

**From the novel *James McIntyre: The Mammoth Cheese***

1

We have seen thee Queen of Cheese

Laying quietly at your ease

Gently fanned by evening breeze –

Thy fair form no flies dare seize.

2

Opening the front door of the establishment of yours truly – James McIntyre, prominent citizen of Ingersoll, in the province of Ontario, in the country of Canada. Furniture-maker, cabinetmaker, and reluctant undertaker. Also newspaper reporter and occasional poet – when occasion serves.

3

Tomorrow, all of life will become spectacular. It will be the grand unveiling of the seven-thousand pound Mammoth Cheese. The largest cheese to be manufactured in the British Empire. A feat whose renown will travel like lightning around the globe.

4

So what is the epic adventure? The magic adventure that will lift a whole village and float it on the foams of far-flung seas? The adventure that will put Ingersoll in the realm of legend and myth?

5

What was the great work that he was born to write? What was the great undertaking that all his faculties throbbed to create? He would dedicate himself to that great endeavour. He would become the great poet that he felt he was born to be. Every tick of his watch was a burr that would spur him on.

**From the notebook *The Planning of James McIntyre: The Mammoth Cheese***

1

It would be a comic novel of aspiration, about the town of Ingersoll & the poet, James McIntyre, & their achievement in creating & promoting the Mammoth Cheese.

2

It would be a loving & affectionate look at how a society functions smoothly when all is in harmony.

3

In effect, they are celebrating themselves – alive & thriving. I would enjoy writing this novel immensely, I have already done some of the research.

4

He wrote a poem about the great cheese in 1866. He became known for that poem. He continued to write similar poems, on all topics, for the rest of his life. He lived in Ingersoll, Ontario. He was a local businessman. He suffered losses in fires and floods. He suffered the loss of his first wife and others.

5

I found a photograph of The Ingersoll Mammoth Cheese 1866 for a cover. The whole idea is fascinating in ways that it wasn't when I first thought of this topic for a novel.

### **From the Journal *The Making of James McIntyre: The Mammoth Cheese***

1

I worked from about three pages of information about James McIntyre and the Mammoth Cheese project and from the poems of James McIntyre, which he published in 1874 and which I found on Project Gutenberg.

2

I did not realize, at that time, that all I would need for both community and main-character life-styles I would find in the 122 pages of poems of the historical James McIntyre.

3

Of course, I also drew on my own experience, in growing up in one small town (St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada) and living near another small town (Cayuga, Ontario, Canada) so the concept of a small town newspaper with volunteer writers was quite logical to me. This idea led to the fascinating interaction with Mr. Harris, as he emerged from the three historical articles and some of the McIntyre poems to become a character in the developing novel.

4

The interaction of the historical project of showing the Mammoth Cheese at local venues (in order to generate publicity to impress the English cheese market) fused with the concept of the main character writing an epic poem on that quest.

5

I find this James McIntyre poem – Lines on the Death of My Son – to be flawless, in that it is unmarred by what has come to be seen as the blemishes of a decadent era in poetry. It is a poem that stands, as far as I am concerned, with minor poems by the great writers, though the consistency of writing and the depth of conception of the oeuvre of the writers is not comparable at all.