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A journey toward evening
by Lovat Dickson

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A pale shadow rising
Prairie dust to London marble. The journey of a distinguished writer
by Lovat Dickson

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.

The Waste Land, by T.S. Eliot

I remember a happy childhood, a laughter-filled home
bursting with the complicated business of each of the many
lives sheltered in it. And then suddenly darkness fell. A
strange city, a small, crowded apartment; death pushing us
into an unaccustomed sharing of rooms, while strangers
with mournful faces and hushed voices consoled with my
father. I remember the passage of the coffin, awkward to
manipulate through narrow doors, the pale-faced motes
wearing black gloves, pressing themselves against the wall
as though they would be invisible, their voices chanting
responses over a lifeless body they had not known.

Childhood memories are exaggerated, mixing memory
and desire. I remember that scene with the utmost clarity.
But what I have shown you is a flashligh picture, revealing
nothing but figures with the fixed expressions people wear
when the shutter snaps.

Yet, if I go back into the childish minds observing this
solemn occasion and tell you what was going on there, an
altogether different impression emerges. In the vast upset of
my mother’s final illness, we had all suddenly been snatched
from our English schools and sent with her to Canada
where my father had been posted during the war. It was now
1917. I was 15. And the city in which we found ourselves was
Ottawa. None of us knew what we were going to do. No

plans could be made while my mother’s life was in suspense.
Children are frightened of death. My mother had been the
centre of every joy I had ever known. I loved her when she
was living but, in the process of dying, she was becoming a
stranger. I knew I could not hold her back; I would have
been terrified if it had been possible to accompany her.

With children, the past is quickly forgotten. What is to
come is full of mystery and excitement. Evolution is
responsible for this apparent heartlessness. We have been
shut off in that damned-up sector of life called
childhood, where we go through all the stages of evolution,
I, the oldest boy, was ready now for manhood and eager for
the joys it promised.

It was with this that my imagination was busy in that
solemn hour. I have to go back to my childhood and dig like
an archeologist through layers of ruins to find what it is
really like when your imagination is going crazy and life is
waiting for you to join it.

Jack Bickell, the Toronto mining millionaire, for whom
my father was acting as consulting engineer after the war,
was petitioned on my behalf. My father’s feelings about me
were ambiguous. He knew that I wanted to be a writer, and
he both encouraged and repressed me, proud of my love of
words, yet continually fearful lest it prevent me from
earning a living in a conventional way.

Bickell regarded me broodingly, sitting in an armchair
beside our dining table while we were at dinner, a cigar
convulsively wriggling in the corner of his mouth as he

Lovat Dickson of Toronto is a retired general editor and
Told my father I was looking for something else. At 17, as I moved from job to job, looking for any of them for very long, I was aware of beginning to appear as a failure. Employers, disarmed by my educated voice and submitted manner, were deluded momentarily into believing they had found someone promising. We deceived each other. My unfinished classical education was as useless in a factory or office as any other of my talents. Bickell, when he came on a visit of inspection from Toronto, told me that a local newspaper could build up a sense of community out of a high school where "the future was provided by the company in the way of entertainment and the United Mineworkers of America were busy unionizing the men."

Success in the first two years of the trade. My short and unillustrious career with Famous Players was tactfully not spoken of. Bickell seemed impressed by my leg. Even at the age of 17, I could walk while viewing the world from the foot of a twenty-foot ladder. We were an office and a typewriting firm. The Burleigh District Weekly, my own invention and design, was launched with the $75 capital on my desk. I was the editor, not that little toll of a finding hostility so often when it is seeking love, turns away and seeks forgiveness in something else.

The whole world. Failure might be admitted privately to myself. But not in my letters to my father or in the assured stories and maligned novels I was always beginning, scrapning, and rewriting with one dauntless character undismayed — myself as hero. I can see as clearly now as I felt it only yesterday, that room on Church Street in Toronto. I had lived there during most of 1920 and 1921, with its single narrow bed, the yellow-patterned oilcloth on the floor, the wooden washstand in the corner. It was an unpainted room the day we first moved into it, with the clock hanging against the window. I can feel the intense cold outside reaching in to touch the ill-litting double windows. I can hear the sound of boiling oil in the room, the voices in the night outside and inside the house. How one worked until the sun came up and crampéd, how one fell asleep even while throwing off one's cloak.

Almost two years passed before my growing body rebelled at the long hunger, and I went to join my father in Brantford. I had to ask him for the ticket. I hated this sign of failure: I had learned nothing, earned nothing. I began the longer journey a second time. I suppose it must have been about the time I was at the University of Alberta. Four years of an honors course in English under Dr. Edmund Broadus, a legendary demon described as a black swan on the campus, reduced my swollen ego and straightened out my English.

This cleansing course of purification was followed by a course in teaching, in which I scored so high that I never took the examinations. For, having been influenced by style, altered my moral beliefs, and tossed me around until I was an entirely different person. But it had one effect Broadus had not looked for. It intensified my desire to be a writer. Broadus pooh-poohed the notion. The academic life was to be mine. A PhD first and then a puisne justice. I went on to work at night.

The difference between us was settled when an Edmonton millionaire, Frederic Hammond, who had rashly purchased a London newspaper, the Daily Telegraph, with an ambition by editing it himself, found his nerve for the enterprise failing, and invited me to be his accomplice as assistant editor and general manager. From then on to the day I left, he had never had a word of any tone from me.

As at moments we seem the sport of capricious fate. This extraordinary man had not crossed my path, the whole of my life would have taken a different turn. But fate only appears accidental. In reality we shape our own children's faces and our own faces in their faces, and in the desire to be a writer had been responsible for every step I had taken. I felt it. Unreflecting consistency was bound up with my whole career. It seemed as if the sky was ever filled with the weight of iron filings.

One way on the way to getting what I wanted. I became as hard and deterministic as a criminal, showing no mercy when Hammond's flaccid will and nervous temperament included me in a rigmarole, and I took over the editorship of the Fortnightly myself when his nerve broke and he ran. I gave myself no rest, Hammond no peace, the newspapers no life. I refused to give the chance to withdraw, until with everything signed and sealed I could draw an easy breath and show some mercy to my victims.

This was the hard way. We had to work hard. We set off as children, pure as angels, our aims and ideals high and worthy. Life bruises us, our innocence is tarnished, and we have to make compromises. Little by little we get in the world, but we pay for it. Now I had a university degree and a job of some distinction. It was at the centre of the greatest literary and political controversies, and I was a less admirable person than the 17-year-old boy who could not keep a job, was often hungry, but every night went with his bag of papers to bed so able to write, as a priest goes to the altar to lay out the sacraments.

It was not all tol, nor was it meretricious. I was paid very little except in recognition of its worth. I did not keep to the money. I met young English contemporaries, who were as poor as I was, making their way with reviews and short stories. They came now and then to my paper to cloister forever on my youth. I was launched on my career, and I was confident there would be no going back.

For more than 50 years, my life was to be enclosed in an area in the west end of London, not much bigger than a half-section of good Alberta farming land, but a great deal more crowded. Rounded on the east by St. Paul's and on the west by Parliament Square, this area is shaped like a horn and is entered only through a gate like that known as the Bloomsbury. Here, in this jumble of streets and lanes and courts, the Fortnightly Review was edited and a new political and literary world was established on the same street in Covent Garden where the founding Macmillan brothers had opened their first office in 1807.

I walked into Covent Garden one gray morning in 1929. Great bells — Big Ben the lowest — chimed out the hours from St. Paul's across the river, audible over the hum of the city. It was to be found not only in Poets' Corner in the Abbey, but beneath monuments and font stories in ancient churches in the Gad's Hill of Dickens' London, as well as the Gad's Hill of like becoming a familiar guest in a great historic house, where the portraits on the walls were those of your own ancestors.

Those years — the thirties — are rightly and painfully remembered as the years of the Great Depression. In London, in my own case, it was years of unemployment. The fabric of history seemed to be cracking. Old King George died and was succeeded by King Edward, who abdicated before he was crowned. Hitler screamed and sprinkled, small pieces of white paper were held aloft as symbols of salvation, and reserves were called up. Young Cambridge men went home and there was a sudden sharp sense of loneliness for the few left behind, a tremor of anticipation of what was to come. It passed like a prickling of the skin, which I could view any time I desired but which I never felt again.

Later I was the happiest years of my life, and I suppose that most of us remembering our own 30s would say the same. There you reach a plateau in your life, a pause before the first of the roses begins to bloom. Besides, there was love. It is sweeter when danger threatens and it is better when, as in those times, economic pressures postomous until you are in your 50s. The boy-and-girl, marriages of the seventies are understandable and can now be afforded. We married when I had a publishing business to support, and I felt myself 15. I was responsible as though they were my children. I made most of my small income from scooting for the American Macmillan and took no more out of the firm than four pounds a week. Everything the business made went back into it. I married during the year Grey Owl's great success as author and lecturer brought substantial profits to the firm. But my total income was 750 pounds a year, and my wife went to work as a model.

You couldn't be a young couple could then live very comfortably, tasting all the pleasures that London affords in the hours free from earning work — the piles of letters, the many invitations to literary and political gatherings, the evening concerts, the London operas, the literary and social events, the international congresses, the diplomatic conferences, the important and exciting social events. It was a struggle, to be sure, but it was a struggle for the love of it. But from the outside, it did not appear so.
building on St Martin's Street behind Trafalgar Square, was not only in location but in atmosphere. Here even the ornate street-lamps showed a nice touch of municipal pride and imagination. They bore on their cast-iron sides, embossed in bas-relief, a reproduction of Goya's famous presentation of St Martin dividing his cloak with a beggar. At dusk each day a functionary on a bicycle, with a short ladder carried on his shoulder, arrived to light each lamp with all the brisk formality of an altar attendant.

What a change from 58 Bedford on the edge of Covent Garden's vegetable market, where broken cabbage stalks and rotten oranges thrown out of cases each morning impeded access to Lovat Dickson Limited's front door. The fruit-sellers' shaggy ponies, between the shafts of their light carts waiting to load up the vegetables the dawn buyers had bought, stared at the windows where our books were displayed. They ate their chaff from matted bags slung on their necks, at intervals adding their own droppings to the splattered street.

It seemed ominous that, just as I signed my agreement with Macmillan, the Munich Agreement should also have been signed. I was to have been assistant general editor of books, the general editor being Harold Macmillan. First his unfailing opposition to Munich and then his joining the Churchill administration removed him from the office. He was not to return, except for brief intervals, for 23 years. But there it was. In the darkest days of the war, when the first bombs were beginning to fall on London, Harold Macmillan gave me lunch at the Carlton Grill. He was to go to North Africa as resident minister. "You won't go, will you?" he asked. "Remember we rely on you." And although the publishing prospects looked bleak, with paper rationing and the threat of invasion (and the added possibility of fighting on London's ancient streets promised by Churchill in that event), I felt as if I had been promoted to a command.

I now enjoyed the power of decision, which is one of the compensations of responsibility in great companies. And also one of the perils. This was not a public company, in spite of its enormous spread and size. It was a family business, owned as it happened by public-spirited men who wanted to preserve their inheritance and pass it on without unduly enriching themselves in the process.

The time came when Harold Macmillan returned from the prime ministership to assume control of the business, his older brother Daniel then being gravely ill. Through the long years of his absence I had often been tempted to return to Canada. My friend, Leonard Brockington, had written to me once, "The publishing business here is about to sail up Bonanza Creek. You had better get yourself a prospector's outfit and come out here right away." The vision of continuing with Lovat Dickson Limited on the very ground where my first struggles had been tempered me strongly, but by this time I had submerged my whole identity in Macmillan. Breaking with it would have been pain. When one is in his 60's, he does not stand dreaming on the verge of life as I had done '40 years before.

But with Harold Macmillan's return, I was released from the promise I had made years earlier. How sad it is to feel that you are no longer necessary to a great enterprise. I yearned for Canada as only one who has been an exile can. I knew that if I would find it changed, and would not really be an essential place in it for a man then in his 60th year. And yet, whoever feels himself too old for love? The capture I had felt as a young man in discovering literary London now made me dream of rediscovering Canada.

It is a common fallacy that when old men reach the end they think they are indispensable. They listen half-

essentially to speeches made in their honor, knowing that soon they will be forgotten. It is a kind of death, with the additional pain of letting oneself buried alive. All very well, perhaps, if you want leisure. But what man who has lived with a pen in his hand can really get satisfaction out of changing it for a golf club?

The winter season was at hand when I returned in 1967. There is no season of the year more beautiful to me than the early days of the Canadian winter. Returning was a continual delight of rediscovery. There were occasional shocks. Writing is now so easy and pleasurable that I spend all my days with it. Sometimes when I emerge into the streets I am half-blinded by the light and sometimes roughly reminded that another generation of wide-eyed confident youths are now in possession of them, and that they are as impatient of graying beards as I was in the twenties.

Driving along Bloor Street in Toronto recently, I crossed in two or three youths wobbling along on bicycles in the contemporary careless fashion. One of them gripped the cat and spoke to me through the open window, "Move over, granddaddy," he commanded.

I wish I could have talked to him about The Waste Land, reminding him that there is something more in life than, "Your shadow at morning striding behind you or your shadow at evening rising to meet you." I would like to have told him that I have lived a long time, that life is adventure, and that every stage has its creative excitement, from the first setting out to the hour of humility at the end.
The facts on oil and gas reserves

Once optimism ran high; now prudence is the word

by Wynne Thomas

North of the Arctic Circle, the Precambrian shield — the bedrock of half of mainland Canada — gives way to thick overlying sedimentary deposits that are as much as 500 million years old. Sloping away gently from the shield to the mountain systems to the west and into the Arctic Islands to the north, these deposits have been considered by exploration geologists as one of the world’s largest and most promising untapped sources of hydrocarbons.

In addition, geologists were optimistic in the 1960s concerning the large sedimentary basins off both coasts of Canada and the vast oil-sand deposits in northern Alberta, where one extraction plant was already in operation. By 1969, at Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, on the edge of the polar sea, explorers discovered the largest oil and gas pool in North America: 10,000 feet below the surface in a 200-million-year-old Triassic sandstone. The discovery provided immense encouragement for Canadian geologists, who had already undertaken an initial investigation of the Arctic and other frontier areas.

By 1969, 20 wells had been drilled in Canada’s frontier areas by explorers who had acquired exploration permits from the federal government on 700 million acres. One well had been drilled in the Mackenzie Delta bordering the Beaufort Sea and three in the Arctic Islands to the northeast.

In addition to the work on land in the Arctic, exploration was underway in the oceans, with two wells in the shallow waters off the east coast and 14 off the west coast. No oil or gas was discovered, but the slow, expensive job of charting the frontier’s hydrocarbon deposits had begun in earnest.

The same year, the Canadian Petroleum Association (CPA) submitted an estimate of Canada’s petroleum potential to the National Energy Board. The assessment covered the established producing areas of western Canada and all the frontier areas, except land lying under offshore waters deeper than 600 feet. With admitted scant data to draw from, CPA assessed Canada’s possible total petroleum potential — excluding the Alberta oil sands — as the equivalent of 242 billion barrels of oil, enough to accommodate the country’s needs well into the 21st century at the rate of consumption then.

CPA was not alone in its enthusiasm. Prudhoe marina was being planned as hostilities as “True Oilman.” “There is reason to look forward to discoveries of major new reserves in Canada,” Imperial told its shareholders in its 1969 annual report. “Geological conditions in Canada’s Arctic coastal area … are similar to those of the Asia’s North Slope.”

Estimates of Canada’s recoverable petroleum potential offered by industry spokesmen and others during the next few years ranged from 80 to 700 years’ supply. In 1973, the Geological Survey of Canada, a federal-government body, rated the country’s oil and gas potential, not counting the oil sands, at 230 billion barrels — slightly less than CPA’s assessment of four years earlier — while an assessment produced by Bob McCrossan and Jack Porter and published by the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists the same year put total potential reserves at 183 billion barrels. But there were more restrained assessments, notably the official findings of the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists itself. That same year, 1973, it estimated the total reserves at 120 billion barrels, exclusive of fields with a potential of 50 million or less barrels. Still, many Canadians interpreted such assessments to mean that, as a country, Canada had clearly little to worry about so far as supplies of oil and gas were concerned.

Today the euphoria of those early years of frontier exploration has been replaced by a new and tough realism. The extensive exploration in the frontier regions has not yet yielded a commercially producible supply of oil. The oil sands development has been hit with double-digit inflation, and extraction plants that were expected to be constructed at the rate of one every two years or so have shrunk to one additional plant — the Syncrude plant, which is expected to start producing oil by mid-1978. No plans have been announced for the start of construction on any more plants.

The gas discoveries in the Arctic are awaiting pipeline transportation to get them to markets in the south. The result is that, after a short period in the early 1970s as the only industrialized country of the western world that was a net exporter of crude oil, Canada became a net importer again last year. The country’s prospects of regaining self-sufficiency during the next decade are decidedly slim. This year, we will be net importers of 300,000 barrels per day and, by 1985, even with conservation, we shall be importing close to a million barrels of crude petroleum and exporting none. Further exploration work in the frontier areas has led to a reassessment by the Geological Survey of Canada of the country’s total petroleum potential (again, excluding the deep-water regions and the oil sands) at less than 100 billion barrels. The more conservative estimate came as the result of more sophisticated methods of assessment, more up-to-date drilling information, and the exclusion of the continental slopes and rises off the country’s coastlines. A hundred billion barrels is a substantial reduction from earlier estimates, but it’s a lot of oil and definitely worth going after.

To date, a total of 12.5 billion barrels of hydrocarbons have been produced in Canada.

To the oil industry, there was little unforeseen about the changing estimates of the past few years. But to many Canadians they represented an unexpected and dramatic change of fortunes. And this has led critics to charge the Canadian oil industry with deliberately misleading the public as to the size of this country’s potential petroleum reserves. The industry has been accused of doing so in order to maintain profitable exports. How else, the critics ask, can the promises of the past be reconciled with today’s situation? If Canada had even 100 years of petroleum left five years ago, how come we need to import so much oil?

Although the industry can’t avoid accepting its responsibility, not all of these criticisms deserve to be taken at face value. For one thing, the critics tend to focus on the more optimistic aspects of industry statements while ignoring the qualifications that almost always accompanied them, such as the difference between potential and proven reserves.

Imperial’s 1969 annual report to shareholders, for example, which looked forward to “discoveries of major new reserves,” contained an important caveat. W.O. Twats, then Imperial’s president, warned shareholders: “The logistics of moving oil to market will have a direct bearing on the rate of activity in these frontier areas. … Two facts are already apparent about frontier oil development. One is cost — billions of dollars will have to be spent. The other is lead time.” Three years later, in his 1972 report to shareholders, Twats sounded another warning, one that was echoed by other industry spokesmen: “Our present energy reserves, using present technology, are sufficient for our requirements for several hundred years. But this fact alone cannot guarantee that Canada will not face interruptions in energy supply — or assure Canada the most economic development of supply … exploration success cannot be scheduled.”

Nor indeed was there unanimity within the industry on the validity of the CPA’s 1969 assessment. The Imperial Oil annual report wasn’t the only place in which warnings were being sounded. In 1972, Donald McIvor, then exploration manager for Imperial and now an executive vice-president, reminded an industry audience of the hazards of exploration. Of the world’s 500 or so sedimentary basins, he said, three of them contained over half of all hydrocarbon reserves. Hundreds of basins do not have reserves of more than local significance — “… a risk that hydrocarbon explorers have always had to contend with.”

McIvor went on to stress a frequently overlooked fact: that the accuracy of estimating undiscovered reserves in any basin improves as exploration progresses. “In an unexplored or little-explored basin, these estimates are subject to
Seismic studies such as those off the Atlantic coast and in the Arctic provide the early clues of the presence of oil and gas. But it's not until wells are drilled that the potential reserves can be assessed.

enormous error, both upward and downward. While sedimentary volumes can be measured reasonably accurately from preliminary geophysical surveys, the hydrocarbon yield per unit volume is little more than a comparative guess. Such factors led McIvor to conclude that "... the Canadian Petroleum Association reserves committee estimates ... may be misleading inasmuch as they indicate significantly large reserves virtually everywhere, and thus tend to minimize the risk involved." It was Imperial's view, said McIvor, that Canada's undiscovered reserves would follow the historic worldwide pattern; they would be concentrated in a few basins and, additionally, in restricted parts of those basins.

While the industry expressed caution in its statements concerning the petroleum potential of the frontier areas, there was another factor that, in hindsight, constituted a major cause of confusion. This confusion had its roots in industry terminology. Like all professions, petroleum geology has its own special vocabulary, with many jargon terms for the uninitiated. To the geologist, there is a vast difference between proven and potential reserves. Proven reserves are those that have not only been discovered but defined by drilling and engineering data, which demonstrate they can be produced under existing economic and operating conditions. Proven reserves represent supplies available to the consumer, and there is little disagreement among authorities as to the size of Canada's proven petroleum reserves.

When, on the other hand, a geologist assesses a region's potential reserves, he is talking about oil and gas that have yet to be discovered in commercial quantities and that in fact may not be found to exist. Assessments by oil companies of undiscovered reserves are not intended primarily for public consumption, but as a relative measure of the hydrocarbon potential to guide their own exploration strategies. A good piece of advice to the non-expert is to be more prudent in attaching significance to estimates of potential reserves. In practical terms, reserves are of no use to the consumer until they have been discovered, developed, and linked to markets by transportation systems. In retrospect it is clear that the industry would have been advised, as Imperial Executive Vice-President J.G. Livingstone said in a Montreal speech recently, "to have placed greater public emphasis on the highly speculative nature" of some of the assessments of petroleum potential.

There are a couple of other factors to bear in mind. The first is that the accusation of having misled the public overlooks the diligence of the federal government in monitoring Canada's petroleum-supply position. The country's looming oil shortage was noted early in the 1970s by the National Energy Board which, in 1972, stated that during the past two or three years it had become concerned with Canada's ability to supply oil to domestic and export markets. The report predicted declining production from western reserves and forecast a shortage of domestic oil and gas to meet Canadian domestic markets. It was clear that the government was well aware of the situation.

In addition, those who accuse the industry of having deliberately misled the public overlook the amount of money poured into exploration in the frontier areas during the past decade. It's a fair point because the sum involved — more than $2 billion — makes a strong case for the industry's good faith.

Since 1969, Canada's oil explorers have drilled more than 310 exploratory wells in the frontier areas. It is difficult to believe it would do all of this merely to propagate something it knew to be false. So, while one may question the industry's judgment, it is difficult to fault its behavior.

Charges of misleading the public on the reserves question can have other effects. For example, such allegations can seriously affect public confidence in the industry at a time when it is most in need of such support. Particularly, it needs a high degree of investor confidence to attract money on the scale needed to maintain exploration momentum.

Concerning the accusation that the industry deliberately misled anyone, there is a lack of supporting evidence. "Nevertheless," as Imperial's J.G. Livingstone admitted recently, "looking at the situation from the perspective of a Monday-morning quarterback, it is now apparent that the industry was unduly optimistic about the rate at which new supplies would be brought on from these areas."

Just what does the industry know today? It knows that frontier areas of the North hold good potential for future supplies. And because of the discovery of hydrocarbons in the offshore Atlantic, further exploration is underway. A number of significant discoveries of both oil and gas have been made in the Mackenzie Delta and the Arctic Islands. And in Alberta the Energy Resources Conservation Board's estimates that, with available technology, the oil sands' mineable areas can yield as much as 26 billion barrels of synthetic oil before the deeply buried deposits of heavy oil in Alberta contain more than 800 billion barrels of crude bitumen. Even a 10-percent recovery of this reserve is nearly 10 times as great as Canada's remaining known, discovered, proven reserves of conventional oil. The industry knows that finding, developing, and transporting commercial quantities of gas and oil to petroleum users will prove a longer and more costly job than once had been expected. And while it realizes that nothing short of a miracle can prevent Canada being a net importer of crude oil by at least the next decade, the industry also believes Canada has the expertise to achieve the federal government's goal of energy self-reliance. Achieving that, of course, depends on the reserves proving sufficient, the proper technology being developed, government policies being stable, and investors seeing a fair return.

"The paradox of scarcity in the midst of plenty" was how the Science Council of Canada summed up this country's petroleum-supply position in 1975. Those words still apply. We do have the potential for large resources. The question is how much of that potential will be realized and at what cost it can be brought to market.
A town colored in history and contribution. To all of Canada

Outremont

by Adrian Water/photos by Sam Tata

Not far from where 17th-century explorer Maisonneuve ended his crusade atop Montreal’s Mount Royal, lies a pleasant slope. Spreading north and eastward, it is walled in greenery and dotted with parks, ponds, and granite-surfaced homes. For Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, the area holds “dear and privileged memories.” For it was in this town with the heavy shadows of large trees, flowering gardens, and peaceful avenues that he was born and spent his early years.

This is Outremont, a 941-acre suburb of Montreal. Last year, it celebrated its 180th anniversary and revealed itself as a corner of Canada that has not only avoided the skyscraper, but entrusted more sons and daughters to historic fame than any other area of comparable size in the country. Indeed, here in one of the last remaining bastions of Maisonneuve’s New France, politicians of the calibre of Trudeau and Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa set up homes side by side. Through the years, they have lived in quiet harmony with industrialists such as Jean-Louis Lévesque and a large number of bankers, doctors, clergy, professors, judges, novelists, and entertainers.

The residents have nestled on the mountain slope and have sent their sons to Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf and their daughters to Convent d’Outremont, run by the nuns of The Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. That may be the secret of the town’s vibrancy. “In its superb urban decor,” says Trudeau, “Outremont has, little by little, grouped schools, colleges, and convents recognized for many years as high places of knowledge and instruction... It is not, therefore, surprising that it has produced so many successful people.” Further, says Trudeau, some of the most representative and diversified ethnic groups in Canada have lived harmoniously in Outremont.

They still do. Most of their houses were built between 1910 and 1930 when the town blossomed like the Mount Royal flowers. They are large, imposing places with bay windows, stained glass, and heavy wooden balconies. They speak eloquently of good years, of distinguished years, and promises that the suburbs will thrive tomorrow.

Despite its present-day wealth and erudition, Outremont had humble beginnings. Its first seeds were sown toward the end of the 17th century when the Sulpician Fathers, landlords of Montreal Island, spurred coloniz...
Pierre Beaubien. In so doing, he planted the beginning of the Outre-
more community.

With the help of a farmer and his energetic young nephew, the famous
refined Curling Beaubien immediately
begun to farm the land. Then, in
1866, Dr. Beaubien’s son, Louis,
decided to build a house there. His
wife, Suzanne Lauretta (granddaugh-
ter of Sir Andrew Stuart, Quebec’s
chief justice), was expecting their
second child; Côte Ste-Catherine, she
felt, was an ideal location for raising a
family.

Within a few months, Louis and
Suzanne moved into a new home at the
foot of Mount Royal, and Montreal’s
wealthy French followed. By 1875, this
close corner of the island had a population of about 200, comprising
50 families living in about 40 houses. A
street directory of the day records that
30 of the households were English and
20 were French. But, despite the
sudden invasion by the bourgeoisie,
most people who resided on the hill
were still mainly farmers, milkmen,
gardeners, and housekeepers.

On Feb. 23, 1875, Côte Ste-Catherine
was incorporated as the municipality
of the village of Outre-Mont (after
Bouthillier’s house) and the residents
voted to call the town. They elected seven
councillors—five English and two
French—to serve for three years under
Mayor David Edward. At its first
meeting, the council agreed to pay
constables $2.50 “per condemnation,
plus half the villain’s fine.” However,
they unanimously agreed that, since
villagers had risen to past calamities
with buckets of water, firemen weren’t
necessary. There were regulations
governing chimney sizes too, and
farmers were forbidden to sell poor-
quality meat.

Residents saw brisk progress. By
their second assembly, councilors had
authorized a wooden sidewalk to be
built along Côte Ste-Catherine Road,
and forbade citizens to dump “dead
animals or any substance that would
cause offensive odours.” For this, the
councillors decreed sternly, there
would be a $5 fine.

A second bylaw forbade buggy
grooming, horse racing, wearing on
public roads or kept in a tavern or
grounds of ill repute. Also at that second
meeting, councilors agreed to record
their minutes in English. By this
time, the municipality’s name was being
spelled in one way—Outremont.

As years passed, more and more
people settled in Outremont. By 1881,
the population had risen to 577 and the
village budget allowed for $1,252 in
receipts and $1,151 for expenditures.
A growing population also necessitated
new laws. No man, councilors agreed
adamently, should be allowed to breed
pigs near the village hall and the
owners of errant cows should be fined
severely. More important, was a
transportation system to soothe
Montreal, three miles away. Charles
Whitehouse was appointed to provide
a stagecoach service “with four good
horses and four trips a day except
Sundays.”

Outremont flourished beyond the
residents’ wildest dreams. Montrealers
fell in love with their eager for vegetables,
honey, and melons, which thrived on the
sun-drenched hills. The people of
Outremont, in turn made regular trips
to Montreal where a favorite stopping
point was Alfred Joyce’s confectionery
shop on Phillip Square. Here, they
revived in burnt almonds, nougat,
sweetmeat, and sugar plums. English-
and French residents alike.

Meanwhile, Madame Beaubien
lived in quiet, sober luxury and sold
for herself a title “grande dame.”
While her husband sat first in the
House of Commons and later in the
Quebec Legislature, she worked to
lavish upon Outremont a decidedly
French flavor. She spoke French to her
five children and gave them a French
education. According to French cus-
toms, she celebrated the New Year
rather than Christmas. And every
Sunday evening, convoys of horse-
drawn carriages or sleighs brought the
elite, in their best attire, to dinner.
Indeed, it is still said in Outremont
today that the salons of Beaubien
brought together the best of two
traditions: the Loyalist English and
the Loyalist French. Members of the
court, politicians, and prominent physi-
cians mingled in her living room,
while their children played squash
together and went to the same schools.

But McDougall Avenue has other
sons and daughters. Jeanine Sauvé, the
federal minister of communications,
lives there with her husband, Maurice,
vice-president of Consolidated
Bathurst Limited. Nearby, John
Boyd, vice-president of Hydro-Quebec
and president of the James Bay
Development Corporation. Next door
to the Sauvés, lives Marcel Casavant,
the former Quebec deputy finance
minister. Until 1960, Omer Héroux, a
former leader of the Parti Québécois,
lived at 221 McDougall Ave., the house
is thought to be Outremont’s oldest
standing building.

The Review, Number 5, 1970
French people supported him anyway, and he assumed his task with vigor and foresight. Orchards, pastures, and piggeries began disappearing. Sir Wilfrid Laurier gave his name to the village’s main commercial street. Shops opened. Louis and Suzanne Beaubien entertained many people at dinner.

But the newly appointed police chief, also head of the volunteer fire brigade, supervisor of public health, and director of public works, had additional worries. The motor car had arrived in Outremont and was killing stray cows. So when the Montreal Automobile Club asked the Outremont council to increase local speed limits from six miles per hour to 10, the police chief rejected the idea as being “rash.” Nonetheless, residents soon traded their buggies for cars and their stables for garages.

By 1910, 15 years after it became incorporated as a town, Outremont had 5,000 residents, many of whom had settled there when other nearby sections of Montreal had become industrial or commercial. About that time, there was a fierce argument over the relocation of St. Viateur Church, to be attended by the Beaubien family and their English counterparts. Some people wanted the church in the south amid the greenery of the mountain; others saw it in the north, among the “lower masses.” The feud reached such a pitch that the parish priest, Father Charbonneau, is said to have suffered a stroke over it.

By the 1920s, the growth — the population was soon to exceed 13,000 — had turned to affluence. The town permitted service stations and Jean-Charles Edouard Trudeau was assured of his fortune when he launched a chain of them throughout Montreal. His son, Pierre Elliott, was later to attend Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf and mingle with other illustrious Outremont residents, such as the labor leader Michel Chartrand and René Lévesque, leader of the Parti Québécois, who still lives nearby today.

After the Scots and the French came the Jews; Ida Steinberg’s five sons, Sam, Jack, Morris, Nathan, and Max, decided one day to launch a string of grocery stores. In 1929, they popped into the Mount Royal Avenue branch of the Royal Bank and borrowed $2,000. By the following year they had opened their first shop on Outremont’s Bernard Avenue. Today, the brothers (Max died in 1965) have 19 supermarkets, mostly in Ontario and Quebec. “I’d say,” muses Nathan Steinberg, “that Outremont did very well for us — very well.”

It did. Among the Steinberg brothers’ customers were two senators who worked vehemently on opposite political sides, but lived next door to each other on Côte St-Catherine Road. They were Raoul Dandurand, the Liberal, and Charles Beaubien (yet another Beaubien son to make good), a Conservative. Both are dead now, but that leafy corner of old Outremont is still a haunt for politicians. Yvonne Choquette, the former Quebec education minister who resigned when Premier René Lévesque amended his controversial language legislation (Bill 22), lives a few blocks away. So does François Cloutier, Quebec’s minister of intergovernmental affairs, and Laurent Picard, former president of the CBC.

With increased services and little industry to subsidize property taxes, it now takes $8.4 million annually to run Outremont. But, if the budget has exploded, so has the population. The area now has 60,000 residents, of which only six percent are of English origin, eight percent are Jewish, 22 percent comprise other ethnic groups (mainly Greek and Chinese), and 63 percent are French. Most residents still huddle on the mountain slope in the shadow of the Université de Montréal, just outside Outremont’s western boundary. More recently, artists and performers have moved in to take their places among the eminent. They include: composers Gilles Tremblay and François Cousineau, pop singer Diane Dufresne, sculptor Yves Trudeau, television personality Lise Payette, actress Monique Miller, and author-critic Gilles Povin. All are part of the modern-day, dignified Outremont led by Mayor Pierre Des Marais III.

The pressure of change has not eluded Outremont. Yet it has changed little. “Each time I return,” says Prime Minister Trudeau, “I know that it is possible to take the same walks I enjoyed in my boyhood — without feeling in a different place.” That’s the way Des Marais wants it. At present, there is an urban-renewal program costing $1 million to preserve the town’s link with yesterday. Of the area’s 579 older buildings, many of which date back to Victorian times, 400 are being restored. “We decided awhile ago that they would not be demolished,” Des Marais says with a smile of self-satisfaction. “Outremont wants to retain its heritage and, at the same time, improve its housing facilities. Let’s face it. They don’t build houses today like the ones they built in Outremont in the good old days.”

Good old days! Outremont has rarely known bad ones.
Setting free the oil

In the north of Alberta, one of the world's biggest oil deposits. Opening it means money, machines, and an army of skilled people.

by Jean Menden
photos by Mike Dobel

In the setting sun country, 376 mile hence from Edmonton, a battle is being waged to win over one of nature's buried treasures. Here, beneath the muck and scrub timber, rests one of the biggest oil deposits known to man - something more than 600 billion barrels of crude oil. Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board estimates that, in those weeks that can be matched with today's technology, it can yield as much as 25 billion barrels of synthetic oil.

These are the Athabasca oil sands, whose oil deposits are larger than remaining proven reserves of both Alaska (8.1 billion barrels) and the United States (about 26 trillion barrels). It is easy to feel swept by this gusher, reeking like asphalt on the ground. By the technical problems of getting it all out and converting it into usable crude oil, by its monumental size, by its location, and by the stern task of gathering an army of skilled people to see it free. Slowly the coat is being peeled.

Back in 1964, one company - Great Canadian Oil Sands - began construction in the area and started producing oil in 1967. By 1975 the pioneer operation was producing about 40,000 barrels per day, but its first eight years have been many ups and downs. Today Syncrude, a consortium of petroleum companies and governmental agencies, is aiming to produce more than 100,000 barrels per day of synthetic oil by 1980. In addition, the governments of Canada, Alberta, and Ontario is making the biggest effort yet, applying $3.5 billion to the task and...
aiming to start the job of extraction in the late seventies. It is expected Syncrude will be taking 125,000 barrels per day from the sands by the early 1980s.

The area known as the Athabasca oil sands is 19,000 square miles of jack pine, black spruce, aspen, birch, and poplar cut by the Athabasca and Clearwater rivers. Along with competition from major construction projects around the world, the location presents a formidable task: drawing together the electricians, welders, pipefitters, and other skilled workers to do the job. To help attract such people and keep them during construction, the contractor, Canadian Bechtel Limited, has an energetic recruiting program. The inducements, a labour on construction can make, with overtime, as much as $18,000 per year, while skilled tradesmen such as pipelayers and electricians can earn as much as $35,000. In addition, board is provided and the beer is 25 cents a glass.

"The longer these highly trained people stay on the project," says Gil Carron, manager of Imperial's department of new energy resources, "the part of the company directly relating to Syncrude, 'the greater the productivity. But they aren't found easily.'" Canadian Bechtel Limited has recruited them from all over Canada; more than 6,000 were on the site this summer. Native people account for about 600 of this workforce. In the meantime, Syncrude is busy recruiting the complex mix of talents and skills that will make up the permanent professional staff once the plant goes into operation. The present staff of about 800 will have to rise to over 2,500 by 1978.

The growing population of Syncrude employees at Fort McMurray (a town 25 miles south of Syncrude's site) brings a social challenge: helping the community handle rapid growth in a constructive way. To involve the townspeople in their community's growth, Syncrude has organized public forums for discussion of local issues. The town is the only community of any size for 200 miles and thus serves as the oil sands' transportation hub for planes, trains, and trucks. In 1960, it was a wisp of a village with only 1,000 people.

Covered at first by Great Canadian Oil Sands development in the early sixties and then Syncrude's construction program, the population has grown to about 16,000. According to provincially appointed municipal planners, Fort McMurray will have a population of about 30,000 early in the 1980s. And one planning study done in 1974 predicts that, if more plants open in the area, the population could reach 120,000 by the end of the century.

In the meantime, houses and apartments are being built, with a target of about 2,500 units by 1978. Today the town is a community in transition. There are still a few log cabins, but they are rapidly being obscured by new developments, apartment blocks, and plazas. The town now has a radio station, a cable television outlet, three hotels, and a half-dozen motels. It has a newspaper, Fort McMurray Today, which appears five times weekly.

The town, like other western communities, is full of outdoor activity with such sports as golf, baseball, soccer, and hockey; there's also swimming in an indoor pool. In addition there are groups for writers, artists, and history buffs. Keyano College now has as many as a thousand people an evening studying everything from dance to design. "With housing being a major concern to people here," says Peter Duffy, editorial writer for Fort McMurray Today, "one of the most popular courses last winter was one called Should you rent or should you buy?"

Beyond the town, stretching in every direction, is the bush and beneath it the oil sand that Syncrude will be using. By mid-1977, the first of four giant walking draglines costing $28 million apiece will start removing the overburden. Eventually the four draglines will mine about 90 million tons of oil sands each year. The abrasive sand is hard on equipment, especially in winter. To resist the abrasion, the teeth of the dragline buckets are made of special alloy steel.

The draglines, which can manage 100 tons per bite, are so specialized that only two companies in the world make them, both in the United States. Syncrude's policy is to buy Canadian wherever price and specifications are better.

Clockwise from top left: A Fort McMurray street with newly built townhouses for the many new residents; two of the community's early stores built before oil sands development began; there's a target of 2,500 houses and apartment buildings by 1978; a new subdivision of mobile homes is required to keep up with a burgeoning population that is 16 times larger than it was 16 years ago. Peter Duffy, editorial writer for Fort McMurray Today, says housing is a major matter there; Keyano College, under construction, has many night courses.

The participants in Syncrude have taken steps to safeguard the environment. Prior to construction, Syncrude undertook an environmental study that resulted in a detailed report to the Alberta government. The report outlined the nature of the ground cover and even presented an archaeological study to help assure the project would not harm any Indian artifacts.

Once construction began, a team of environmental experts moved on the site. They're doing air and water studies before the plant goes into operation. When Syncrude swings into permanent production, an environmental department will constantly monitor air, water, and wildlife around the plant. As a vital part of the program to safeguard the surroundings, Syncrude will employ a closed system for water used in processing the oil sands. This involves the use of a huge settling pond to enable the water to be continuously recycled. This feature of the project, together with the use of other closed systems for cooling water, means that Syncrude will not be directing any used water into the surrounding streams and rivers. The plant's sulfur emissions will be carefully controlled to be within the level set by the province of Alberta.

"The care that Syncrude is taking with the environment has been recognized by outside authorities. "Through our regular inspections on the site," says
some material costs soared by 50 percent, the price of some manufactured items rose by 100 percent. On top of that, unsuspected soil conditions called for new foundation designs. Then too, the demand for machinery was soaring so that the purchase of heavy equipment was like buying doughnuts at the bakery on a Saturday morning: take a number, please; wait in line, please. ‘‘Any delay,’’ says Jim Wunder, Imperial’s coordinator for the Syncrude project, ‘‘anything that puts the project behind schedule, adds tremendously to the cost.’’

The problems crystallized in 1974 when forecasts of the cost of the project rose upward to $2.5 billion, more than twice the estimate of the previous year. ‘‘That,’’ says Imperial’s Gil Carter, ‘‘just about killed the project.’’ As it was, Atlantic Richfield Canada Ltd., a participant with a 30 percent ownership in the project,

Towers reach for the sky in the bitumen-upgrading area, which is still under construction

withdrew on Dec. 4, 1974, leaving Imperial (30 percent), Canada-Cities Service Ltd. (30 percent), and Gulf Oil Canada Limited (10 percent) to make new arrangements.

At a time when expenditures were running at the level of a million dollars per day, the three surviving participants began seeking new investors. They concluded that, with the high daily expenditures, Jan. 31, 1975, was as long as they could justify waiting in their search for new investors. Finally a satisfactory solution evolved. On Feb. 3, 1975, in a historic meeting, marked with tough negotiation, at a hotel near the airport, the Winnipeg agreement was reached, in which three governments decided to invest in the project. The proportion of investment are: Imperial, 31.25 percent; Cities Service, 25 percent; Gulf, 16.75 percent; the federal government, 15 percent; Alberta, 10 percent; and Ontario, five percent.

Obviously the cost of Syncrude is high. Divide production of 125,000 barrels per day into capital costs of nearly $2.5 billion and you come up with a ‘‘cost per barrel of production’’ of nearly $20,000 for synthetic oil. Oil from the oil sands. By comparison, the cost per daily barrel of production from conventional Alberta fields ranges from $5,000 to $10,000. As for selling prices, Syncrude oil will be based on world prices.

In all of this there are unavoidable risks as in any undertaking of the size and complexity of Syncrude. But along with the risks go great opportunities for developing new expertise in technology for Canada. And weighing the realities, Canada cannot sit by idly allowing itself to become more and more dependent on imported crude oil. Even though Syncrude’s oil will be expensive, it does result in the expenditures being made inside rather than outside Canada. In this way, other parts of the Canadian economy benefit and jobs are created for future Canadian workers.

Syncrude will not provide the solution to Canada’s energy needs. Not by itself. But today’s effort to unlock the treasures of the sands represents, according to the C.D. Howe Research Institute, a kind of mature understanding of our finite reserves and recognition of the need for a real start in an effort of national scale to meet the new realities.
Pennies and Postcards

Landscapes and main streets and farm animals. And notes about Carrie and her collarbone

by David Parry

“What an era it was,” says Allan Anderson of the years 1900 to 1916. “Movement and change. Travel. A fascination with inventions.” Anderson has been studying neither history texts nor academic essays, but picture postcards.

Anderson, who lives in the village of Tottenham, Ont., began collecting early-Canadian postcards in 1972. That year he came across an old double-size card of St. John’s, Nfld., and wondered if he might have hit upon a unique way to explore the past. Old postcard pictures would give the look of the land, while the written messages would reveal the things that concerned the people who lived there.

Anderson, a freelance broadcaster who travels a lot in his work, prowled antique shops and secondhand stores from the east coast to the Arctic. He decided to specialize in what he calls “the golden age of picture postcards,” the years from the turn of the century, when the cards first appeared in Canada, to World War I, which ended the use of European color printing. By 1916 power stocks had vanished from the stores. In limiting his interest to one era, Anderson thought he might find enough to fill an album. But within a year he’d collected more than 2,000. Today he has 24,000 cards.

Anderson co-owns the collection with freelance broadcaster Betty Tomlinson. In 1975 they received a Canada Council grant that enabled them to take slides of some of the cards and travel around giving lectures. An average presentation includes 420 slides,
many of them specially chosen for the area they’re visiting. While Anderson works the projector, Tomkinson plays tapes of the music they’ve assembled to accompany the presentation.

Most cards in the collection are in beautiful condition. Anderson says this is because people who bought them years ago often kept them in special postcard albums. At one point there were postcard clubs and a half-dozen collectors’ magazines. The craze began in Europe and became so popular there that, in 1908, The London Evening News was moved to warn its readers that “the art of letter writing may speedily become extinct.”

The postcard itself — without picture — originated in Austria in 1869. Three million were sold in the first three months. A year later the new lightweight correspondence proved very functional when Paris was under siege because of the Franco-Prussian War. Special three-gram cards were sold and mailed out of the surrounded city in balloons.

An early engraving in The Illustrated London News shows a German postman with a miniature mailbox strapped to his back leaving his hands free to carry postcards in a tray like those used now by nightclub cigarette girls. The postman is selling the cards to patrons of a sidewalk cafe. The caption explains that the cards would often be filled out immediately and popped into the portable mailbox.

There are conflicting claims as to when and where the first pictures appeared on postcards. In Britain, as in most other countries, the government had claimed exclusive rights to print the early cards and had kept them unadorned by graphics. But in 1894, the government gave up its monopoly and privately printed picture postcards went on sale shortly after.

In his book, The Picture Postcard and Its Origins, Frank Staff says that in Britain postcards could be mailed for half the price of sending a letter. This made them popular at once, but there were “those who considered the use of a halfpenny postcard to be an insult, believing that if a penny was not paid for a message, then it was hardly worth sending at all. For many years the use of postcards was frowned upon by a certain class of person.”

If there was any such reluctance in Canada it had little effect on sales. “The post office, God bless ‘em, kept separate figures for postcards,” says Anderson, “so we know that, in 1890, Canadians mailed 27 million cards. In 1905, it was 41 million. And our population then was only seven million.”

Anderson says the cards have given him a rare glimpse into the ways people lived, what they thought about in leisure moments, and their worries and joys. He says the cards reveal people were often sick, but had a fine sense of humor. For many it was a time for social climbing. I have been invited.
to usher at a temperance meeting Friday evening,” a young man proudly wrote on a postcard to his parents. “They were able to get a surprising amount of information onto a card.” says Betty Tomlinson. She reads one from the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia. “Your cards were so pretty. Especially did I like the one of the Normal School. Ray and Carrie are so tired they sleep till 8 a.m. Very hot and dry and dusky here. Will stuck a nailhead in the ball of his big toe and made a bad wound. Laid up three days for it and is still very lame. Carrie broke her collarbone. Ray cut his knee and I sprained my ankle. One cow has a calf. One has a sore leg and the cat has kittens under the house where the hens have chickens. Trouble. Trouble. Trouble.” A delightfully concise summary of the tribulations of early farm life, though a little more information might have spared future generations the mystery of how Will stabbed his toe with the head of a nail.

The writing frequently shows a concern for style that is lacking in many of today’s “wish you were here” postcard sentiments. Consider this message from Regina in 1907. “We had a terrible experience since we saw you. Our house was struck by lightning at 11 o’clock on Thursday and badly wrecked. We were all asleep and strange to relate not one of us received a scratch. Fires started in five places but we got all put out. All hope we may never be called upon to come through the same again. Yours, Uncle Jim.”

Two cards from the Toronto area show the dry humor that was characteristic of the age. The first, backed by a picture of the Rosedale ravine, is dated 1908. It reads. “We’re going skating tonight. Ask Ernie if he wishes me many falls. Tell him we miss the noise he used to make on the piano very much. Maggie.” The other, showing the Scarborough bluffs in 1909, offers a curious style of consolation to someone named Minnie from a friend or relation named Pearl: “Sickness must like you. It hangs to you well. I heard you got thrown out of a carriage and hurt.”

The pictures on the cards are by no means all landscapes. Train wrecks, fires, factories, and farm machinery all found their way into the mails. The photographs were taken in black and white, but most were hand-colored and sent to Europe where there were presses for printing color. The work shows remarkable attention to detail. In street scenes, tiny hats were rendered on each head in the crowd. Yet, despite the attention to detail that went into the work, the photos themselves have a refreshingly casual flavor; the idea of a cameraman waiting hours for precisely the right moment to click his shutter appears to have been born to a later age. The effect is more candid and a little more fun. If the coloring artist felt that a fluffly cloud would aid the composition of the landscape, he’d cheerfully brush one in. Night scenes were tacked by darkening the background, adding a moon, and painting lights in the windows of buildings.

Though most of the cards were sold by large companies with distribution networks and connections with the color-printing houses of Europe, local photographers flourished from the postcard craze. Long before wire services supplied pictures to news papers across the country, an alert photographer could shoot a major fire or accident and print it onto postcards. Between disasters, family groupings were a popular theme for custom-printed cards.

Anderson and Betty Tomlinson know the ages of most of their postcards by the postmark date. But some weren’t mailed, so it’s difficult to determine when they were made. A couple of guidelines help. Before 1905, there was no vertical line separating the message space from the address space. Since 1910, scenes showing shorter poles must have been taken in that year or later.

Anderson usually pays 25 to 50 cents for each card, but sometimes has to go as high as $2 to $3. He once paid $20 for an aluminum postcard from Niagara Falls, but such exceptions are rare.

Suppliers have ranged from a jewelry shop in Victoria to an antique store and museum in Aylesford, N.S. “I took a bus to Aylesford from Wolfville in Nova Scotia to see what this guy had. I bought all he had. Then the dealer told me he had a private collection that he didn’t know what to do with. I said, ‘sell it to me,’ and he did.”

Frequently people approach at the end of a lecture with cards of their own for sale. A rash of offers usually follows newspaper articles about the collection and the radio appearances Anderson makes from time to time. Yet there are still problem areas. “Downtown Peterborough and Kingston are hard to find,” says Anderson. “And it’s impossible to get anything from the Yukon.” If you have any old albums around the house and think you can help, you might like to send him a card.
When I was in my teens and growing up in Nova Scotia in the coal mining town of Glace Bay, I had a teacher in high school named Georgina MacKay. By the time I became a student in her class, she was in the last years of a long career, one that had begun in that town in 1910. She was a small woman, not much more than five feet in height, round of face and bright of eye, with thick, reddish hair swept to the back. I had heard of her many years before I entered her class, for she had taught, so it seemed, all the adults I knew as a child — the doctors, the lawyers, the teachers, my aunts, my uncles, and even my father. In the small world of boyhood, she was a large and looming legend and, as the years of high school drew near, I anticipated her classes with a combination of curiosity and timidity.

She taught English in all its aspects: its history, its literature, and its usage. I remember that morning in September, 1949, when for the first time, I took a seat in her class. She strode in, shook her head in a slight, quick gesture that I would remember forever and announced that, no matter what our ambitions, we were about to begin the most important study of our lives. “What hope,” she asked, “what hope if you want to use your life for a high purpose but cannot use your language?”

Using the language according to Georgina MacKay required, above all, a respect for the rules of grammar. Just as a carpenter must follow the rules of his trade in building a house, she said, so the student of English must follow the rules of grammar in constructing a paragraph. She was a strict grammarian; some people today would call her a purist and they would be right. There were times, she told us, when a rule of grammar could be broken for some special reason. But such occasions were rare and only for those who first of all knew the rule and why they were breaking it.

She was not, however, merely a pedant absorbed in the mechanics of parsing and unappreciative of the rhythm of a graceful phrase. The final test of syntax, she maintained, was how it appealed to the ear. Once, after I had handed in an essay, she called me to her office — she was then principal of the school — and gave me candid opinion. “The material is all here and it is arranged well,” she said, with a kindly lash of her tongue, “but it reads like the directions on a can of paint.” Had I ever read some of the essays in a magazine called The New Yorker, she wondered, especially some of those by a man named E.B. White? “We should study them for style,” she told me when I was 15.

She urged us to read E.B. White for reasons other than the clarity and cadence of his style. She admired the feeling with which he wrote. He was not cynical, she said, and so he was able to see the beauty and the importance of very ordinary things. So, when we wrote our compositions for Georgina MacKay, we did not always write on the values of a good education or the history of the Legislature in our province. She was just as interested in a few paragraphs on walking down main street or chopping a pile of wood in January.

In her teaching of Shakespeare, she had a gift that made the characters vivid with color and many of their words permanently remembered. A friend of mine, a student in Glace Bay High School and now past middle life, insists that she can still watch some of Shakespeare’s plays and anticipate the lines, because the lessons she took more than 40 years ago from Georgina MacKay are so clear in her memory.

Like all great teachers, her influence went far beyond the subjects she taught. One day during an examination she was supervising, a boy innocently reached across the aisle, picked up his neighbor’s blotter, used it, and passed it back. Immediately she swooped down, checked to see if either had been cheating, and having established innocence, offered her advice: “We must avoid the suspicion of evil as evil itself.” The student who reached for the blotter on that afternoon in the thirties is now a Supreme Court justice and the maxima of his teacher has accompanied his long career.

To her, a student arriving late for class, whether by one minute or by 10, was lax and there were no excuses. She had a rule for such incidents, iron though unwritten, and every student knew it. The latecomer would be compelled to stand by the door for five minutes — sometimes 10 — while the lesson went on and all eyes stared ahead. Finally, when she had decided that the penalty time was up, she would cast a nod and the student would take his seat, grateful that the ordeal was mercifully over. I am told that, in one of the country’s major hospitals, there is a surgeon whose punctuality at the operating-room door is a religious ritual because he stood so long and so often beside that classroom door.

However, she was not a severe or dour woman. She took great pride in the school’s accomplishments in sport. Sometimes her appreciation of the place of sport took on a surprising expression. Once, for reasons I could never fully understand, a baseball scout from the old Brooklyn Dodgers showed up in Glace Bay and she promptly canceled some morning classes so that we might have the opportunity to hear the views of this man on how to go about developing our pitching arms. So far as I know, his visit did not result in anyone going all the way in baseball.

Georgina MacKay was the daughter of a medical doctor, William MacKay, a Nova Scotian who had graduated from Bellevue Hospital Medical School in New York in 1874 and returned to spend his entire life practising in Glace Bay. A man of ambition and energy, he became leader of the Conservative Opposition in Nova Scotia in 1886 and helped frame the province’s Health Act of 1888. He was appointed to the Senate in 1912.

Georgina — the younger of his two daughters — was born in 1886. She went to the local schools, excelled in her work, and then in 1906, she entered Dalhousie University in Halifax. She graduated in 1910 and began a career that was to span 40 years in a single school, bringing a disciplined approach and high aspiration to hundreds of teen-agers. In the mid-forties, years after it was her due, she was made principal, but in some ways the delay may have been for the better; it meant that most of her career had been spent in the classroom. In 1951, the year when she retired, Dalhousie honored her with a doctor of laws degree; the president who conferred it was one of her students, Alex Kerr-Thain. In the autumn of 1958, when she was 71, she died and became for all who knew her part of a fond and lasting memory.

We are not certain, many of us, if the high schools of our time still have teachers of her gifts and commitment. But this fall, as my son begins his final years of school, I can wish for him no greater gift than that, in the years of youth, his life will be touched by a teacher of the wisdom and integrity of Georgina MacKay.