, she said that when she decided to continue the work of the foundry, located adjacent to the famed Beachcombers Club headquarters, off Commercial Street near the Flagship Restaurant, "many people thought I was just a lonely widow, carrying on with thoughts still in the past." She made the practical decision, an income was need-

ed and she knew her husband's work, and decided to carry on, meanwhile making arrangements for the items to be cast elsewhere and completing the work herself.

Many people in town will still fondly remember Alice and William Boogar for their quiet charm. If they are lucky, they may even own a piece of William Boogar's work.

*[Laurel Guadazno is visitor services manager for the Pilgrim Monument & Provincetown Museum. She also writes and narrates "History Highlights," heard regularly on WOMR, 92.1 FM.]*

# Wm. F. Boogar, Jr. Dies In Hospital

William F. Boogar, Jr., of 180 Bradford Street, well-known sculptor, bronze worker and artist, and an authority on birds, died Sunday at the Barnstable County Hospital in Pocasset, where he had been taken the previous day. He was 64 years old.

Born in Salem, New Jersey, a son of William Francis and Clara How Boogar, Bill, as he was affectionately known to his many friends all over the country, was graduated from Haddonfield, New Jersey schools and studied art for three years at the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Later he studied for several years with Charles W. Hawthorne here in



Provincetown. At the Academy in Philadelphia a special room was set aside for his oils and watercolors and today at the same Academy a number of his pieces of sculpture may be found as well as at the National Academy of Design, at the Concord Art Association and at the Wilmington, Delaware, Society of Artists. He had also held exhibitions at the National Gallery and a number of others in this country as well as in Paris.

His latest notable work was the designing and executing of the tablet marking MacMillan Wharf here, honoring Admiral Donald B. MacMillan, noted Arctic explorer, with whom Br. Boogar made a trip to the Far North in 1936 as cook aboard the MacMillan vessel Bowdoin, at which time he also painted many watercolors of that northern country.

Mr. Boogar's foundry and workshop was located just off Commercial Street adjacent to the head-

live at 35 Franklin Street, Provincetown, Mass., recently arrived in Germany and is now a member of the 408th Supply and Transportation Company.

Pvt. Salvador, a truck driver, entered the Army in January 1958 and was last stationed at Fort Dix, New Jersey, where he received basic training.

The 23-year-old soldier is a 1954 graduate of Provincetown High School. He was employed by the Marcey Oil Company before entering the Army.

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William Boogar

from Who Was Who in American Art

b1893, died 7/20/1958

PA Academy of Fine Arts

Studied with Charles Hawthorne

Exhibited at PA Academy of Fine Arts, National Academy of Design, 1937 Paris Exhibition

Specialized in bronzes

from Dictionary of American Sculptors

also a painter

Tablet for Pilgrims Landing in Provincetown Landing

Children's Fountain in Wabeek, WI

Memorial to Frederick Waugh

Memorial to Henry Major

Worked for the Public Works Project and is listed in their 1933-1934 report

Lived at 284 Bradford St. Provincetown

1978 exhibition of Provincetown Painters at the Guild of Boston Artists

Annual Water and Miniature Exhibition at PA Academy of Fine Arts in 1927