

# John De Visser

## Sees the World through a Lens



Photo by Ted Amsden

John is one of a multitude of immigrants who have brought their skills to a new life in "the new world". He grew up with his family, parents and ten children, in Holland during World War II. It was then that he met our soldiers and began to learn about Canada.

In 1952, after serving two years in the Dutch army, John immigrated to Canada. He settled in Toronto and got a job with the Bank of Montreal, earning \$25 a week. Perhaps it was the influence of his father, an art aficionado, but John soon learned that he had a knack for photography.

Visiting Niagara Falls with friends, he borrowed a camera and took a couple of shots. The owner of the photo shop where the film was developed recognized a talent behind those two pictures. John bought his own camera that day and his life was changed forever.

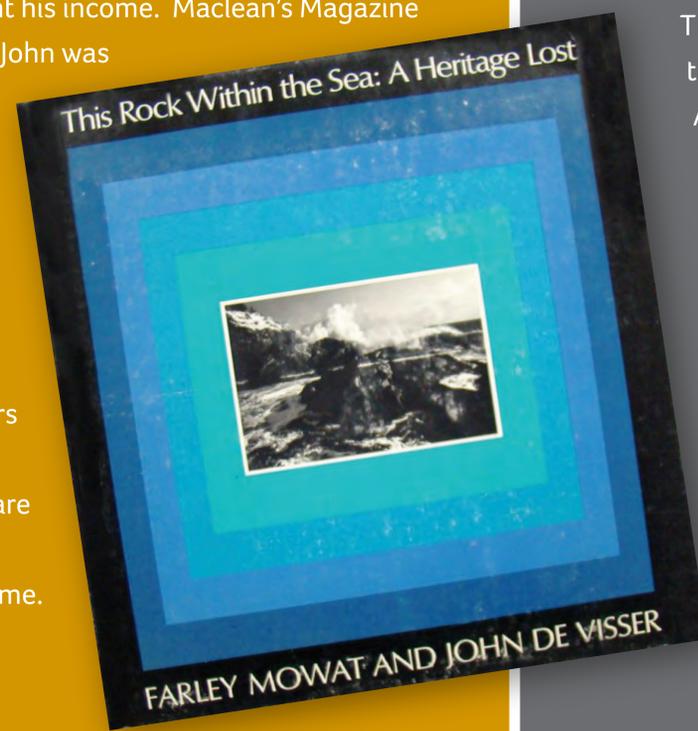
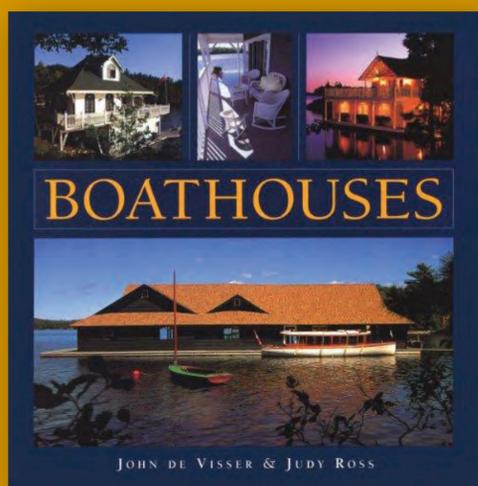
In fact, he became so enamoured of his camera that he got fired from his next job. He was spending his lunch hours photographing, and his superiors at Benjamin-Moore surmised that "his heart wasn't in the paint industry". His next stop was with the Robert Simpson Company, designing flyers. There he was even given time off to follow his passion.

The cost of film and processing eventually became burden enough that John looked to his hobby to supplement his income. Maclean's Magazine provided the perfect answer and soon John was earning enough to concentrate full-time on photography.

John de Visser now has 65 books to his credit and numerous magazine articles. In 1994 he was given a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Canadian Association of Photographers and Illustrators in Communication. Further proof of a life behind the lens are the many thousands of unorganized negatives and slides in his Cobourg home.



1. "This Rock Within the Sea: A Heritage Lost" with Farley Mowat (McClelland & Stewart, 1968)
2. "This Was Expo" with Robert Fulford, Peter Varley and Harold White (McClelland & Stewart, 1968)
3. "Heritage: A Romantic Look at Early Canadian Furniture" with Scott Symons (McClelland & Stewart, 1970)
4. "Pioneer Churches" with Harold Kalman (McClelland & Stewart, 1970)
5. "Portrait of Canada" with Jay and Audrey Walt (New York Times, 1970)
6. "The North East Coast" (Time-Life Books, Wilderness Series, 1972)
7. "Rivers of Canada" with Hugh McLennan (McMillan, 1974)
8. "Winter" with Morley Callaghan (McClelland & Stewart, 1974)
9. "Toronto" with William Toye (Oxford U Press, 1979)
10. "Quebec & The St. Lawrence" with Paul von Balch (Oxford U Press, 1990)
11. "Upper Canada Village" (Oxford U Press, 1980)
12. "Treasures of Canada" (Samuel Stevens, 1980)
13. "South Western Ontario" (Oxford U Press, 1981)
14. "Visions of Canada" (Samuel Stevens, 1982)
15. "City Light: A Portrait of Toronto" with Robert Fulford (Oxford U Press, 1983)
16. "Canada: A Celebration" with Robert Fulford (Key Porter, 1983) (also published in Holland, Germany, Italy and Japan)
17. "The Settler's Dream" (County of Prince Edward, 1984)
18. "Historic Newfoundland" with Harold Horwood (Oxford U Press, 1984)
19. "The Yellowhead Route" with Bill Simpkins and Robert Taylor (Oxford U Press, 1987)
20. "The House: A Treasury of Early Homes" with Tom Cruickshank (Blue Stone House Inc., 1987)
21. "The Inland Seas" (The Great Lakes) with Paul Vasey (Key Porter Discovery Books, 1987)
22. "Montreal: A Portrait" (Key Porter Discovery Books, 1988)
23. "The Falls" with Jack Carroll (Metropolitan, 1988)
24. "The University of Western Ontario" (Harmony House, 1988)
25. "Relationship" with Judy Ross (Harmony House Press, 1989)
26. "Grand River Reflections" (Boston Mills Press, 2000)
27. "The University of Toronto" (Harmony House, 1989)
28. "1000 Islands" with Patricia Fleming (Boston Mills Press, 1990)
29. "The University of Guelph" (Harmony House, 1990)
30. "St. Lawrence University" (Harmony House, 1990)
31. "Ottawa" (Stewart House, 1990)
32. "Toronto" (Stewart House, 1990)
33. "Montreal" (Stewart House, 1990)
34. "The County-Quinte's Tale" (Stewart House, 1990)
35. "Hope College" (Midland Michigan, Harmony House Press, 1991)
36. "Hemlock Cottages" with Judy Ross (Boston Mills Press, 1991)
37. "Greenleaf Bay" with Judy Ross (Boston Mills Press, 1992)
38. "The Credit River Valley" (Boston Mills Press, 1992)
39. "The Upper Edge: Boat-houses of Muskoka" with Judy Ross (Boston Mills Press, 1993)
40. "The Spirit of The Garden" with Shelagh Meagher (Stoddart, 1995)
41. "The Release" with Larry Turner (Stoddart, 1995) - short-listed for the Ontario Trillium Prize
42. "Eastern Ontario" with Donna Carpenter (Boston Mills Press, 1995)
43. "The City of Burlington" with Jane Irwin (Boston Mills Press, 1996)
44. "Muskoka Souvenir" (Boston Mills Press, 1995)
45. "The Newfoundlander" (Boston Mills Press, 1997)
46. "The Newfoundlander" with Margaret Mc Burney and Mary Byers (Boston Mills Press, 1997)
47. "Landscape" with Desmond Morton (Edgar Kent Publishers, 1998)
48. "The Silence and Lake Couchiching" with Mary Byers (Boston Mills Press, 1998)
49. "Muskoka" with Judy Ross (Boston Mills Press, 2000)
50. "Old Ontario Houses" with Tom Cruickshank (Finley Books, 2000)
51. "Shelagh at the Shore" with Judy Ross (Boston Mills Press, 2000)
52. "The Three-Cornered Train" (Boston Mills Press, 2002)
53. "Old Ontario Houses" with Tom Cruickshank (Boston Mills Press, 2003) - short-listed for the Ontario Trillium Prize
54. "The Upper Edge" with Judy Ross (Boston Mills Press, 2000)
55. "Canadian Churches: An Architectural Legacy" with Prof. Peter and Douglas Richardson (Finley Books, 2007)
56. "Old Canadian Cemeteries" with Dr. Jake Irwin (Finley Books, 2007)
57. "Fort Hope: A History" with Ian Montague (Ganaraska 2007)
58. "Lashouses" with Judy Ross (Boston Mills Press, 2008)
59. "A View of the Bay: Collingwood and Beyond" with Judy Ross (Boston Mills, 2008)
60. "Kingston and Frontenac County" with Alec Ross (Boston Mills, 2009)



The titles of John's books make it clear that he loves his country of choice. And whether it's the Muskokas, the Yellowhead Route or Newfoundland, he prefers to work outside and in natural light. *This Rock Within the Sea*, produced in 1968 with Farley Mowat, remains one of John's favourites. It must be others' favourite, too, for over 30,000 copies have been sold.