

# Great Canadian Imposters



**“Many people will not listen to simple truths except when uttered by exotic personalities.” That was one of the comments made when Canadian-based naturalist Grey Owl died and it was discovered he was not a native at all, but a transplanted Englishman.**

**Archie Belaney may have been one of the most famous imposters in Canadian history, but he was neither the first nor the only one. In the early 1800s, a woman from the Orkney Islands disguised herself as a man to follow her lover to Canada, where they both worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company.**

**Another woman, born in Woodstock, Ontario, bilked bankers and businessmen out of fortunes by pretending to be the illegitimate daughter of American millionaire Andrew Carnegie.**

**Then there was secret agent Henri LeCaron, who pretended to be a Fenian sympathizer, all the while working for the British government .... and Dr. James Barry, who may or may not have been a woman. And Ferdinand Demara, who inspired both a movie and a television series. During the Korean War, Demara successfully posed as a Canadian naval surgeon until a newspaper report on one of his heroic operations led to the revelation of his true identity.**

**Great Canadian Imposters is a fascinating look at “great pretenders” in Canadian history, what they accomplished, and what may have motivated them. The talk runs from 45 to 60 minutes, with lots of time for questions and discussion.**

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