



Our cultural moment for September 12th celebrates H. Gordon Green

H. Gordon Green was perhaps Wellington North's most famous personality. In the prime of his career, in the 1960s and 1970s, he was one of the better-known journalists and radio commentators in Canada. Green was a native of Arthur Township, where he was born in 1912 as the eldest of eight children. Coming of age during the depression, he took on a number of jobs including farm hand (at 50 cents a day), country school teacher, and door-to-door salesman.

Green was destined to become a writer and enrolled in journalism at the University of Michigan where he sold his first story to the *Toronto Star Weekly* for \$50. This was big money for the late 1930s. His childhood as an impoverished farm boy and experience with marginal employment opportunities had left an impression. After a brief stint at McGill studying medicine, he joined the army.

Following his service, he joined the staff of the *Montreal Star*. He was assigned to the *Family Herald*, the *Star's* weekly farm magazine that at that time was a fixture in nearly every rural and small-town household. Even though he was still in his 30s, Green had developed a down-home writing style that made reference to his experiences in the 1920s and 1930s. He became editor and held the position for almost 20 years.

As time passed, he became something of a celebrity, a role he enjoyed immensely. By the 1950s, he appeared frequently on various CBC radio programs as a commentator and panelist. Green's radio career evolved into a short-syndicated commentary that was heard over dozens of radio stations in Canada. He became known as "Radio's Old Cynic" which suited his style.

In the 1960s he became engaged in politics and in 1962 accepted the nomination as the New Democratic Party candidate in the riding of Wellington North. Although broadly supported and pulling in the largest vote ever for the NDP, he only managed a third-placed showing.

H. Gordon Green published a number of books including *Professor Go Home* and *A Time to Pass Over*. He continued to write a column for the *Star* until his death of cancer in 1991. His last column appeared the day before he died. Thousands mourned his death. Fellow Arthurite MPP Ted Arnott delivered a tribute in the Ontario legislature.

Submitted by James Taylor Wellington North Cultural Roundtable

(source material from the Wellington Advertiser where many of his columns appeared)