University of Alberta

A Book for my Father

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the life of my father, Arthur Cantin, who was elderly when I was born. As I was growing up, I had little knowledge of my father's seven decades of existence before I knew him. A French-Canadian, he lived several years in the United States, working in the textile mills, and later learning the new technology of electricity through correspondence courses. He held thirty-two jobs in thirty-three years before becoming an inspector of electricity and gas for the federal government in 1912 in Edmonton, Alberta. He developed his own plan for the development of hydro-electricity in Alberta.

To research his life, I have used his diaries, letters, and articles, as well as an archive of photographs. I have traveled to some of the places he worked and hunted, and have made use of my memories of growing up with an aged father. The result is a mosaic picture of him, composed of images and pieces of narrative in many different voices. As in a work of fiction, he emerges as a character who is at once a young man of dreams and ambition and an old man who contemplates the past. In exploring my father's life, I have discovered the man who influenced me to value books, and so I have come full circle and written this book for him.

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," Four Quartets

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to Bob Cantin, my nephew, for lending me the family albums which revealed an archive of pictures from my father's past and which were indispensable in piecing together his life.

My thanks to Anne Malena for being my reader. A special thank you to Mary Walters, good friend, for her thorough reading of the thesis and words of encouragement; and special thanks also to Ian MacLaren for his careful reading of the manuscript in progress and his many perceptive comments.

I am grateful to have had Greg Hollingshead as my supervisor during this project. He provided the steady guidance and encouragement to get through the stacks of unstructured material about my father and patiently read the many drafts of this thesis. I am sure he knows the material as well as I do. A very special thank you to him.

And, finally, I would like to acknowledge the constant support and enthusiasm my husband Jerry provided, and to thank him for being my traveling companion during the exploration required for this thesis.

Imagine, if you will, a family on the way to church in the city of Edmonton, Alberta, on an October day in 1952. The father is an older man, with greying blond hair and light blue eyes shaded by a fedora with a small red feather in the hatband. He holds himself very straight in his dark wool overcoat with fur lapels as he walks. The mother has completely white hair, although she is many years younger than he is. She is tall with a medium build, and is wearing a tailored wool suit she has sewn herself. A pillbox hat with a black net down over her eyes gives her a mysterious look.

Holding on to her gloved hand is a little girl, about four years old, the link that holds the woman to the man. She is blond, with a braided tress tied with a pink ribbon at the top of her head, while the rest of her hair is cut straight and short, just below her ears. Like her mother, she has dark brown eyes, and has a tendency to squint in the sun. She likes to lift herself off the ground on her parents' supporting hands, but her mother has told her not to do that, so she resists the temptation. The child could be their grandchild but she is not; she is their daughter.

The main fact of the story is this: I was born to my father and his second wife, my mother, when he was sixty-seven and she was forty-three. We were a family unit until my father died at the age of eighty-five when I was eighteen, the legal definition of an adult, although I was still a child. If you asked me what it was like growing up with an aged father, I would say that I did not know it was unusual. When I was old enough to ask about my friends' fathers going off to work while mine stayed home, my mother told me that my father had been retired from his government job for many years. So I was given a word with which to answer my friends' questions about what my father did, although I could not explain what "retired" meant.

I remember him as a tall, dignified man who dressed in suits, who liked to walk, and who would speak to everyone in a courteous voice. He loved apples, read books voraciously and enjoyed going to movies. His favorite song was "Silver threads among the gold," an accurate description of the color of his hair when I knew him. But he was also a proud man with a quick temper who liked to have his way. He was contradictory in most discussions, seeming to take the opposite side for the sake of argument. He used to say that if he ever fell into a river and was swept away to look for him upstream.

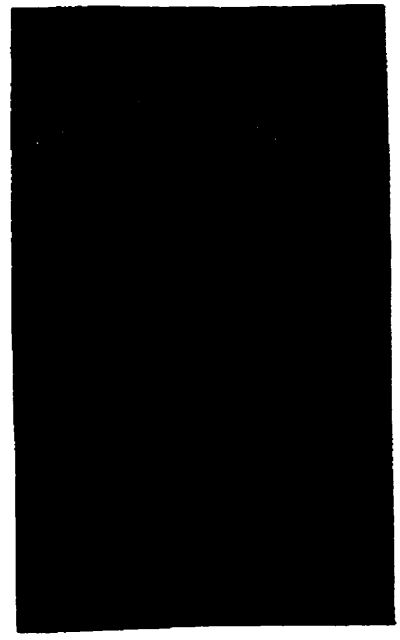
I can glance around my house now and see the shelves and shelves of my father's books. Some are held in oak bookcases with glass doors; others are in plain wood bookcases. After my mother died in 1990 and I had to empty her house, I looked through all the books that were stored in her basement and I remembered how he had treasured them. I brought the books home with me because I know he wanted me to have them. I can run my fingers over the backs of his books now, Durey's General History of the World, Gibbon's Roman Empire, A General History of the Christian Era, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin, William Ewart Gladstone, by George Russell, and The Prairie, by J. Fenimore Cooper, among the many titles that tell of his varied interests. I know that he read them all. He could quote from Plato or Abraham Lincoln, and could turn to the exact page where the quotation came from. His favorite quotation was from Shakespeare: "Men at some time are masters of their fates. The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

Growing up, I also remember him as a farmer wearing oil-stained coveralls and a short jacket, and a particular kind of hat he called his "calotte," the French word for a cap. He drove a grey Ford tractor that pulled drills, harrows and plows. Once, I had my picture taken with him, kneeling in a field, holding up two Hungarian Partridge chicks that he had found. It is my favorite picture of him, tanned and unshaven, looking down intently at the tiny birds in his hands. I am about four years old, with a bow of ribbon in my hair, and I am looking unhappily

over his shoulder, because I am annoyed at having to stand in the itchy bristles of straw in the field.

I never knew my father, really. I knew certain details about his childhood, his work and his grand project for hydroelectricity, but I did not know what he had been like throughout the almost seven decades he had lived before I was born. After my mother died, when I was forty-one, I found that she had kept for me many papers from my father's past: the articles and diaries that he had written, and several other documents. Perhaps as she intended, I began to discover this man who had been my father: prying apart the lines he wrote to see the image beyond.

I have a tin-type picture of my father, most likely taken in 1889, when he was eight or nine years old. He is dressed in a wrinkled suit and stands very straight, leaning his left elbow on the back of a wooden chair. His face is unsmiling and he seems to be thinking about something. What is remarkable about the picture is the awkward, self-conscious way he holds his hands: his right hand is held with the fingers straight and touching his thumb, while the other is held to show the back of his hand with the forefinger and middle finger forming an inverted V.



My father died on February 10, 1967, Canada's Centennial year, when I was in my first year at university. The funeral was held four days later, on Valentine's Day. After the funeral mass and interment, I returned to university to attend my afternoon chemistry lab. Although my mother encouraged me to go because I would not be gone for long, I did not realize that I was leaving her alone, to spend the rest of the day with her grief.

That afternoon, I met a friend from high school who was surprised to see me at university because she knew of my father's funeral. She asked what I was doing there and I explained that I had decided to come to my lab because it was very difficult to make up missed labs. She did not extend condolences but said, "Oh. Well, I always thought that you treated your father as if he was simply in the way...."

I turned away without saying anything. I could have denied what she said but I could not deny the truth. My father was an old, old man when he died, and I was still a child.

My life proceeded on its course after that, marriage a year and a half later, a son nine months after that, about the time I finished my Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. I became a full-time wife and mother of four and began to write short stories, although writing was something I had started to do in my French elementary school days. I continued to attend university part time for years, finishing a Bachelor of Arts in Canadian History, and then returning to get the English subjects I needed to finish my Master of Arts in English. For the subject of my creative writing thesis, I chose my father, the man who had been in the way while I was growing up.

My father's diary was written in a black book with a cardboard cover stamped in gold that says, "Canadian General Electric Co. Ltd." However, this has been used as the back cover so that the front of the book is simply black. The diary, composed mainly in 1915, with additions in 1929 and 1944, is written in black ink in a small though neat script that is not difficult to read. Although my father's first language was French, he wrote the text in English. There is a two-line red margin on the left of the yellowing pages with two holes on both the left and right of the paper for holding the pages together. A flat gold wire runs through the left pair of holes and then the wire is folded down and looped under a metal bracket.

At the end of the diary, there are diagrams and a letter written to inquire about the potential for development of an electric storage battery that my father designed. Then there is the record of his lending library from 1915 to 1928. The last pages of the book are filled with tables for "rubber-covered cables," Ohm's law of an electrical current, the directions for reading a Ten-thousand Micrometer, and charts for the sizing and cutting of gear wheels.

My father also kept notes in small, leather-bound "Canadian Pocket Diaries" for the years 1923 to 1946. These are filled with details of his everyday living: his expenses while traveling for the government, the repairs he had to make on his car, brief descriptions about his hunting trips and what he shot, the cost of a hair-cut and a meal at a hotel. Occasionally, there are notes about the first robin of spring, the weather, and personal remarks such as, "I do not like to be driven."

Arthur Cantin's diary, 1915:

It is hard for a man who has been used to hard work to sit and hold the office down as it were in order to put in time. I cannot sit here indefinitely without doing something, most of what I do is reading, not novels but engineering works and some of the old Masters.

Today, March 24, 1915, I have a slight headache so I am not inclined to read much but I have to keep busy somehow so after reading several biography, I thought mine would perhaps be interesting to at least one person after I am gone, that is my son. I am writing this in a book in which it is not likely to be found. I wish to keep this to myself but still I feel that it is worth the paper it will be written on.

I was born in Weedon, Quebec, on March 29, 1881. My father was Flavien Cantin, a hard working blacksmith, who had always, "Done his work honorably," or as the French saying is, "Fait honneur à ces affaires." My mother's maiden name was Virginie Cloutier, both my parents born in or near St. Ferdinand de Halifax, Quebec. On my mother's side, as far as I can ascertain, it was one of the original French family to come to Canada having settled near Quebec City in 1632. On father's side I have not found out to date when the first one came to Canada but there is a settlement near Point Levi opposite Quebec which bears my name.

My early life was spent in Weedon excepting for about a year spent in St. Marie de la Beauce at which place I attended the Brother school and was doing quite well in my study. Then we went back to Weedon and I started at the common school but after the first year, I took

a dislike to the teacher and my progress ended there. I might say also that the teacher was altogether too insistent in teaching the catechism. I had to learn it by heart, Question and Answer, and I spent a good many valuable hours doing this. At about this time I had one year of English lessons taught by a teacher who did not know her English alphabet properly and of course could not teach English in any form. When I left school I was about twelve and I could barely read or write French; not one word of English did I know.

I remained in the village doing odd jobs around the Cross Saw Mills, such as stacking clapboard and working around the mills doing various chores, and helping my father farm the four acres we had in the village.

Amongst my school chums I was somewhat of a leader and I was the one who generally kept them busy after school hours. I was a great one to get them working for me at various chores but principally "à fair chantier" (to be a lumberjack). In the winter time, I had small sleds of all kinds and had a trained dog that I used to harness together with one of the neighboring dogs and we used to bring in a large quantity of fuel wood.

Father always had a dislike for me using his smithing tools as I used to leave them generally in poor condition, then again lose them, as I had a very poor memory and if I left a tool anywhere I could not remember for the life of me where I had left it. I got to be quite a mechanic at an early age, I could handle tools and when father was away, I used to do odd jobs of blacksmithing for farmers who would come in and be in great rush for the work.

Weedon is in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, a short drive from Sherbrooke. The area was first settled in 1841 and Lord Elgin designated it as a municipality in 1851. The main industries of the region at that time were logging and the manufacture of potash from wood ash.

Flavien and Virginie Cantin, my father's parents, were married at St. Ferdinand de Halifax in May 1873 and then settled permanently at Weedon shortly thereafter because all of their eight children were born there. The first son, Ludger, was born in 1875, and the first daughter, Alexina, was born three years after that, in 1878. In those first five years of marriage, Virginie had time to make a Christmas quilt with traditional designs of roosters, trees and pineapples on a white background. My father was the third-born child, three years after his sister, on March 29, 1881. Afterwards, three other girls were born: Anna in 1883, Rose Alba in 1885, and Clara in 1887. After losing one daughter at birth, in 1891, Virginie bore Philemon in 1895. All the girls had "Marie" as one of their names, and all the boys had "Joseph," as it was traditional to give these names in French-Catholic families.

The Catholic church in Weedon, built in 1854, was named for "St. January" because the visiting bishop who inaugurated the church suffered severe frostbite to his hands during the ceremony. Although the congregation petitioned to have the name changed because it reflected badly on the region's weather, the bishop was adamant and the name remained. A larger church was constructed in 1880, the year before my father was born. From 1887 onwards, part of the large presbytery, the residence of the priest, had been used as a school. All children in grade six had to attend catechism classes, in which the priest or vicar would teach them the rules of morality and have them recite the answers to the questions in the catechism book, just as my father described.

In my mother's basement I found a framed souvenir of my father's first communion. The frame is painted to resemble wood with gold around the inside of the frame next to the

glass. A piece of wood, wedged like a shingle, holds the document in place at the back. Printed in the center of a brownish piece of paper with water stains around one side is a black-and-white lithograph of seven boys kneeling around the priest, who holds up a white host over the chalice, preparing to give them their first communion. The boys are dressed formally in dark jackets, short in front and long in back, over light-coloured trousers. The altar behind the priest has six tall candlesticks on it, and stands in front of an ethereal scene of Jesus on the cross. Drawn all around the picture are crosses growing out of wheat and grapes, and four circles with the words of Jesus at the last supper.

Under the picture, written in fine black script, are the words: "Cantin, Arthur, 10 ans, à fait sa première communion dans l'Église de St. Janvier de Weedon le 17 juin, 1891. P. Brassard, Prêtre."

Diary, 1915:

Mother was the business head of the house. She could read and write French and she did all the correspondence and bookkeeping of the home. There used to be an excursion from Sherbrooke to Boston for $5.00, a distance of about 100 miles, so about November 1894, she went visiting Boston and Lawrence, Massachusetts and Manchester, New Hampshire, and, when she came back, my parents decided to move to Newton, Massachusetts. But the following year my younger brother Philemon was born so my parents delayed it a year.

My family moved to the States in April 1896, I think it was the 15th, arriving in Newton the next day. None of us could speak English excepting father who had a very limited knowledge of it. We were stopping with French people for a few days until the furniture came when we moved into an old house of five rooms and started to look for work.

I got a job at the Nonantum Worcested Woolen Mills at $1.33 a week working 58 hours a week. The hardest part of that job was the getting up in the morning at 5 or earlier to go to work at 6:30. I, who had been brought up to get up at 8 or later, found it quite a task to get up, but it was a good lesson as up to the present day I get up early—generally 6 a.m. summer or winter.

In the mill all were English speaking people and it did not take me long to see that without a knowledge of this language a boy or man was doomed to do the most menial labor at the least pay. So, early, I started to pick up English from anyone who would tell me what a certain word

meant. I also started playing baseball but never took any strong liking to the sport, I soon gave it up.

After working in the mill for about 5 or 6 weeks, the mill closed down and I had, as well as two of my sisters, to seek work elsewhere. There was no work to be had in the neighborhood so the family moved to Manchester, New Hampshire, where we remained for a few months. I found work in the Starks Mill and learned "spring," a work which is quite menial but which requires a constant look out and standing up to make sure that everything is going okay. I worked there for 6 weeks and got $3.00. This and the close confinement in the mills gave me a dislike for mill work but having no knowledge of English, mill operator was the only thing I could look for.

My father's family had a formal photograph taken in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1898, shortly after their move to the States. Flavien, the father, is forty-nine years old, and sits straight in his chair. He appears to be a tall, thin man, bald except for a fringe of hair. On his lap, he holds his youngest son, Philemon, who is about two years old.

Virginie, the mother, is sitting next to Flavien and seems shorter and heavier than him. She is forty-three years old at this time, and the mother of seven children. She has a high broad forehead, tired eyes, and her hair is tied back, giving her a stern look. On her lap, she holds a newspaper she appears to be rolling.

My father, Arthur, who is sixteen years old, is on the right of the picture behind his youngest sister, and his right hand rests on the back of the chair his mother sits in. He stands more on one leg than the other so that his left knee is bent and slightly ahead of the other. His hair and eyes are light because he was blond and had blue eyes.

Diary 1915:

In October 1898, the family moved to Lawrence, Massachusetts and I started to work in the Atlantic Mills on a drawing frame. I was seventeen years old. Being somewhat of a mechanic I soon was given work at painting bobbins and repairing machinery and cleaning, which I liked much better than tending a frame. However, there was a foreman there by the name of Murphy who tried to handle me roughly and this I would not stand for, so I quit. I went to work in the Upper Pacific Mill at the same kind of work and remained there for over a year when I quit that, and went for more money in the same mill but in the cloth printing department. This was quite a dirty job as the work consisted mostly of washing the color off the tangle and circular brush. These colours were so strong that if a rag was left soaked with that dope, it would start spontaneous combustion in a few minutes.

I worked in the Upper Pacific Mill at print work for about 5 or 6 months when I started at the Lower Pacific to learn to weave. There I was making from $7.50 to $12.00 a week and remained there about a year.

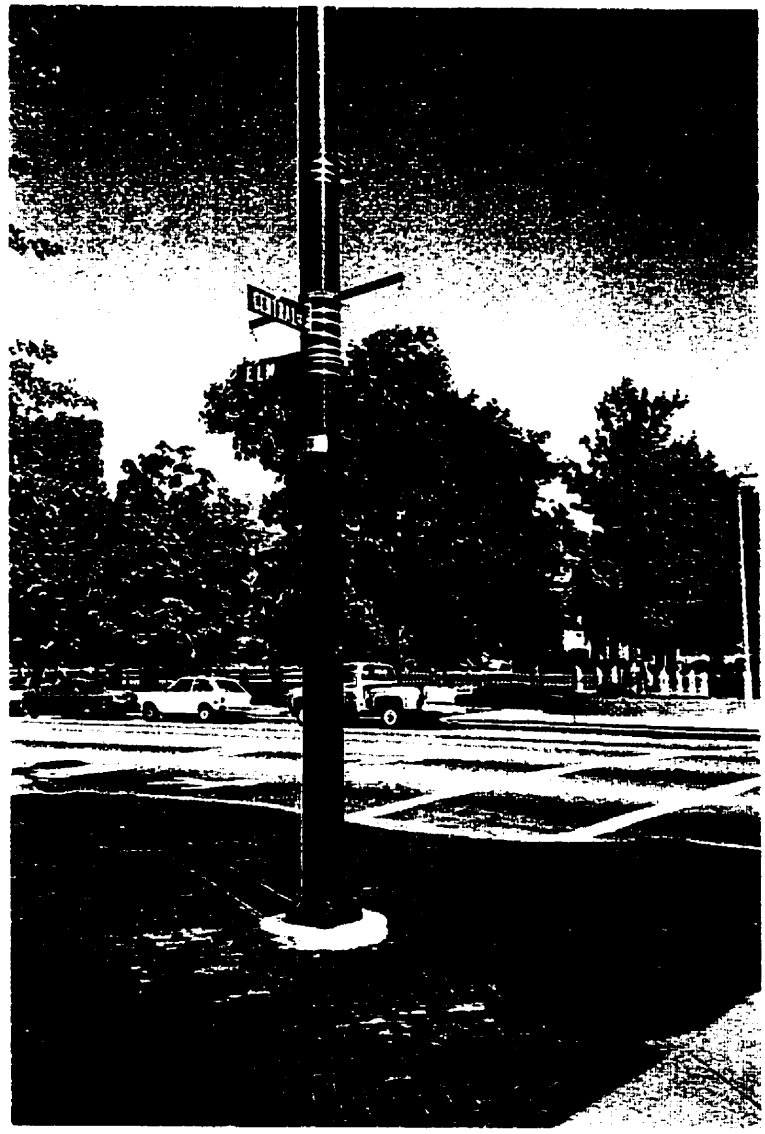
When I was growing up, my father often referred to Lawrence and Lowell, which seemed to be together, and also to Concord, Manchester, and Pittsfield. I did not ask where these places were; I presumed they must be in Quebec or Ontario. Twenty-five years after my father died, when I was in my forties, I looked up these names and discovered that they were in the United States, in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. This fact piqued my curiosity: Why would a French-Canadian family with hardly any knowledge of English want to go work in the mills of the Eastern States?

What I discovered was that the large-scale manufacture of cotton cloth began in Waltham, Massachusetts in 1815, financed by a group of Boston merchants. At first the textile industry actively recruited farm girls as cheap labour. By the mid-1840s these American-born employees were abandoning mill work, so the newly arrived Irish immigrants filled the vacancies. When the Irish in their turn deserted the mills, factory managers looked to the large pool of French-Canadian workers just north of the border, actively recruiting entire families to come south using convenient and cheap rail transportation.

In May 1992, when I was visiting Montreal, I found an advertisement in a newspaper for the Lowell National Historic Site, a restored textile mill. The name was familiar, and I looked it up in my father's diary when I got home and found that he had worked there, and that Lawrence, Concord, Manchester and Pittsfield were in the same region.

I remembered seeing addresses where my father had lived as I glanced through his papers when I moved them from my mother's basement. The first place I looked for addresses was in his drafting portfolio, a warped cardboard file, tied on three sides with black ribbon. Here I found an address on his drawings for a drafting course he had taken while working in Pittsfield, Massachusetts: 39 Dartmouth Avenue. As I eagerly jotted down the address, I felt like a detective finding her first real clue. Then I looked through the first pages of several books in my father's library, but found nothing until I came to an old French-English

dictionary. There I found an address in Lawrence, Massachusetts: 68 Hampshire Street. Those two addresses, along with my father's references to the corner of Elm and Central in Manchester, would at least give me places to investigate, one hundred years after my father had lived there.



Diary, 1915:

While I mention drink, I might say what was the strongest inducement for me to keep sober was when we were living in Manchester, corner of Elm and Central Street. This was known as little Ireland and the police in Manchester is the roughest of any city I ever lived in, barring none. A number of arrests were made at that corner every week and very often there would be a fight between the police and the man under arrest and the policeman would handle that man until he would be bleeding all over the face.

Father was a man who always used liquor moderately and he would always treat us when passing liquor in the house. From that day on I said that if I should ever get drunk, the police would arrest me and I would perhaps receive a beating just as a number of those arrested, so I decided not to drink.

It is a pleasant fall day in late September before any of the leaves have turned red in Manchester, New Hampshire, when my husband and I set out to discover this city my father referred to in his diary. We have no map of Manchester other than a schematic diagram, so we stop at an antique shop in a converted warehouse to orient ourselves and to ask for directions. The shop-keeper directs us to a main road that leads to the oldest part of the city where the Merrimack River is bordered by the giant Amoskeag Manufacturing Company that used to make textiles. Most of the mills were closed after 1929, and textile manufacturing moved to the south of the United States, close to where the cotton was grown.

When we arrive at the site, we see city blocks covered with the imposing brick buildings of the mills, five storeys high with rows of identical rectangular windows. The entire city seems to radiate from the nucleus of the complex, although the mills have been closed for fifty years. Nothing has been torn down, the buildings are simply fenced off and left standing. We head down Main Street, parking in front of well-maintained brick tenements that used to provide living quarters for the workers, and walk along looking for Elm and Central.

Once we locate Elm Street, we ask a passing girl where Central Avenue would be; she points us in the other direction from where we have been walking. When we arrive at the corner of Elm and Central, we find a park called Merrimack Square, which is a war memorial to the Vietnam Veterans. Plaques of honor, like small tables on a concrete circle, stand under the American flag. The park is peaceful, with tall trees, park benches and well-tended lawns. An old man in a suit coat and baseball cap shuffles past us to sit on a bench.

Across the street is the paved driveway of the Hilton Hotel, which is the end of Central Avenue because the river runs on the other side of the hotel. On the other corner, perhaps where my father looked out over the street watching the police arrest the drunks, are a couple of two-storey buildings in white stucco. One is a dry cleaning shop and the other is a small coffee

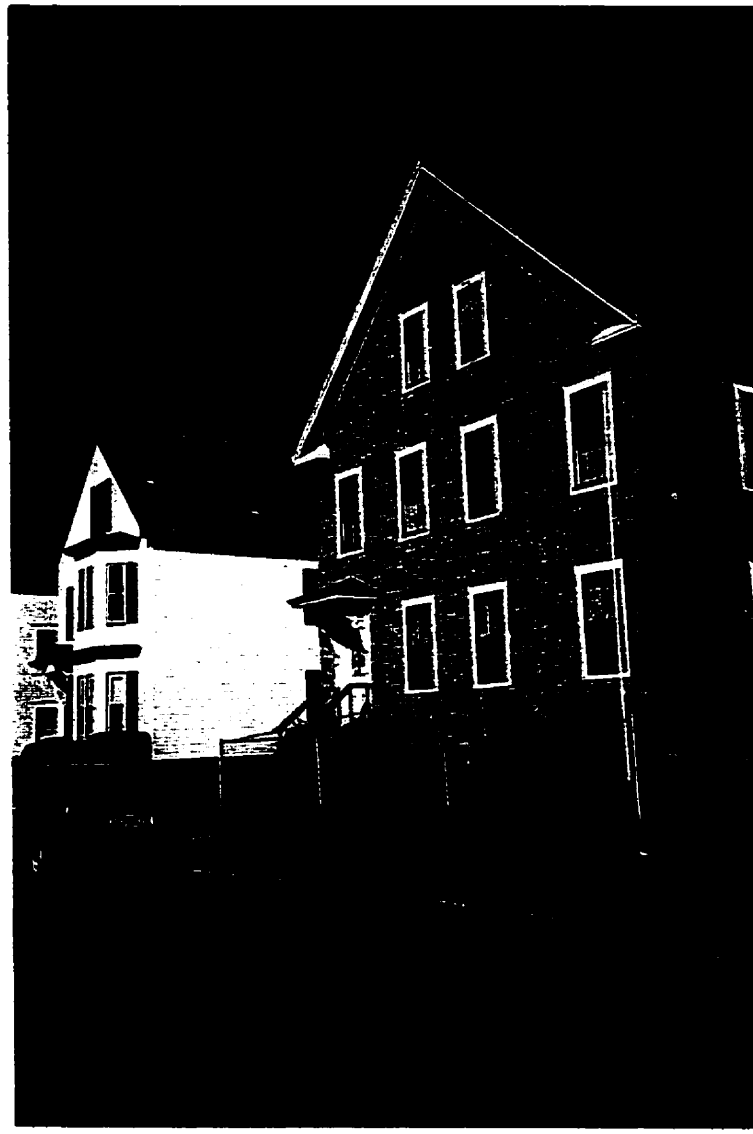
shop and insurance agency. These are newer buildings, and I am curious to know what kind of building stood there before.

We find the "Manchester Historic Council" and archives of the city. I look up my father's name in the city directory for 1898, names and addresses only, because telephones are too new an invention for numbers to be listed. In the directory there are many "Cantins," including Flavien, my grandfather, listed as a blacksmith, who lives at another location, 455 Cartier. Agenor is Flavien's uncle and is listed as a barber and hairdresser; Ferdinand, who could be Flavien's brother or another uncle, runs a boarding house with his wife Marie at 619 Elm and Central. It is possible that my father lived in the boarding house with his aunt and uncle until his father found another house on Cartier Street. The 1899 directory continues the story by stating, "Flavien, blacksmith, moved to Lawrence," and "Ferdinand, deceased." I do not know anything about Flavien's brothers and sisters except for this fact that I find quite accidentally. My father did not mention his aunts and uncles; perhaps by the time I was born all of that generation had passed away.

There are no historical pictures readily available of the corner of Elm and Central to show us what the boarding house looked like. We drive back to locate the address of 619 and find that it is the place where the stucco dry cleaning shop stands.

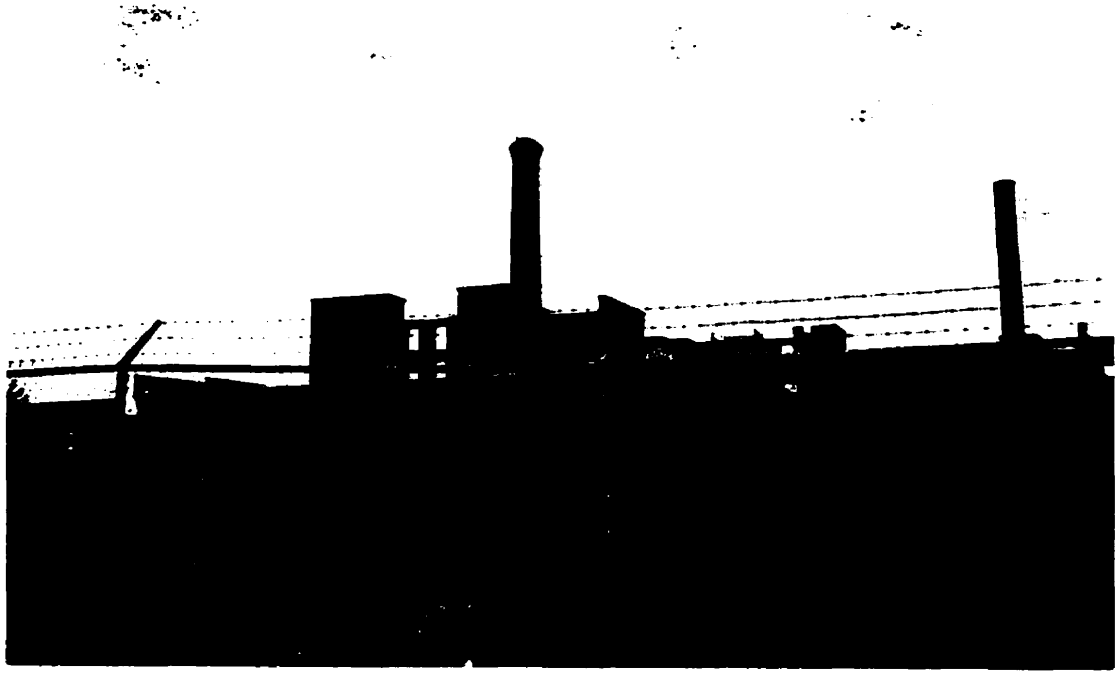
Cartier Street, we have been told, is in the old French-Canadian section of the city. We find a bridge to cross the river close to where the textile mill stands, and we visually locate the spire of St. Marie's Church, which is still in use. It looks French-Canadian in design, with gothic-shaped stained-glass windows and carved stone work around the doors. The church sits in the middle of a tree-bordered square, with a laneway blocked off to make a safe playground area for the adjoining school.

Cartier Street is one of the streets adjacent to the church and we find the house at 455 easily. It is a three-storey building, the original, covered in a grey asphalt material in the design of bricks. An ornate porch roof shelters the front door. Around the back, we find the typical verandahs that we have seen in Quebec: architecture imported from Canada to make the place feel like home. I try to picture my father as a sixteen-year-old boy, running down the steps of the verandah in the early morning, going to work at the mills.



Down the street, there is a small antique shop going out of business. I find two porcelain cake plates, made in Germany, with a design of natural shamrocks around the edge. The shamrocks remind me of the Irish mill workers and of my father's time spent in "Little Ireland" when he first moved to Manchester. Finding only two plates that match as a souvenir of the region strikes me as appropriate. In searching for my father's history, I cannot find all the pieces: only fragments that have to be assembled into a mosaic.

It is late afternoon by the time we arrive in Lawrence, Massachusetts. There are large smokestacks that tower above long rows of abandoned red brick textile mills with identical multi-paned windows. All the compounds are fenced with barbed wire at the top to prevent anyone from climbing in. The weeds and litter show that no one has cared for these places for a long time.

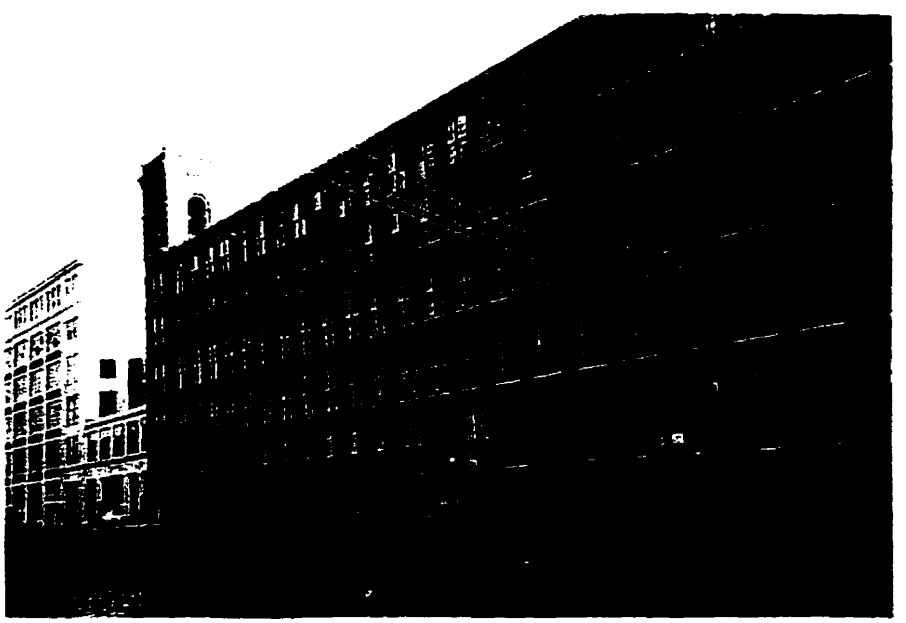


I search for the address I have found in the French-English dictionary, 68 Hampshire Street, in the roads radiating up from the mills. We stop at a busy post office, with people standing in line looking at us, knowing we are strangers, and we ask for directions to Hampshire Street. A man with his two little girls points to the next corner.

Whatever buildings fronted Hampshire Street have long been torn down and we walk along fenced, overgrown, empty lots. A church sits at the end of the street, and we head towards it, thinking it was perhaps the French parish at one time. We ask an elderly woman,

who rushes by us clutching her sweater close. She tells us it is St. Mary and then hurries away from us before we can ask anything more. The church is built of stone with a tall silver spire but as we approach we realize that all the doors are barricaded, the windows are covered with heavy wire, and the side facing the street is mud-splattered and neglected. Perhaps it is too expensive to tear down churches and mills; better to leave them standing like ghosts from the past. I wonder if my father attended this church; it is probable that he did. He lived in Lawrence longer than in any other city in this region, and he attended school here, learning his particular Boston-accented English, using the French-English dictionary that led me back to Hampshire Street.

The Lawrence Historic site, across from the Upper Pacific Mills my father mentioned in his diary, is closed when we arrive. It was in this mill that he started cleaning and tending the bobbins and then moved on to the printing department where the dye was extremely combustible. I wanted to see inside these walls where he worked but we have to content ourselves with walking along the restored brick sidewalk on the other side of the canal. I examine the steep wall of unbroken windows and wonder on which floor my father worked.

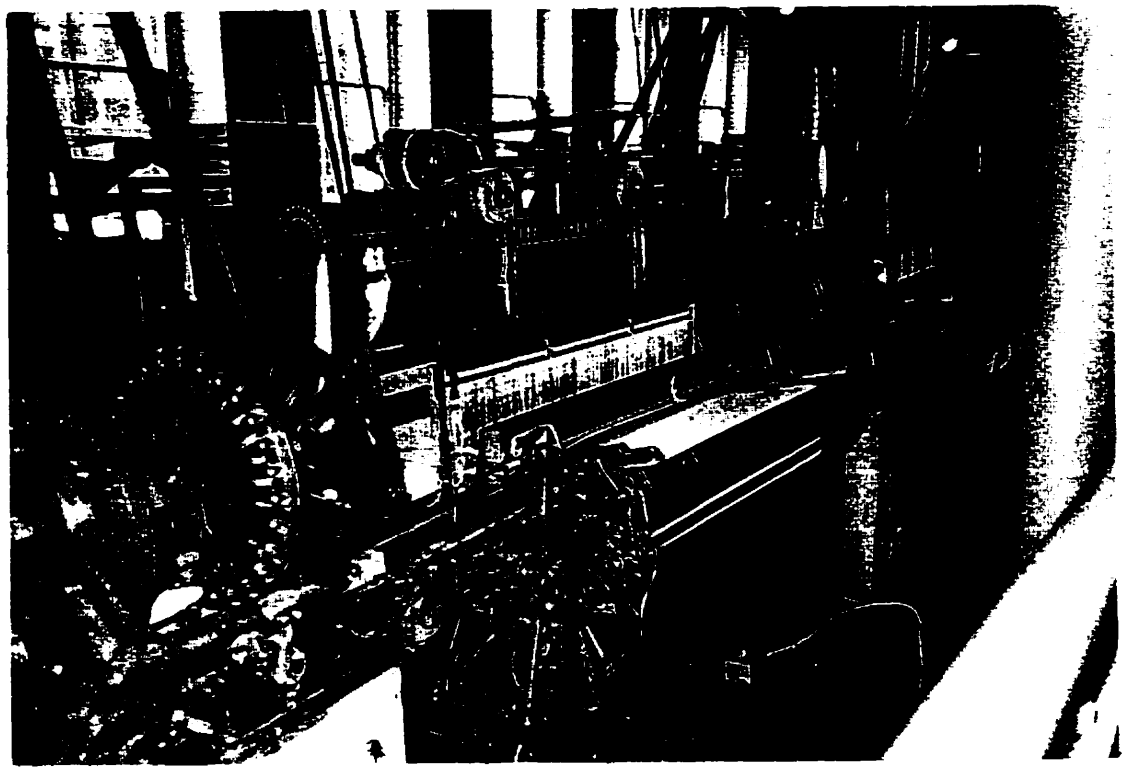


Lawrence does not seem to be a tourist-friendly town, and so we drive to Lowell, Massachusetts, forty miles down the road. This is the city where my father's first wife Marie-Louise stayed with her parents numerous times while my father was employed elsewhere. At the Lowell Historic Park, tourists can view the restored sections of a mill town of one hundred years ago.

The next morning, we take a trolley to the Starks Mill, where my father worked at "spring," a job tending the looms for which I could not find any other particulars. We enter a door in the center of the building about ten feet away from the dark water of the canal. The first thing we see inside is a cutaway in the floor revealing the large turbine surrounded by the splashing water of the canal. At intervals along the building there are inlets of water into turbines that are attached to different gears and eventually to a gigantic flywheel, fifteen feet in diameter. This powered the shafts that ran along the ceiling of the long halls where the looms for making cloth were set up. Each machine had its own belt connection to the turning shafts on the ceiling: the power of the water transferred to the looms. Another machine with pistons and wheels regulates the flow of water into the turbine so that it remains constant, allowing for fluctuations in the flow of the canal. As I gaze down into the turbulent water, I realize that my father must have been impressed that the looms in the mill could all be powered by the flow of water.

A few blocks away, the newly restored Boott Mills have a workroom set up with row upon row of weaving looms. A wall of soundproof windows allows us to peer into the room and I wonder why we have been issued individual sets of earplugs. I do not have to wonder long because when we step into the room we realize that each loom has two hammers that hit the shuttle and send it flying back and forth between the threads of cotton. Every time the shuttle reaches one side, the frames lift another set of threads, and the motion is repeated to make the cloth. Only a few of the looms are actually making cloth; the others simply go through the

motions and make the sound. The clamor of a hundred hammers obliterates all thought; it is hard to imagine working in that din for twelve hours. My father, as mill operator, stood and watched as the looms operated so that nothing came loose; sometimes the mechanism broke down and sent the shuttle flying through a worker.



The room is uncomfortably hot and humid, a re-creation of the conditions that workers had to endure. The mill owners had learned that cotton thread did not break as easily in hot, humid conditions. Therefore, all the windows were nailed shut and steam was piped in. A temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit was not unusual in the mills on hot days; the thought of that gives new meaning for me to the word "sweatshop".

Another room in the same mill features oral and written testimonials from the people who worked in the mills twenty and thirty years after my father was there. The mill operators wrote that the mills were so dirty that a coat or article of clothing could not be left hanging on the wall because by the time the owner returned for it, it would be covered in cockroaches. The

same was true of bags of food brought for lunch. For that reason, there was a system of lunch deliveries by the younger children in a family, particularly the boys. They would arrive home from school, eat their lunches, and then carry food to their family members working in the mills. Afterward, everything would be carried back home and the child would return to school.

Perhaps it was my father's little sisters, Rose Alba, age twelve, or Clara, age ten, who delivered the lunches. My father's mother, Virginie, would have been the organizer because she would have stayed at home with her youngest child, Philemon. The daily routine of the Cantin family would not have differed from that of any other family working in the mills.

I have been looking forward to the advertised canal boat tour, through the "canyons" of the mills. Embarking in a wide flat boat that holds about twenty people, we set out on the dark green surface of the water. Most of the flow of the Merrimack River has been diverted into man-made canals, lined with huge stones three feet wide by two feet high that form the walls rising twenty feet above us. The guide tells us about the intense physical labour of the Irish workers who dug the canal and hauled the rocks with horses in the 1820s and 30s.

He explains that the city of Lowell is built inside a loop of the Merrimack River, and a slight waterfall provides the necessary potential energy, so that the movement of the diverted water through the canals powers all of the mills along its route. Unfortunately the boat is not permitted to go between the tall facades of the mills because one of the lock gates has recently crumbled. We view the gate from a distance as water pours over it.

When we arrive at the Merrimack River, we see only a trickle on a rocky riverbed; most of the river's water flows in the canals for the mills that do not make cloth any more. Perhaps here too it is easier to leave things as they are. I am not used to so much of the past left standing. I come from the west of Canada, a new land, where my father chose to go after he left here. A cold wind blows down on us from the artificial canyon of mills, and I shiver, anxious to return to shore.

Diary 1915:

My parents decided after six years in the States, in 1902, that we would return to Weedon. I was twenty-one years old at the time. When one is young he will build all kinds of castle in Spain and I sure built some big ones in Weedon when I was in Lawrence. But when we arrived, I remember well the reception we had, all the old cronies and habitués of the place were on the deck at the station and after the train pulled out, we could see the whole village and I never felt so sad in all my life. My sister Anna and I began to rate some of the buildings about the station, and what we had pictured as big buildings were nothing more than one- or one-and-a-half storey buildings of very moderate size and, in a number of cases, in very poor repair. After holding a council, my sister Anna and I decided that we would return to Lawrence on the first train but this we could not do: we had no money and father and mother would not hear of it.

We did not like Weedon and our ambition was to get out of it; however, as I had come to Weedon for the purpose of learning the telegraph, it was up to me to stay there and learn it. I made arrangement with the Station Agent, Mr. Joseph Lemieux, and I started some two or three weeks after our arrival at the station. In the meantime, my father had bought a shop in Sherbrooke and my family had moved there. I boarded with a cousin of mine for a few weeks and then I moved with the people who were living in our own house, but I did not like that and I wanted to move with my own people, that is to Sherbrooke. I think it was Mr. Coderre who arranged with the manager of the Great Northwestern

Telegraph Co. and I moved to Sherbrooke early in November of 1902, and I started in my new place.

Mr. Nourse was the manager and he was reputed to be a crank and he was that. However, my progress with him was very rapid as it was a relaying office and there was a large number of messages going through that office and I did a big part in repeating these messages. While I was there, there were two other boys who learned at the same time. One by the name of Coombs, an upright fellow and steady plugger, the other by name of Redmond.

In April or May 1903, I heard that they required an operator on the Boston-Maine Railroad and I applied for a job. I told them where I had learned telegraphy and they called up Mr. Nourse but, instead of helping me, he did all he could to hurt me in finding work. Shortly after that, the matter came to a crisis in the following manner. I had been doing all the bookkeeping for him and one day I told him that I thought it would be nothing but fair to have Redmond do a part of it but the old man would hear nothing of it. So I told him that I would not do the bookkeeping unless Redmond did his share. The old man told me that if I did not care to do as I was told to go. Not being slow to take a hint that he did not care for me in the office, I took my hat and bolted for the door.

I went across the street to the Canadian Pacific Railway Telegraph Office and asked to continue my apprenticeship there. Mr. Bottom, the manager, told me that I could do that if I cared to do so. I started that very day for the CPR. It did not take me long to get the lay of the work and before a week was over, I was practically doing the whole of

the telegraph business. I might say here that Mr. Bottom had been short in his cash the year before and he also had been drinking more than he should; therefore, he was in great need of money and he told me that if I wanted the job I would have to give him ten dollars a month and that I would be placed on the payroll at the same salary as the last operator. Wanting the position I agreed to that and a couple of months after I asked him for five dollars more which he granted to me. It was only a few months after that, that the drink got the best of him and he was again short in his cash, this time for three times the amount of the previous year. He was let go and he asked me for the last five dollars which I let him have. Then I drew the full salary which was forty dollars a month.

Then the CPR appointed another Agent and I never worked under a worse man in all my life, he simply made life miserable for me and this lasted for two years until I resigned and went to the United States: that was in February 1906, or ten years ago. I never regretted the move as I think I am a better citizen today for having seen a little of America and my native country.

So in 1906, I moved with the wife to Boston, Massachusetts, she having secured a position with one of her former employers, Pitts-Kimball store. We remained in Boston for two or three weeks only as the salary she was getting was not large enough and we went to Lowell, Massachusetts where her family lived. I got a position with the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. and had to work for them at Worcester, Massachusetts and six months later, I was appointed Testman in the Manchester Exchange—quite a promotion but I must say that I

worked conscientiously for them and my knowledge of the telegraph helped me in getting early promotion. Then seven months after that I was promoted to Wire Chief in the Concord, New Hampshire Exchange. I started to work for that company for $9.00 and 18 months after that, I was making $70.00 a month. I think this was good progress.

Although I knew my father as a farmer when I was very young, I was also aware that at some time he had been a telegraph operator, had worked in telephones and had worked for the Grand Trunk Pacific as well as the Canadian Pacific Railways. But these were fragmented references that were never explained. He used to say that he had held thirty-two jobs in thirty-three years before he obtained his last employment as District Inspector of Electricity and Gas for the federal government: the job he kept for thirty years.

My father first worked in the textile mills of the New England States when he was fifteen years old. For the next eighteen years, until he was thirty-three years old, he changed jobs regularly, the longest period of employment lasting only a couple of years. In many cases he wrote that he had some difficult bosses and perhaps that was true; he was a French-Canadian who may have been subject to some prejudice. As well, he may have been a proud man who was difficult to get along with.

In his diary, he sets out to count all the thirty-two jobs he held. Part of that list is included here:

> I remained in Concord from February 1907 to April 1908, and the manager there was sorry to see me go although I think the long distance Wire Chief was glad. I would have likely remained with that company had they been willing to transfer me once more to the Long Distance Department, but try as I might I could not get any satisfaction from them. So in April 1908, I left to come to Edmonton, Alberta, which I had had in mind for a long time, and started to work for Alberta Government Telephones; remained until 1909 and worked a farm for one summer; liked the work O.K. but not enough money to go at it properly.
>
> In October 1909, went to Chicago and started to work for the American Telegraph and Telephone Company; remained 6 weeks, fired on

account of being too poor a telegraph operator; started work for Western Electric as Draftsman and left them in the spring of 1910, went to Lowell, Massachusetts and worked for the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company for 4 weeks; left to go and work as Engineer and Draftsman for the General Electric Company at Pittsfield; wages $77.00 a month, remained with them nearly a year; was discharged there through a dislike the foreman had for me (the foreman of my section was a German and he and I did not pull together so it did not take long before there was friction between us and it was hard for me to work under him. He was of a brunette type and arrogant, with a flat bridge nose); went and took a temporary job with the Hood Rubber Company, East Watertown, Mass., changing over a factory from steam to electric drive; worked there a few weeks and then went to Toronto with the Northern Electric Company for 3 weeks; left them to go with the Seymour Power Company as erecting engineer at a salary of $125.00 a month; worked there nearly a year and moved to Edmonton again and started in business as electrical contractor and remained in business for 8 weeks and went to work for the Edmonton, Dunvegan, and British Columbia Railway as Draftsman, with them 4 months; left then to work at Gorman, Clancey and Grindley as sales engineer at $125.00 per month.

Some of the Jobs ~~I~~ I have held up to Dec 31. 1918

The first money I earn was a tip, father sent me to take a man from Weedon Que to Ham(?) Que a distance of about 10 miles and the man gave me 25 cents. I thought he was a prince.

The second money earned was stacking clothes(?) for the Cross(?) saw mills in the summer of 1895 I must have earned as much as $ 30.00 in that summer.

In the spring of 1896 we moved from Weedon to Newton(?) Mass, and I worked in a woollen mill the Nonantum Worcester Co. I was making $1.33 a week for 58 hours work. bobbin setter

from there ~~[illegible]~~ the family moved to Manchester N.H. and I worked in the Stark mill six weeks and I got $3.00 cotton spinning.

from there the family moved to Lawrence Mass and I worked in the Atlantic Mills on drawing frame and I earned $4.08 worked about 6 months left and worked in the Upper Pacific Mills for $4.48 same kind of work. left to go ~~to learn [illegible]~~ the printing dept of same mill at $5.20 a week. left to go to Lower Pacific mills and learned to Weave worked there for about 18 months then went to Arlington Mills Weaving again left that to go to the Washington Mills in the Cloth room left that to go and work a day time to Heroux(?) Clothing stores, remained on that Job for about 8 months at $8.00 a week at no time did I average over $12.00 a week in the factory. I returned to the Lower Pacific Weaving. Then we left the U.S. and return to Weedon where I started to learn telegraphy with the station agent. then my people moved to Sherbrooke Que that was in 1902 I think and they have remained there since. In sept 1902 I moved to Sherbrooke and continued my apprenticeship with the Great N. Western

also did a full weeks(?) weaving in the Atlantic for about 4 weeks(?)

These are the titles of some of the books my father used in his studies and in his work:

The Field Engineer's Handbook, by G. Carveth Wells and Arundel S. Clay

Wireless Telegraphy and Telephony Simply Explained, by A.P. Morgan

Wire in Electrical Construction, by John A. Roebling's Sons Co.

International Correspondence Schools Reference Library, forty-nine volumes

Boileau's Transverse Tables, by Major General J.T. Boileau, F.R.S.

I remember when I was a child climbing up to the attic of the five-stall garage that stood behind our house. The garage had been built in 1923, the same year my father built a brick double house in what had been the Hudson Bay Reserve of Edmonton. He lived in this house, to be called the Brick House on 115 Street, with his first family, Marie-Louise and Arthur, and later, after it was converted to apartments, with his second family, my mother Lucienne and me. The attic is an archive of my father's life and to find more clues about the man, I decide to explore it.

It is a cold day in December 1996, minus sixteen degrees Celsius, when my husband and I climb into the attic to see what we can find. Winter is the best time to explore because in the summer the attic is unbearably hot. Bundled in our winter coats and warm gloves, holding good flashlights, we climb up the ladder and open the trap door, hooking it securely.

The cans and boxes are all the same colour, covered with grey dirt from the wind blowing through the cracks that are lines of light in the eaves. We begin our explorations at the far end of the attic, where several large cardboard boxes labeled, "Encyclopedia Brittanica," are scattered pell-mell. There is a long wooden box about a foot wide and five feet long that holds a few broken car parts and piles of pine cones left behind by invading squirrels. A large moose rack, broken apart, and a smaller prong-horn antler with part of the skull still attached, lie in another box. I pick up a large round bowl and realize that it is a globe from a lamp; it is so dusty I cannot tell what colour it is until I rub some of the dirt off and realize that it is a bright red. Beside it is a metal base for a desk lamp with two upright supports for some kind of shade, and a heavy glass inkwell in the base; however, the globe and the base do not belong together. There is a small white bed covered with two old pillows and a mattress: everything is thrown together without any attempt at arranging. Two wooden chairs, one turned upside-down

over the other, discarded kitchen cupboard doors, painted red, and several empty trunks, fill another section under the eaves.

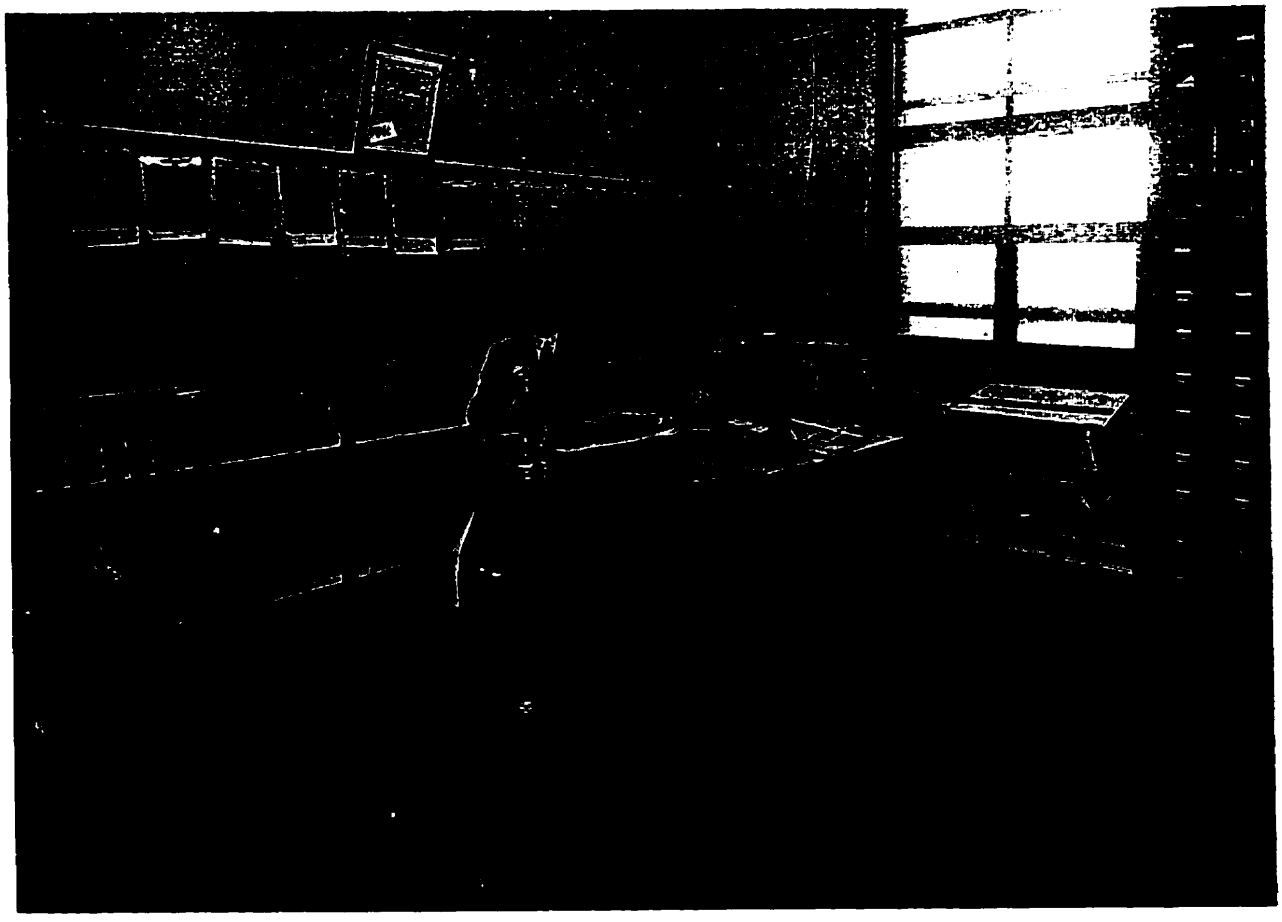
One suitcase holds mementos of my mother's life before she married my father: there are old pictures, including some of her graduation as a nurse from the General Hospital in 1926, and her diploma of nursing rolled up in a cardboard tube. There are colourful bridge tally cards, numerous gossamer handkerchiefs including one that says, "Souvenir of Edmonton," prayer cards and plaid ribbons. My mother had placed several cans of moth repellent in the bottom of the suitcase, and a pink wool coat, cream skirt and black jacket have not been touched by moths. A long strand of tatting, dozens of lacy medallions like beige snowflakes joined together, reminds me of my mother's hands holding the oblong tatting instrument and producing tiny loops and knots as if by magic.

Inside a wide cupboard laid on its back, we find many of my toys: a plastic cash register, a metal toy scale and a long-eared plush rabbit. Next to these lies my father's bearskin coat, its brown fur still glistening, that he used when he went hunting. I heard references to it when I was growing up, but I did not know it still existed. Outside the cupboard is a box filled with waxed cardboard honey containers used when my parents kept bees at the farm, and another box with brown-paper-wrapped new bandages, something from my mother's nursing days.

Looking through a box of old textbooks and papers, I find carbon copies of some of my father's personal letters to his brother and sisters down east. They are dated 1944, the year he married my mother. Yellowed and dry, they crinkle like ancient papyrus as I take off my gloves and look through them, scanning the words. Deciding that I must take some of these artifacts down from the attic, I find an old creamery butter box and start filling it with the letters and pictures, my mother's diploma, the light globe and lamp, and a porcelain sugar bowl without a cover.

When I wash the bowl-like lamp globe, I find that it is white on the inside and a deep red with small gold fleur-de-lys on the outside. When I shine a light through it, the globe glows with a dark reddish colour: a strange globe to hang on the ceiling since it would not brighten up any room.

Then, while examining the picture of my father in his office in 1914, just after he obtained his government job as Inspector of Electricity and Gas, I discover other connections with these objects from the attic. My father, dressed in a suit, sits at his desk behind a tall metallic telephone with the speaker angled upward and the receiver dangling on a holder on the side.



The office has tall filing cabinets with two visible rows of fifteen small drawers and a drafting table with a ruler laid across it. I recognize a large map of Alberta held straight by wooden rollers, one at the top and one at the bottom, hanging on the wall. Now it sits rolled up in a corner of my basement. An extension cord runs from one of the lamp sockets in the ceiling down to the lamp on his desk. When I look closely at it with a magnifying glass, I recognize the shape of the lamp base with the inkwell in it that I have brought down from the attic. The glass shade of the lamp is an elongated horizontal style, recently come back into fashion as a banker's lamp.

I can see my father's diploma from the International Correspondence Schools, next to the dozen or so file folders hanging from supports on a ledge around the room. Next to the diploma hangs a picture that I recognize from the circles of light in the darkness and I immediately run downstairs and retrieve it from my basement wall. It is a picture of Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, "The Great White Way" referring to the street lit by carbon-arc lights; hence the circles of light. The scene is taken in the summer and shows the avenue with two sets of tracks for the electric railway running in the middle. On each side of the street are shorter lamp standards. The signs in the windows and storefronts are "The Mutual Life of Canada," an unlit electric sign that reads "Art Kraft," the "Irvine Studios," and the electric sign of the "Hudson's Bay Company."

As I sit here at my computer, I am surrounded by my father's map of Alberta, the lamp from his desk, the two diplomas from the International Correspondence Schools, the picture of the Great White Way: all props of his life gathered together from several different places and placed again in my mind in my father's office. I am the director of a play creating a setting with my father as the main character; yet he is the one who remains elusive, simply a shadow in a picture, a memory of an old man sleeping in the afternoon; could that be my father?

When I was a child, growing up with a father who was in his seventies, I did not realize how similar we were in our situations: we were both my mother's children. She was the one who took care of us and decided what we could or could not do. She made sure I was occupied at every moment, to ensure that I wasted no time in my life. During the week, I was busy with school and practicing the piano half an hour every day. On Saturdays, I could go shopping downtown with my mother and then play outside or ride my bicycle, as long as my homework and practicing was done. After church on Sundays, we would often go visiting relatives and friends of my parents.

As he grew older, my father too was limited in where he could go and what he could do. After the first of his minor strokes, which today would be called TIA's or transient ischemic attacks, he was not allowed to drive a car in case he saw double while on the road. If my mother could not drive him, he would take the bus. Once he took the wrong one and got lost and he had to phone her to come and get him. He had always enjoyed walking, but in the last six years of his life, after we left the Brick House on 115 Street to live in a bungalow in the west end of Edmonton, my mother confined him to walks around the block, and forbade him crossing the street. She said that if he became disoriented, he simply had to keep walking and eventually he would return to the house. When I was a little girl, I too had not been allowed to cross the street and so had to ride my bicycle around the block, first in one direction and then, for variation, in the other direction.

When researching my father's life, I found his compass in a tarnished silver case with a filament-like needle that trembled delicately and then always pointed north. I was reminded that once my father had been a hunter in the mountains, going out in a wilderness without roads, finding his way with this instrument and never getting lost.

A medium-sized rug made of strips of cloth and cut-up seamed nylons punched through a fabric backing is set in front of my fireplace: a memento of my father's first wife. After I was married and lived in the Brick House on 115 Street, I found the rug in the entrance of the basement laundry room. It looked like a cast-off burlap bag, but one day, on impulse, I picked it up and threw it into the washing machine. When the rug came out of the wash, its bright colours were revealed in a design of red and white flowers bordered with pink, and two purple trumpet-like flowers projecting diagonally from the center. The style would be called "primitive" or "folk art," like that of a Grandma Moses of rug designs. I washed the rug several more times, and then I took the scissors and carefully trimmed the fuzz and pulls on the design. I showed the rug to my mother, who explained that it had been made by Marie-Louise, my father's first wife.

So the ghostly presence of Marie-Louise, whom my mother called "la première femme à Papa," became tangible in the art of her rug. At that time, the only picture I had seen of her was a photographer's studio photo with her husband—my father—and their son, who was about fifteen at the time. She is an attractive woman with white hair and glasses, sitting straight in her chair. She looks serene, with a slight smile on her lips.

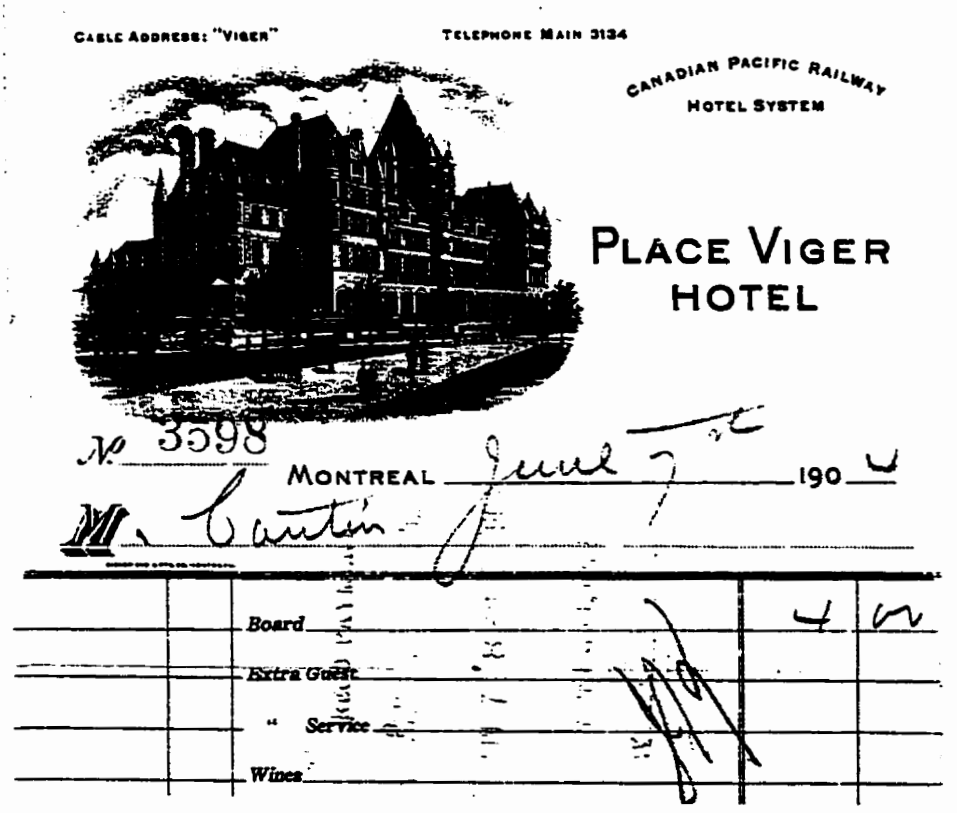
Her birth certificate, among my father's papers, reveals that she was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, a textile mill town, on August 5, 1872, the eldest child of Eudoxie and Ovide Baril. As a young woman, she worked in a store and had a position of responsibility. That she may have gone to a training college is evidenced by a picture of her standing with a group of other young women all wearing the same dark dresses with identical watches pinned on their chests. My father's diary notes that he met her when he was eighteen and then did not see her again until he was twenty-one. They wrote letters after he left Lawrence, Massachusetts to move to Canada, and they were married two years after that, on June 4, 1904, when my father was working as a telegraph operator in Sherbrooke. Marie-Louise was nine years older

than my father and the marriage must have caused a stir in their families: she was thirty-two and he was twenty-three.

My father wrote in his diary:

> I often think that she had a certain influence over me which I think was for my good. She was born in the United States and always above the class in which she was born. She had a certain amount of pride which I think a person should have and while she was clerking at a Department Store, she had charge of a department for a number of years. After I left home, she exerted a certain uplifting influence which induced me to greater effort to get out of a low salary class.

In a small envelope among my father's papers was a folded bill from "Place Viger Hotel" in Montreal. The bill is dated June 7, 1904, three days after Marie Louise and my father were married in Warwick, Quebec. The hotel, part of the Canadian Pacific Railway Hotel system, records a payment for "board" of four dollars, paid at 8:48 a.m.



CABLE ADDRESS: "VIGER" TELEPHONE MAIN 3134

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY
HOTEL SYSTEM

PLACE VIGER
HOTEL

No 3598 MONTREAL June 7 1904

M. Lautin

Board 4 00

Extra Guest

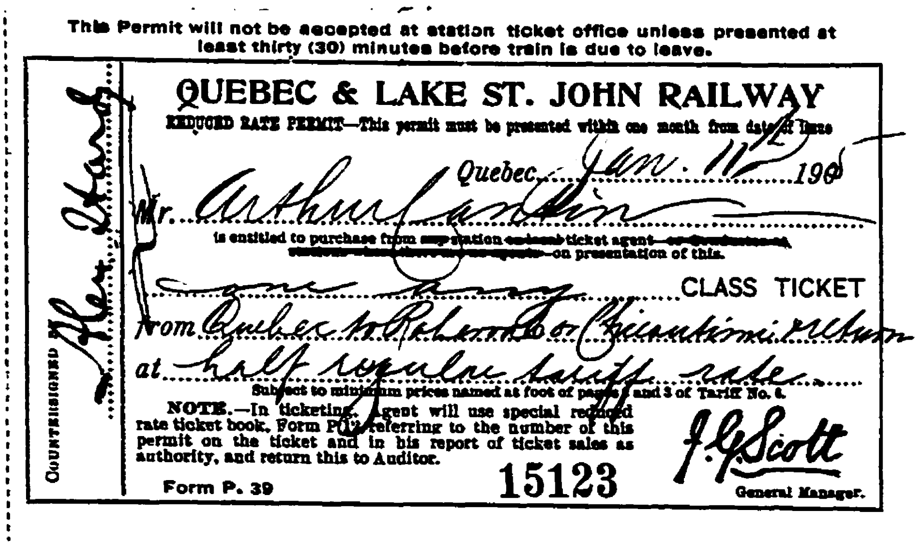
" Service

Wines

Seven months after they were married, in January 1905, my father received a letter of reply to his inquiry about the possibility of moving to the northern district of Quebec. The letter, from the "Quebec and Lake St. John Railway," said:

> In reply to your letter of the 7th, I would say that I think that the Lake St. John district offers a good many inducements and if, as you say, you have some capital to invest, you may be able to do so to advantage. I enclose you a permit with which you can purchase from our Quebec station ticket clerk a ticket to Roberval or Chicoutimi and return at half fare as an inducement for you to go and see the country for yourself.

The coupon for the reduced fare is still attached to the letter. My father is looking to start a new life somewhere, but decides not to take advantage of the offer, probably because Marie-Louise is pregnant.



This Permit will not be accepted at station ticket office unless presented at least thirty (30) minutes before train is due to leave.

QUEBEC & LAKE ST. JOHN RAILWAY

REDUCED RATE PERMIT—This permit must be presented within one month from date of issue

Quebec, Jan. 11 1905

Mr. Arthur

is entitled to purchase from station ticket agent on presentation of this

one way CLASS TICKET

from Quebec to Roberval or Chicoutimi & return

at half regular tariff rate

Subject to minimum prices named at foot of pages and 3 of Tariff No. 6.

NOTE.—In ticketing, Agent will use special reduced rate ticket book, Form P. 12 referring to the number of this permit on the ticket and in his report of ticket sales as authority, and return this to Auditor.

Form P. 39

15123

J. G. Scott

General Manager.

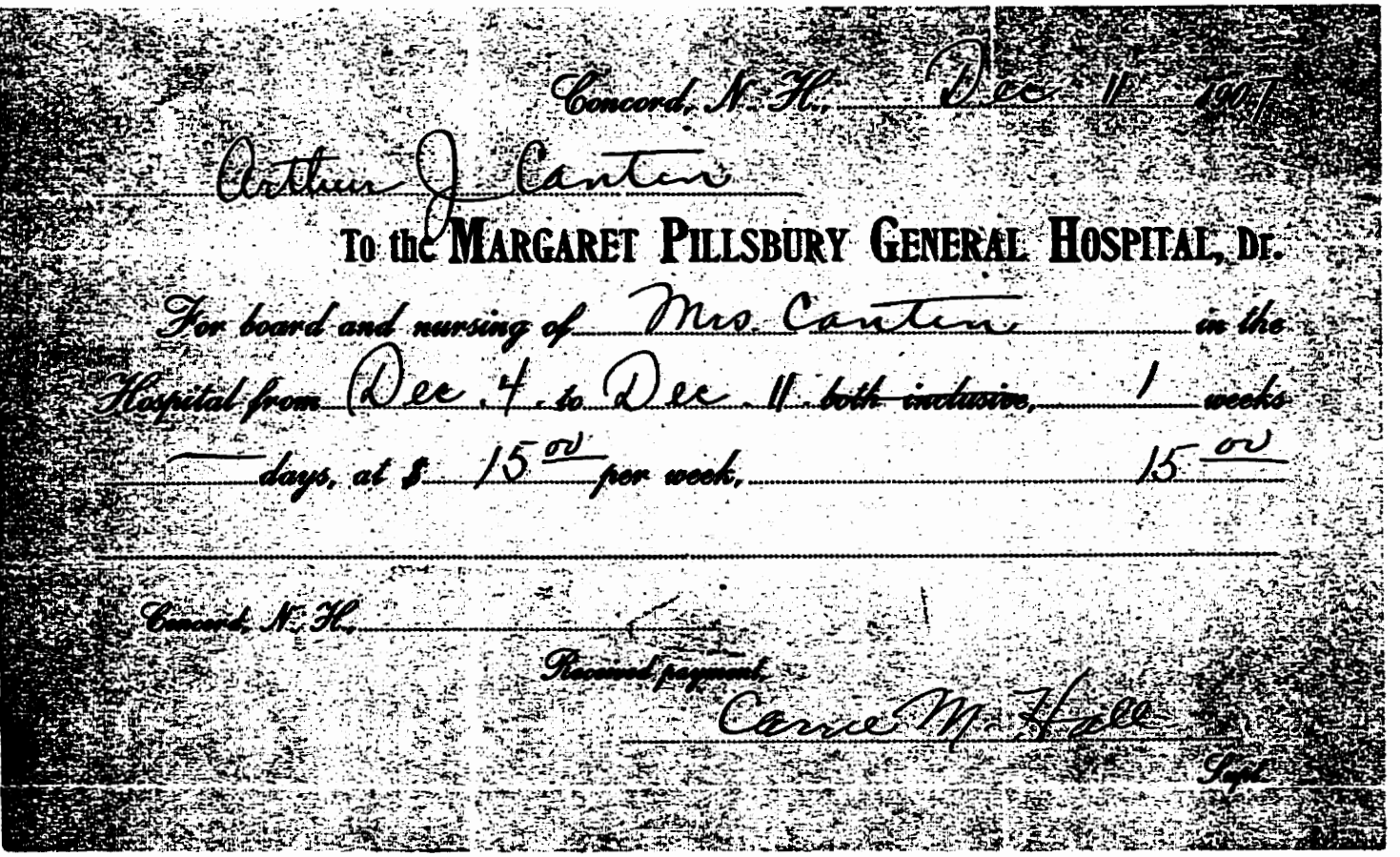
COUNTERSIGNED

Nine months after the wedding, my father writes in the first pages of his Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, the most important book for him at the time: "Our first boy born at Sherbrooke, Quebec, March 14, 1905. Stillborn."

In 1907, my father and his wife have their picture taken together sitting beside a river in Sherbrooke, Quebec. Marie-Louise is dressed in a light embroidered dress with puffy sleeves and her wedding ring shows on her left hand resting on her dress. She wears an elaborately plumed hat and a chain around her neck. My father sits next to her looking off to the side, his interlaced hands hugging one knee. He wears a suit, a white shirt and tie, and a bowler hat.

SHERBROOKE 1907

Marie-Louise follows my father in his frequent job changes in the first years of their marriage. That she moves to Worcester, Massachusetts when he gets his job with the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company is shown by the pictures of them together taken in a park. She also moves with him to Concord, Massachusetts, as a picture of a large house inscribed, "Our house in Concord," attests. As well, two receipts from the "Margaret Pillsbury General Hospital" in Concord turn up in my father's papers stating, "For board and nursing of Mary Louise Cantin from November 27 to December 4, 1907 and also from December 4 to December 11, fifteen dollars a week." The receipts are written in fine script, folded in four.



Concord, N. H. Dec 11 1907

Arthur J. Cantin

To the MARGARET PILLSBURY GENERAL HOSPITAL, Dr.

For board and nursing of Mrs. Cantin in the Hospital from Dec. 4 to Dec 11 both inclusive, 1 weeks ___ days, at $ 15 00 per week, 15 00

Concord N. H.

Received payment

Carrie M. Hall Supt.

My father explains these receipts in his diary:

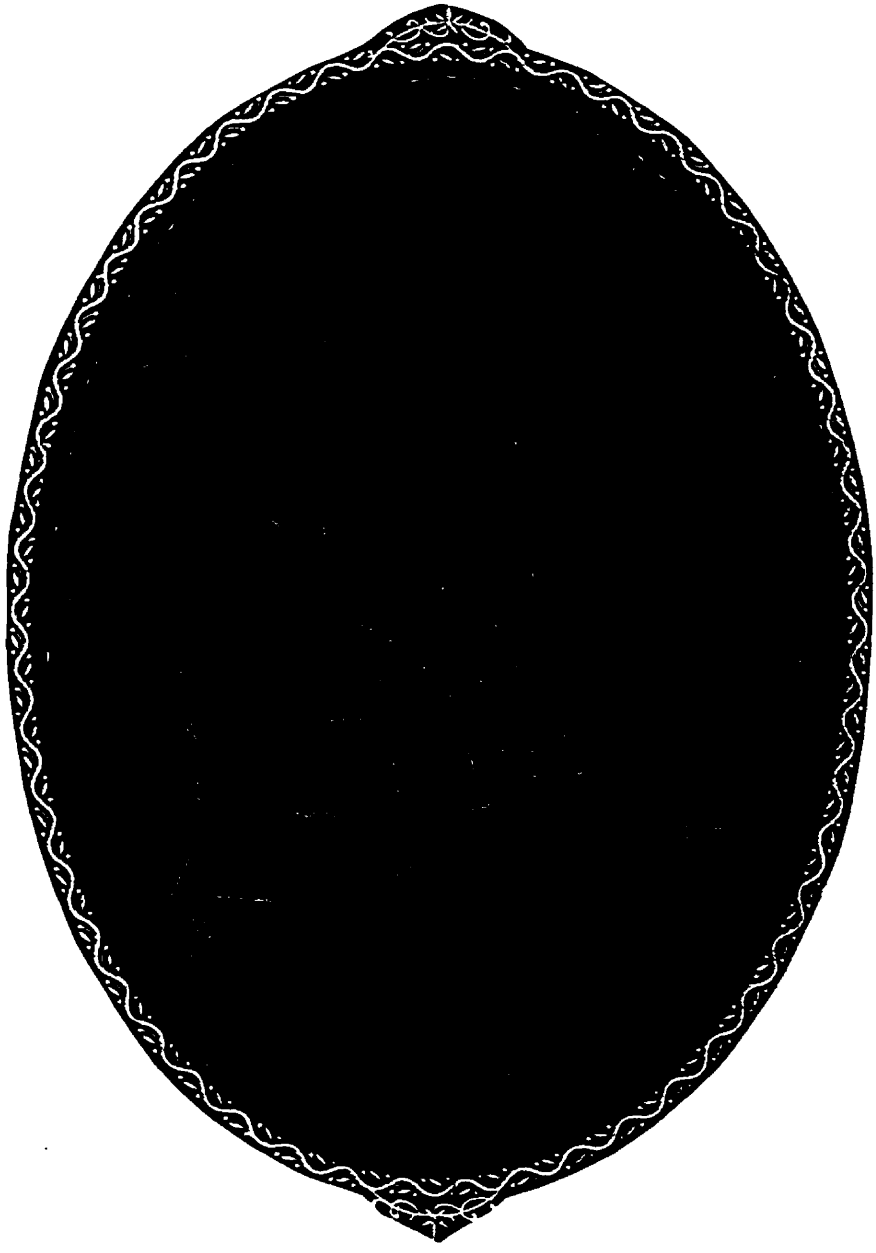
> When we were settled in Concord, the wife was an expectant mother again and the experience I had with the first stillborn child made

me cautious so I got a doctor and kept my wife under his care to the best of my ability. But I regret to say, that if a mechanical and electrical engineer did not know more relatively than the doctor does about the human ill, I fear that instead of having high speed railroad trains and automobiles, the ox cart would be in greater vogue today than ever. I told two of them that much at the time. However, in spite of all my precautions, my wife gave birth to a girl, stillborn.

Marie-Louise stays behind in Lowell, Massachusetts with her parents when my father first comes west to Edmonton, Alberta in the spring of 1908. He works for Alberta Government Telephones and then helps on a farm. Marie-Louise apparently does not see her husband until he returns east a year and a half later; perhaps this is the first indication that all is not well in the marriage. However, my father does return east and they do continue to live as husband and wife. Marie-Louise again becomes pregnant in 1910. This time my father decides that they will go to Lowell, Massachusetts so that she can stay with her mother and receive good care. He moves to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where he had found work as an engineer and draftsman at the General Electric Company.

On September 27, 1910, Marie-Louise, at the age of thirty-eight, gives birth to their son, Arthur, junior. My father wrote in his diary that "he was quite bright and he gave us or his mother very little trouble." There is a picture of the family taken outdoors next to an ornate iron fence. Marie-Louise is dressed in a coat with lapels of a rich paisley design, and she smiles shyly at the camera as she holds up her new son. My father has a serious look; perhaps he is realizing his new responsibilities. At the age of twenty-nine, he has become a father for the first time.

Another picture of my father and his son is taken at that time. Sitting in a Victorian parlor with dark wallpaper, in front of a china cabinet with lace triangles hanging down from the shelves, my father holds up his son for the camera. The baby is round-faced with bright eyes, healthy-looking. He is dressed in a long white dress that makes his form stand out in front of the dark oak table and my father's dark suit. My father is young and slender and sits very straight to hold up the focus of his attention, his long-awaited child.



Pittsfield, Massachusetts is about a day's drive from Lowell, and my husband and I delay going there until we are returning home to Canada. As we drive towards the center of the city, we see a sign that points to the General Electric Company and, as we turn towards it, we discover that we are on Dartmouth Street, where my father lived. At Number 39, we find a two-storey wood house with two doors in front, indicating that it is an up-and-down-duplex. It could be the house my father lived in from 1909 to 1910, when he only had to walk down the street to go to work at the General Electric Company.

My father bought a piece of land in Pittsfield; perhaps he thought that the job would be a permanent one. In his "Canadian Pocket Diary," he notes that the value of the lot is two hundred dollars. The entry recurs until 1919, seven years after his final move to Edmonton. Now I understand what the mailing tube with "Pittsfield House," printed on the side, meant. When I unrolled the fragile, water-stained blueprints, I found five pages of plans for a two-storey house from Sears-Roebuck and Company, Chicago, Illinois. The drawings included front and side elevations, a basement plan, cross-sections, and a main floor and second storey plan. The fifth page gave the specifications for materials through cross sections of the window, the stairs, a section of the hall, the baseboards and casing. The plan stated that "all descriptions and numbers are in accordance with our published catalogue in which prices are given based on actual cash values."

When I look up at the house in Pittsfield, I realize that it is not the house in the blueprints. Did he buy a lot and plan to build a house because he had a son? After he lost his job at General Electric, was there no other position available at another company? Did he think he might move back to Pittsfield some day? There is no one to ask what happened, only these hints about what might have been.

Diary, 1915:

I worked as an engineer and draftsman at the General Electric Co. at Pittsfield for a year but I was discharged there in the latter part of March 1911. I had made up my mind to go back to Alberta; however, the wife strenuously objected to that, so I was undecided for a while and that indecision was hard. I went to Toronto, Ontario and there I happened to drop into the office of Smith, Kerry, and Chase, Electrical Engineers, who had the contract for the installation of the complete track of the Seymour Electrical Power Company. I worked on this job nearly a year and I believe it was the best job I had; lots of hard work but of a kind which was suited to my taste and I was real sorry when I left it. I worked in Port Hope, Bowmanville, Newcastle, Colborne, Milbrooke, Peterboro and Trenton, Ontario.

While I was working in Bowmanville, I had the Mrs. visiting me. She made a very fine trip and enjoyed Bowmanville a great deal, so much so that she up to this day reproaches me for not staying there permanently, and I cannot convince her that once the job was over, there was nothing left for me to do but move on. In Trenton and Peterboro, I was on generating stations and if the work had been of a permanent nature, I would have remained with them, but it was only a temporary sort of work. I remained until the spring of 1912 when I left once more with the intention of returning west to start up my own electrical contracting business.

However, there were too many men in Edmonton with the same idea and the price that could be charged for the work was not enough to

live on. I had no difficulty selling all my equipment to another contractor and then found work as a sales engineer for Gorman, Clancey and Grindley. I was anxious for the wife and son to join me and I had decided that we would have our own house, since Edmonton was experiencing a boom and there was a great demand for living quarters so that rents were exorbitantly high.

I secured an option on a lot about one and one-half mile from the city, on the south side of the river. I borrowed three hundred and fifty dollars from my brother-in-law and, with the fifty that I had saved, I hired someone to put up the frame, windows and floors of a 16' by 14' house. This was shiplap with building paper and a bevel siding. It made a place to go in, but that was all.

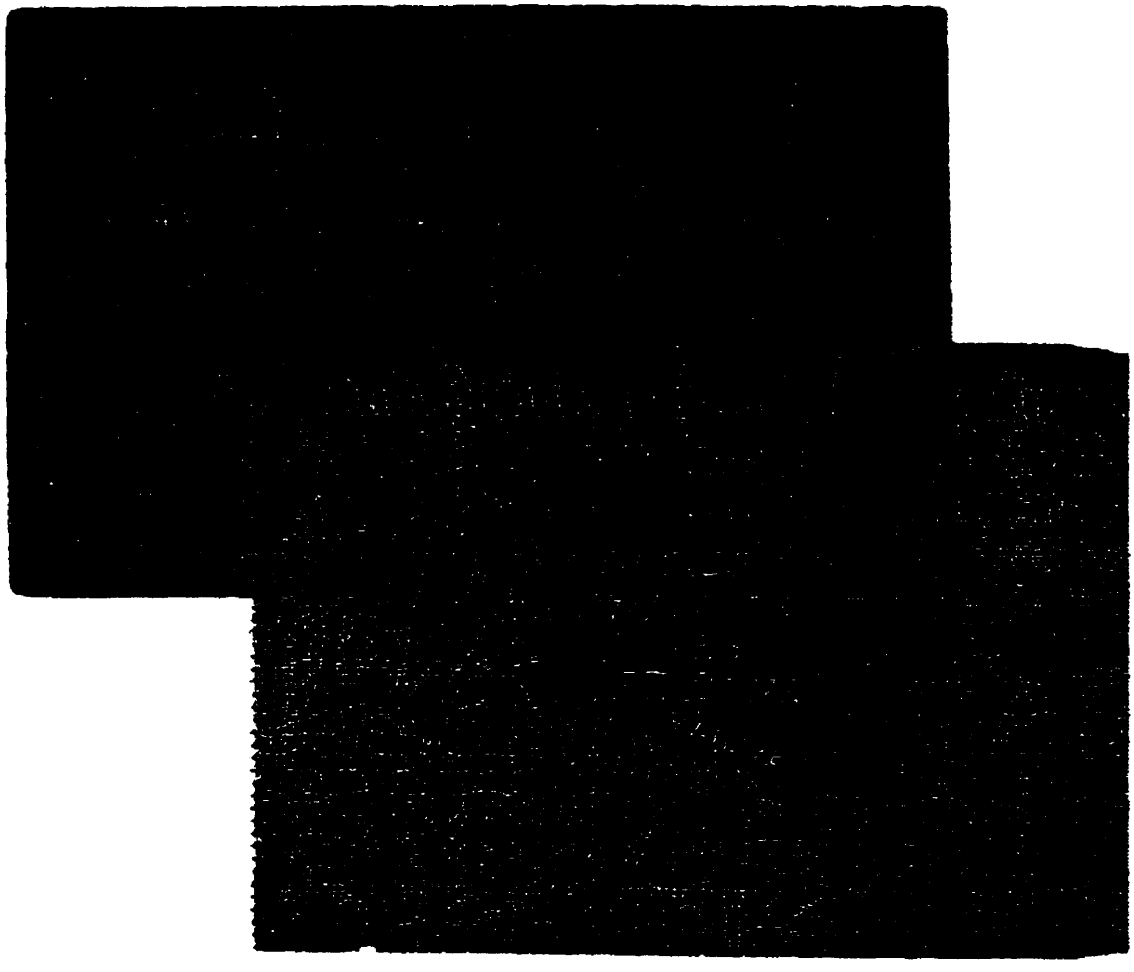
The first night we were there we had the visit of prowling dogs and cats but the next day we managed to keep them out by stopping the place of access. However, as it was, the house was not fit to stay in during the hard winter of this western country. Somehow or other, I secured enough shiplap to board the kitchen and the room above the kitchen. And then we took white building paper and papered the rooms which made them clean and bright.

We spent a fair winter in that house, but the Mrs. was quite lonesome as we had no commodity of any kind. We had no street car until well on in December 1912 and only well water which was very hard, and with a young baby, it was a hard task to keep clean. Then, on June 15, 1913, I was laid off from Gorman, Clancey and Grindley and had to look for work. This is the only time I had a hard time in finding a job. I was four weeks out of work and then I had to go as night operator with Grand Trunk Pacific, a position paying seventy dollars a month, quite a cut from one hundred and twenty-five dollars. I stayed there for six weeks until I got a position as superintendent of the Melville, Saskatchewan, Electric Light plant. The wife came to live with me in Melville and then, because of a disagreement with the town councilors, I left the job and went back to the Grand Trunk Pacific once again and we moved to Birmingham, Saskatchewan.

These moves the Mrs. did not like and objected to strenuously, but it was the best I could do. The station had to be shared with the section hands and that made the quarters very undesirable. However, we

made the best of it and soon got used to it. But then on Christmas Eve of 1913, I received notice that the railway station was to be closed. We had made preparations for the winter and moving in winter months with a baby was no fun. So we decided that the Mrs. would go visiting my people and her people in Sherbrooke and Lowell. But before doing that we thought we would come back to Edmonton and look at the ground, see how our house was, and also for me to look for a likely position. On this trip I got in communication with my present position with the government but there was nothing definite and I had to return back with the Grand Trunk Pacific, which I did, and remained with them till the last of February, 1914. I took the examination for the government job on February 10, 1914. I was quite sure that I would be successful but it took six weeks before I had the answer and received the appointment.

In an ox-blood red card holder, originally from the "Illinois Watch Company, Springfield. High Grade Railroad Watches," I found railway passes issued to my father and his wife that were never used. The tickets reveal the route from east to west across Canada and the United States. The first beige card pass is from the Grand Trunk Railway System, and says, "Pass for Mr. A.J. Cantin and wife, Agent, from Sherbrooke to Chicago, issued on January 7, 1914, good for one trip only until March 31, 1914." The second pass is from the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company, from Chicago to St. Paul; the third pass is from the Northern Pacific Railway, from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Winnipeg, Manitoba. The fourth pass is from the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, from Winnipeg to Edmonton.



My father must have kept these to remind him of the crisis in his marriage. Marie-Louise did not want to return west again after she left in January 1914. Her ten years of

married life had been filled with uncertainty as her husband changed jobs on a regular basis which required them to move constantly, and she had lived with her parents back in Lowell many times. Since she arrived in Edmonton in August 1912, her husband had been an electrical contractor, a telegraph operator, a sales engineer, a superintendent of a power plant, a railway agent and then a telegraph operator again. She decided that she would not come back.

My father wrote of this in his diary:

> The time expired on April 1, 1914 for Mrs. Cantin's tickets and I was anxious for her to come back but she had made up her mind not to return, and I did not want to leave my new government position as inspector of electricity and gas, which was a good job. I decided that if she was not willing to come back, I would not write her nor help her in any way. I would leave her absolutely free. I did not answer any of her letters for some time; then she quit writing altogether. It was not until August that she wrote me and wanted to come back. This was agreeable to me and I sent the necessary money and she came back.

Perhaps Marie-Louise was pressured by her parents to return to her husband; after all, separation and divorce were unheard of in French-Canadian culture at that time. She was forty-two years old with a four-year-old son; as well, she may have considered her son's future at that time. Although she was strong-willed and had persuaded her husband to return east several times before, she realized that she would not be able to change his mind now. She decided to give him one more chance and she wrote to him and asked for money in order to the west. Edmonton, that far-off prairie city, would become her home for the next thirty years and she would return east only twice in that time.

Marie-Louise must have been a self-sufficient woman because my father's job as electricity and gas inspector required him to be gone for weeks at a time traveling throughout

central Alberta. In the 1920s and 1930s, as well, he frequently went on hunting trips. Marie-Louise stayed at home with her son during his adolescent years, which may have suited her. Her husband handled all the money as is shown in my father's meticulously kept account books, where he notes the money he gave her for groceries, and itemizes other things, such as "shoes for junior" and "medicine for wife." Still, she was evidently a patient woman and a "good sport," going fishing and camping with her husband and son in the 1920's when she was in her fifties. One picture in particular shows her holding her own fishing rod while she steadies her son's, from which dangle two large fish.

After the crisis in their marriage which my father spoke about in his diary, he mentions Marie-Louise only three times in his notes, and refers to her as "the Mrs." One time he comments that she went to a card party, another that she helped him clean out the bee hives at the farm. The third mention of her is in a magazine article he wrote about his hunting experiences. He wrote:

> Coyotes were so plentiful that on my way from Oxville to Chauvin, I shot a coyote with a shot gun as we were climbing on the south of the Battle River. It was a 32 lb. Coyote which was in the pink of condition. I had it dyed Isabella and made into a fine scarf for the wife.

Marie-Louise died on June 7, 1943, at the age of seventy-one, after thirty-nine years of marriage to my father. The cause of death is stated as "heart failure," and letters of sympathy mention that she had been ill for the last year of her life. A few weeks after her death, my father went out and bought a light green Bible and inscribed the details of Marie-Louise's life, her dates of birth and death, their marriage, the dates she lost her two stillborn children, and, finally, Arthur junior's date of birth. She is buried in Saint Joachim Cemetery in the center of Edmonton, Alberta, the city that finally became her home.

Recently, while I was cleaning out a basement storage room at the Brick House on 115 Street, where Marie-Louise lived and where I would later grow up, I saw the brown edge of some paper sticking out from the top shelf. When I reached up and pulled it down, I discovered that it was a calendar from Holtan's Store, "The Best in Groceries and Dry Goods. Westlock—Phone no. 7—Alberta." Comprising one main picture with the small monthly pages stapled underneath, the calendar revealed the page for August 1943, two months after my father's first wife passed away. The picture was of a ship with three masts on rough seas, and was titled "Outward Bound." But what was interesting is that someone—was it Marie-Louise?—had pinned over the picture a magazine clipping of the Dionne quintuplets at the age of ten. She must have decided that the picture of the quints was more interesting to her than that of a ship on the ocean.

I am startled by this discovery; it is like finding a stopped watch at the bottom of the ocean, a calendar stopped in August 1943. The calendar must have hung in her bedroom and when my father was cleaning out the room, he took it and stored it in the basement, tossing it on a high shelf.

In 1961, when I was thirteen years old, my parents took me to the south side of Edmonton to see where my father's first house had been. He had phoned the couple currently living in the house and had made the arrangements for a visit. My mother, who did all the driving then, checked her city map carefully before we set out, because going to the district of Bonnie Doon was like traveling to another city for her. As we crossed the High Level Bridge, my father reminisced about how he used to walk across the bridge to get to work when he worked in the post office building. We passed by the Garneau Theater just off the bridge, and my mother said that when she was in training she used to walk here as well, to see a movie. We turned onto Whyte Avenue, and I stared out the window at another main street, different from Jasper Avenue.

My mother, who worried about getting lost in an unfamiliar part of the city, said, "Oh my, this is such a long way. Are you sure we're on the right road?" My father reassured her, "Yes, yes. Stay on Whyte until we turn left at 92 Street." Then later, he spoke with excitement as he pointed to a brown house. "There it is! Just as I remembered. Park on the street there, my dear."

The house was two storeys high, made of overlapping boards painted dark brown, with a central door and two windows the same size, one on each side of the door. My father stepped out of the car and stood for a few moments looking at the front of the house. "It hasn't changed much, except for two extra windows in the second storey. And the verandah was taken off. We're to go to the side door, the people are expecting us."

An old man opened the door and greeted my father heartily. I remember that he was a short man with wisps of white hair that appeared to float around his head. The man's wife, elderly and wearing a flowery dress, invited us into the addition at the back of the house. We sat in brown wicker chairs and drank lemonade in tall glasses, looking out at all the flowers in

the back yard. My mother and I stayed in the sun-porch addition, while my father went on a tour through the house.

I do not remember being curious to see the house myself, probably because no one explained to me that this is where my father, his first wife and son lived when he first came to Edmonton, forty-nine years before. I wonder if I would have been more interested if he had told me about the roaming cats and dogs on the first night. Would I have believed that the house was in a new section of Edmonton, a mile and a half from the city limits, and that in 1912 there was an electric streetcar that ran down Whyte Avenue to the district? Although my father explained many things to me, he did not speak often about his first family. Perhaps he did not mention them out of consideration for my mother.

In 1974, about fifteen years later, I enrolled my first son in St. Thomas Aquinas School, a school that would provide a French and English education. As I drove by a brown-sided house on 92 Street, I noticed that there was something familiar about it. I checked through my father's papers and discovered that he had built his first house at 8836-92 Street. That was the reason I had recognized the house. Then, when I looked in my father's box of negatives, I found other pictures of the house when they lived in it, with a young Marie-Louise holding the hand of her little boy who is about four years old. A new porch had been added to the front.

In 1979, twenty years after I had visited the house with my parents, my family and I moved to that Bonnie Doon district to be close to the French school that my children attended. Every day, whenever I have to go somewhere, I drive by this first house. The wood siding is still painted brown and the windows in front have lace curtains. For many years, I pointed it out to my children so that they would know that this was their grandfather's house, the one the prowling dogs and cats had tried to get into.

Diary 1915:

So far I have written only of what I was doing in the day time when we were living in the United States. It is not to be inferred that I was idle at night or in the evening, having noticed early the importance of learning English, French being my mother tongue. From the very first day I was in the United States, I made strong efforts to learn English and whenever I had an opportunity I would find a word here and there. When we were at Newton, Massachusetts, shortly after we arrived, I used to go with Mother in the store and act as interpreter—I must have been some interpreter; however, I managed to get what was wanted from the clerk and that was the essential.

In the fall of the first year that I was in the States, the family lived in Lawrence and I had to go the "Enemy" School (Public) which suited me first class. However, I must say that the two winters that I went to that school did not do me much good, very little of the English language did I learn during these two terms. I remember well one incident: the head teacher in our classroom was a German and the assistant was a young lady, English speaking—it's so long now that I have forgotten the name. One night she gave additions on the blackboard and I soon found that instead of adding from right to left, she was adding from left to right or the opposite of how it should be done.

I told her half by sign and half French and English, that it was not the proper way and she called the head teacher and he said that in Germany, they added the way I was telling her to add, but it had to be

proved on the blackboard and finally she was convinced I was right in my contention. However, for the next term, I did not attend that school but I went in search of a private teacher. This I found to be quite a lot of trouble and the teacher not a very good one at that and then unreliable in showing up for classes because he was often drinking hard and not fit to teach school.

In the third winter that I went to evening school, I went to Cannon's Business College in the Central Block in Lawrence and this I attended for three winters, until we moved back to Canada. This was a real school but my progress was slow owing to my hardship of not knowing the English language very well. At that time I was taking bookkeeping and business English at that school, but the biggest amount of math was bookkeeping.

Shortly after I entered that school, I went to see my cousin Amédée Cloutier of "Hamel and Cloutier Clothing Store" to work as night clerk. However, there was not a fortune to be made at this work. I was getting 50 cents a week for working from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. on Tuesday and from 1:30 to 11:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon and evenings. My school hours were from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday night, so I only had Thursday evening and Sunday to myself. It was at this time that I began to read books as a way to learn English and soon found that I derived much enjoyment from them. I very seldom went to a dance or amusement of any kind, which may not be considered good for a young man. However, it kept me away from bad company as in the mill towns there is a good deal of lewdness going on as well as drinking.

At the back of my father's diary, I discovered his reading list. Under the title, "What I read and when I read it," he mentions that he reads in the morning from 5:30 to 7:15 a.m.. On January 21, 1915, he notes that he read To the North Sea: The Franklin Voyages.

Eighty years later, in 1995, when I returned to university to finish my Master's degree, I took a course in Exploration Literature, and I realized that the book that my father read about Franklin is the same one that I read for the course. Franklin's quest for the Northwest Passage must have intrigued my father. The narration is a tragic one because the explorers did not turn back south before winter set in and froze all the rivers, thereby trapping the party. The men were unexpectedly forced to winter without adequate supplies. The officers survived, but all of the French-Canadian voyageurs perished except one who went with an officer to get help. After reading the book, I happened to unfold one of my father's maps and realized it was a map of the Northwest Territories of Canada. I sought out the names of the sites that had become associated with Franklin's story, and I saw my father's tracing in red ink of the line of the journey, with crosses marking the probable wintering spot of the ill-fated expedition and Fort Providence.

Then, while I was studying Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," I read the first act where Cassius is trying to convince Brutus of the necessity of eliminating Julius Caesar when these lines jumped up at me: "Men at some times are masters of their fates. The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." I could hear my father saying those words. I wished that I could run to him and tell him that I had found the lines and knew where they came from and now we could talk about ambition and destiny. I wondered if these words defined the way my father tried to live.

This is a part of the list of my father's own informal lending library in 1916:

Loaned to	Book	On	Return
R. Cunningham	Field Engineering	1/26/16	Lost
W.P. McDonald	Meter Book	11/15/16	2/26/17
W.C. Scott	Farm Soil	11/15/16	2/1/17
E.B. Elliott	Lincoln by Binns	2/15/16	3/24/17
"	Fables by Lafontaine	3/24/16	10/5/17
H.M. Randall	Analyzing Character	5/20/16	7/28/17

Among the many books of my father's lending library, I have the book Lincoln by Henry Bryan Binns. The book is a light khaki green in colour, embossed with gold leaves and lettering on the spine. Inside the first page my father has inscribed, "Arthur J. Cantin, Edmonton, Juin 1914." The book influenced him enough that he wrote this about the life of the American president:

> In reading the life of Abraham Lincoln and seeing all the hardship and trouble under which he secured his education, I cannot help but think that a man with ambition today cannot help but improve himself to such a degree that he will succeed in whatever he undertakes to be. I am thankful to live in an age when knowledge can be so easily acquired and I am in hope that some day I will be more than I am now. I am not striving to be a millionaire but I am in hope to be in a position some day where I will not have to worry about the future and to hold some position of trust.

I grew up in a house filled with books: this was a point of convergence for me and my father. On my family's trip through the United States to Florida when I was four years old, my parents bought me "Little Golden Books" at every place we stopped. I can chronicle the journey from "Little John Little," bought in Chicago, Illinois on Nov. 22, 1952, to the "Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales," bought at Clearwater, Florida, on January 1, 1953, with many other titles in between. I remember hugging the cardboard books with the shiny gold spines close to me because they were my books, just like the ones my father always held in his hands. I don't remember that he read them to me—it was my mother who did the reading—but nevertheless he imparted to me the importance of books early in my life.

When I was six years old, my parents started collecting for me The Universal Standard Encyclopedia. This was a promotion at a grocery store that allowed you to buy one volume a week for a reasonable price. The advertisement proclaimed: "We feel sure that this treasured library will help you in your everyday life, and that your children will find it indispensable in school right up through college." Volume One at least had several pages of coloured maps, but I remember despairing at all the small writing when I was just learning to read. The rest of the pictures were in black and white. By the time my parents bought Volume Five, I was able to print my name, and the date, October 10, 1954. This Encyclopedia still sits on my book shelf. Later, my parents bought the Encyclopedia Brittanica and a series of children's books called The Children's Hour, sixteen volumes, with such titles as "Favorite Fairy Tales," "Favorite Mystery Stories," and "Leaders and Heroes."

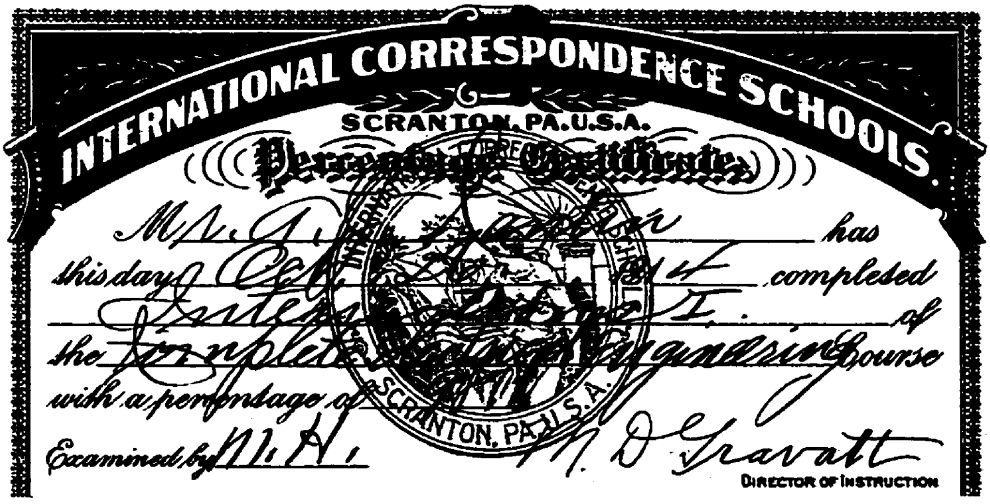
While my father sat in the living room reading the biography of Winston Churchill and histories of the Second World War, I often lay on the floor in front of the gas fireplace reading Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys.

I would walk the fourteen blocks to the old Edmonton Public Library on 101 Street, and there I discovered books about the pharaohs of Ancient Egypt and the finding of King Tutankahmen's tomb. I read about archeology in Greece and Crete and then I discovered the epic novels of James Michener and Thomas Costain. I kept a small spiral notebook with all of the titles that I had read.

Diary 1915:

After the family moved back to Canada, when I was twenty-one years old, I was determined not to let my seeking of an education fall by the wayside. I had heard of the International Correspondence School of Scranton, Pennsylvania and I decided to take the Telegraph Engineering Course, enrolling on July 4, 1903, since I was in training to become a telegraph operator. I made good progress but I soon came to Algebra and there I was stumped. Try no matter how hard, I could not get through that so in disgust I gave up studying for a while, perhaps two years.

Then, when I was appointed to a permanent position in Manchester in August 1906, I revived my course with the correspondence school and I started to work hard on it.



I also took a Drafting course in the Technical Night School in Manchester, New Hampshire, as I had seen a large number of blueprints used in the exchange and I wanted to fit myself so that I could make those blueprints. It was not long before I could turn out a good tracing. I liked the work.

The velvet-lined case of my father's drafting tools, like a surgeon's instruments, were given to me when I was eleven years old, so that I could draw circles, but no one explained to me what they were. I understand how he used the tools when I find the drawings for the correspondence course in drafting in the black portfolio. The drawings are a strange sort of art, precise pictures of tools and machine details. The course began on February 12, 1909, at the time that my father first came to Edmonton for a year before returning to the States. He was required to draw geometrical figures and one of the problems given was "To inscribe a regular hexagon in a given circle." The large pages show the progression of difficulty of shapes, until five years later he drew his assignments on a light blue plasticised paper, with titles such as "Drawing Room Standards" and "Bench Vise Details." One of the final drawings is, "Bicycle Wrench, Details and Assembly," which received the comment, "Neat." The pages are water-stained, but the black lines that my father drew and the pencil corrections from his teachers at the International Correspondence Schools are visible. I have not thought of my father as a student before, to be corrected by his teachers, but the evidence is right in front of me. I choose three of his drawings and have them dry-mounted and framed to hang in my stairway.

Document from 1908:

This certifies that Arthur Joseph Cantin has been a student in the Correspondence School of Telephony and Telegraphy, that he has satisfactorily completed the subjects mentioned herein as taught in our Telegraph Engineering course, has been examined and found duly qualified in them and is hereby awarded this Diploma as an acknowledgment of his proficiency and in recommendation of his acquirements.

Subjects: Arithmetic, Mensuration
Elementary Algebra and
Trigonometric functions
Elementary Mechanics
Principles of Electricity,
Electrical Measurements,
Elements of Telegraph Operating,
Batteries, Telegraphy,
Additional Subject, Telephony.

Witness the signatures of Members of the Faculty and Officers of the International Correspondence Schools. Given under the Seal of the Schools in the City of Scranton, Pennsylvania. This 14th day of March A.D. 1908.

G.S. Webb J.L. Martin

F.H. Doane J.J. Clark

M.D. Gravatt Stanley P. Allan

My father's good friend was Jean-Baptiste Boulanger, a French-Canadian doctor. They had known each other for over forty years and liked to argue about various aspects of the survival of French-Canadian culture in the West. I did not mind accompanying my father when he went to visit his friend. Dr. Boulanger had his office in an old house on 95 Street, on the north side of Edmonton, with a waiting room lined with amber-coloured jars of gall-bladder stones and various tumours removed from patients. I found these jars fascinating.

In his basement, the doctor had a printing press and shelves filled with boxes of tracts, most of them to encourage the French language and culture. Many of them were reprints of articles that he had written for a newspaper published in Edmonton called "Le Patriote de l'Ouest." The doctor usually handed me selections of these tracts as he showed my father and me his latest printing efforts in his basement, which was crowded with shelves weighed down by all the printed material. His son, while still in his teens, had won a French literary prize for a book he had written about Napoleon, and my father spoke of this man's son with evident admiration for one so young yet so accomplished.

Just before my eighth birthday in 1956, the doctor gave me a thick green French dictionary, the Larousse Classique Illustré which he inscribed with my name and the exhortation, "Va ton chemin" or "Seek your own road." After that he signed his name and glued a small picture of himself inside the cover. As well, he pasted one of his small tracts on the next page, that said, in French, that the dictionary is "a book of great class and a proud volume of nobility and character because it offers to all its knowledge."

My father said that he hoped that I would always use the dictionary to become an accurate writer of French and that perhaps some day, I would write a book. As I carried the book home, I was aware that I had been given something important and that I would try my best to learn to write well; but at the same time, I was fearful that I would not.

In the fall of 1966, the year before my father died, I started university in the Faculty of Science. My original ambition was to be a medical doctor, not a nurse, as my mother had been. The French-Canadian community was heavily weighted in favor of medicine, law and the priesthood for boys, with the other professions not seeming to count. But since I was female, I was aware of a subtle encouragement by my teachers to go into the more traditional female professions: teacher, nurse or secretary.

I would have nothing of that. I would go into whatever profession I chose, knowing that my parents would approve of anything that could be studied at university. But at the same time I was fearful that I would not achieve an adequate average to be accepted into medicine. So I decided that I would play it safe and go into another subject and then at the end of two or three years apply for medicine if I could. If not, I could continue in the subject I had chosen. Biochemistry, which combined my favorite subjects of biology and chemistry, seemed the obvious choice. I carefully checked that the courses I was taking were prerequisites for admission into medical school.

My father at age eighty-five was not well that fall, but my mother and I did not speak often of his illness. I avoided the situation by immersing myself in university which was not difficult because I was taking five courses, including three that had laboratory sections. This meant I had to leave early in the morning to arrive for lectures starting at 8 a.m. and most days I had three-hour labs in the afternoon. While my friends in the Faculty of Arts had fifteen hours of classes on campus, I had twenty-nine hours because of the labs, supplemented by the time it took to write the long lab reports. When I got home, my mother had supper ready, and then I could retreat to my desk to work another three or four hours, just trying to keep up.

One night, I glanced at my father as he sat in his rocking chair. Lately, he was still in his pajamas and dressing gown even in the middle of the day. This was unusual because he had always dressed in good trousers and a shirt, even if he was not going out. He was reading a

book about the Second World War. The thick paperback was heavy, so he held it firmly with both hands, propping his elbows on the arms of the chair. As I walked by, he leaned forward, looking up at me, inviting me to talk to him. But I simply said I had a lot of homework, a term he would understand. He did not press me or disturb me when I was studying, because, after all, I had achieved what I suspected had once been a dream of his: I was going to university. He did not say that directly; it was more the scornful envy he had for the impracticality of university graduates and his moments of regret that he had not been able to initiate his hydro-electric project because he had not been sufficiently educated.

Our neighbor Henry often left for work at the same time I did in the morning. As we walked down our sidewalks to the garages, he would ask me how university was coming along.

"Fine," I would reply, then go on to mention how much work I had to do.

One morning, he said, "I was talking to your dad the other day. He's quite disappointed that you're not going into medicine."

"What?" I replied abruptly. "What does he know about what I'm taking? As a matter of fact, all the courses I'm taking count for pre-med. If I decide to apply." All I could think was, how dare my father comment to a neighbor on what I am doing?

"He doesn't know that."

"But I've told him. I'm in science, it's like pre-med. Isn't that good enough for him?"

Obviously, it wasn't. I felt stung by the indirect words of disapproval from my father. I had not realized how much I valued his judgment. Wasn't I going to university? What did he know about studying and working hard?

In 1916, four years after building his first house of ship-lap with bevel siding, my father bought another house on the south side, not far from the High Level Bridge in Edmonton. It was a solid-looking two-storey house that cost $5,000. One of the pictures I have of this house is taken from down the street, looking towards the west where the new University of Alberta was being built. A stout woman in a white apron, who resembles my father's mother, perhaps visiting from the east, stands in front of the house. There are trees in the empty lot next to the house, and a churned-up dirt road runs in front. My father's Grey Dort automobile is parked on the street.

In the 1970's, I look up the address to find my father's second house and discover it is close to the new construction going on at the university. Several city blocks of houses have been torn down to build Hub Mall, then the Humanities Center and the Law Center. I find his house on tree-lined 90 Avenue, down from the marker that says that this was Laurent Garneau's farmland at one time. The house has decorative shingles covering the second storey, which are painted in a dark brown, while the first storey is painted a light yellow. I take a

couple of pictures of the house because it appears to be slated for demolition. However, the house is not demolished, although the one beside it on the corner is torn down.

The other picture I have of this house is taken in the back yard and is of my father's first wife, Marie-Louise, and his son, Art, who is about ten years old, standing next to a tree they have just planted. Rex, the hunting dog, lies in front of the tree. Underneath the picture is written "Plum tree, 1916."

When I return to university years after getting my science degree to study English literature, the creative writing room is at the east end of the Humanities Center. When I look down at the view of the North Saskatchewan River valley, I discover that I can see the plum tree in the back yard of the house that my father bought in 1916. I find it strange that this house should always be before my eyes when I turn into the Humanities Center parking lot.

My father's second diploma from the International Correspondence Schools is in an oak frame with the glass missing. The edges of the document are stained with water, and I recall that my mother's basement flooded thirty years ago, in 1969. However, the gold seal on it is bright and invites the fingers to touch the embossed letters. I marvel at all the subjects listed.

> This certifies that Arthur Joseph Cantin has been a student in the Correspondence School of Electrical Engineering, that he has satisfactorily completed the subjects mentioned herein, as taught in our Complete Electrical Engineering Course, has been examined and found duly qualified in them and is hereby awarded this Diploma as an acknowledgment of his proficiency and in recommendation of his acquirements. Subjects: Arithmetic, Elements of Algebra, Logarithms, Geometry and Trigonometry, Sketching, Geometrical and Mechanical Drawing, Principles of Mechanics, Machine Element, Mechanics of Fluids, Strength of Materials, Heat and Steam, the Steam Engine, the Indicator, Engine Testing Governors, Valve Gears, Steam Turbines, the Magnetic Circuit, Electricity and Magnetism, Electrodynamics, Electrical Resistance and Capacity, Electromagnetic Induction, Primary Batteries, Chemistry and Electrochemistry, Electrical Measurements, Direct Current Motors, Dynamos and Dynamo Design, Alternators, Electric Transmission, Alternating Currents, Alternating Current apparatus, Line Calculations, Design of Alternating-Current Apparatus, Line Construction, Efficiency Tests, Switchboards and Switchboard Appliances, Power Transformation and Measurement, Mercury-Vapor Converters, Storage Batteries, Incandescent and Arc Lighting, Voltage

Regulation, Electric Signs, Modern Electric-lighting Devices, Electric Heating, Interior Wiring, Electric-Power Stations, Applied Electricity, Telegraph and Telephone Systems, Electric Railway Systems, Line and track, Electric-Car Equipment, Multiple-Unit Systems, Single-Phase Railway System, Motors and Controllers.

Witness the signatures of the Members of the Faculty and Officers of the International Correspondence Schools. Given under the Seal of the School in the City of Scranton, Pennsylvania, this 26th day of April, A.D. 1915.

F.H. Doane	M.D. Gravatt
J.D. Purdy	J.J. Clark
W.G. Hardy	Stanley P. Allan

From an article written by Arthur J. Cantin in The Electrical News, June 14, 1916:

> One of the best isolated plants in Alberta is that of the University of Alberta, Edmonton. In the designing of this plant, economy of operation was kept in mind so that nothing would be wasted. The coal used in this plant is mine screening, or slack, which is usually burned at the mine, as it is of practically no value and takes too much place to store it. This coal costs 60 cents a ton at the mine, and 55 cents for cartage to the University. The usual cost of coal in Edmonton varies from $2.00 to $4.00 a ton. Previous to the university using this coal there was no market for it and it was destroyed.
>
> The two main generator units are Canadian Westinghouse 100kv. A. 250 volts, 3 phase, 60 cycle, 514 r.p.m. with direct connected exciter. These units are direct connected to James Howden Co., Glasgow, high speed vertical compound engines. There is also a Terry steam turbine of 10 kW. Capacity, running at 1,800 r.p.m., 150 lbs. Steam pressure, direct connected to a Siemens Brothers 10.5 kW., 125 volt, 87 ampere, 3 wire D.C. generator. The direct current in this instance is used in the testing laboratory.

Generating Plant at the University of Alberta

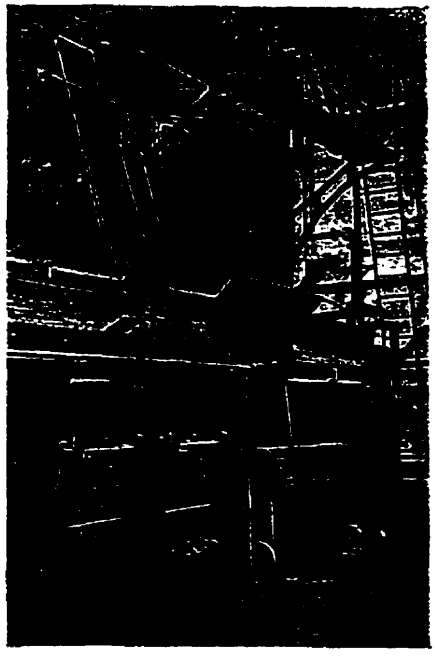
By Arthur J. Cantin

One of the best isolated plants in Alberta is that of the University of Alberta, Edmonton. In the designing of this plant economy of operation was kept in mind so that nothing would be wasted. The coal used in the plant is mine screening, or slack, which is usually burned at the mine, as it is of practically no value and takes too much space to store it. This coal costs 60 cents a ton at the mine, and 55 cents for cartage to the University. The usual cost of coal in Edmonton varies from $2.00 to $4.00 a ton. Previous to the University using this coal there was no market for it and it was destroyed.

The mines in and close to Edmonton are mining lignite coal, having a B.t.u. varying from 7,000 to 12,000; a fair average is 9,000 B.t.u. per lb. A small amount of bituminous coal is imported from the Rocky Mountains west of Edmonton, and from the Crow's Nest Pass, south of Calgary. This coal costs on an average $4.00 a ton.

The evaporation with the low grade of coal is 6 to 1, where the Babcock and Wilcox automatic chain grate stoker is used, and 4 to 1 with hand firing. The cost of coal and labor per kw. h. is as follows: cost of coal, .78 cents; cost of labor, .60 cents; or a total of 1.38 cents per kw. h. of output. The load factor in daytime averages 50 per cent.; the power factor is .72.

The boilers consist of three 225 h.p. units, Babcock and Wilcox water tube type. One is equipped with a B. & W. automatic chain stoker, shown in Fig. 1. The water consumption is low. Steam for heating is furnished by the engine operating the generator, and the condensed water is returned to the boiler. The arrangement has been so well worked out that there is practically no loss of water through



Boiler Room, University of Alberta.

softener is passed through a Cochrane feed water heater, which raises its temperature to 210 degrees F., through the equalizer, then through a V notch recorder. The water is returned to the Cochrane heater by means of 3 small centrifugal pumps direct connected to a. c. induction motors. There is a trap similar to the usual steam trap, with a float, which operates a Sundh tank regulator, which throws the power on, and when the trap is emptied the power is automatically cut off. The city sewer is somewhat higher in altitude than the University and a vertical centrifugal pump is used to handle sewage. The engineer reports that no trouble has been experienced with these pumps. The boiler feed is a G. J. Weir, Glasgow, marine type. There is also an automatic oil feed system which returns all oil that has been used to a tank. When this tank is full it is pumped into a steam separator, where it is boiled until it finds its own outlet.

Engines and Generators, University of Alberta.

The Electrical Equipment

The two main generator units are Canadian Westinghouse 100 kv. a., 250 volts. 3 phase, 60 cycle, 514 r.p.m., with direct-connected exciter. These units are direct connected to James Howden Co., Glasgow, high speed vertical compound engines. There is also a Terry steam turbine of 10 kw. capacity, running at 1,800 r.p.m., 150 lbs. steam pressure, direct connected to a Siemens Bros. 10.5 kw., 125 volt, 87 ampere, 3 wire, d.c. generator. The direct current in this instance is used in the testing laboratory.

The switchboard consists of eight blue Vermont marble panels, 90 ins. high (top section 62 ins. and bottom section 28 ins.) mounted on a sill two inches thick. It is of the same general design as ordinary central station switchboards and is equipped with two sets of a.c. bus-bars. The main circuits are controlled by oil switches mounted on the back of the board, the generator and bus-tie switches being non-automatic, and the incoming line and feeder switches being automatic. The small capacity feeders (lighting and power) are controlled by knife switches and enclosed fuses, the latter being mounted on small bases 15 inches back of the board to allow ample room for taking out the feeder cables.

It is 9:45 p.m. on a Wednesday night in April 1996 when my husband and I head towards the "Power Plant Bar and Grill" in the center of the University of Alberta campus. I want to see what remains of the actual equipment installed when the building housed the power generators for the university. We both recall seeing something large and green, a generator perhaps, as part of the decor, years ago.

The brick building is two storeys high with tall arched windows framed by white bricks alternating with red. On its east end, facing Rutherford Library, the names of the men who played a role in the discovery of electricity are inscribed in stone: Watt, Stephenson, Kelvin, and Newton. More intricate brickwork in the form of lines and squares completes the second storey. The Power Plant was converted into a bar and restaurant and offices for graduate students in the 1970s, and the coal and steam-fired generators were cleared out. However, the two tall chimney stacks remain, boldly assertive monuments to the generation of electricity.

One door leads into a long corridor along the edge of the building to a bar in a large room with a high ceiling. A loft area with extra tables and chairs covers the bar where the drinks are prepared. The room on the right is busy for a Wednesday night before the last week of classes. We wind our way around the tables of various sizes to a place near the stage, used as a storage area for extra chairs. Loud music booms over the speakers and people speak in crescendos in an effort to be heard.

A brightly lit aerial picture of the university taken in the 1960s hangs on the wall next to our table. Hub Mall was not built yet and houses still crowd the lower part of the picture where the Humanities, Law, and Fine Arts buildings now stand. When I look at the picture carefully, I can pick out my father's second house in Edmonton, with the plum tree behind it. I have been a student from 1966 onwards, through all the changes on campus, and suddenly I realize that over thirty years have passed.

The bottom of the smokestack at the end of the room has been circled with a bar and high stools, and half-barrels have been mounted as decoration. Eighty years ago, when my father as the Inspector of Electricity and Gas came here to check on the installation, the stack would have been hot, emitting smoke from the burning of the coal dust to boil the water to generate steam to power the generators. An arched doorway in the brick wall has a decorative touch of bricks radiating outward from the arch. The windows have rounded mullions, an architectural detail that seems lavish for so utilitarian a building. Perhaps electricity was not taken for granted then as it is today, perhaps it was seen as the new force that would light up the darkness of the world and make man's work easier.

There is no sign of the green generator that we remembered seeing here. We ask a waitress if she recalls something large and green and she says that the last of the old equipment was removed a couple of years ago when the bar was renovated.

I wonder where my father walked when he came here, where the coal dust was delivered, what the two Canadian Westinghouse Generators, direct-connected to the James Howden Company high-speed vertical compound engines, sounded like when they were operating at maximum capacity. I wonder if my father could ever have imagined that the daughter of his old age would sit at a small round table in the center of the power plant and hold up a misted glass of beer and toast his dreams for the electrification of Alberta?

My father loved to eat apples, particularly McIntosh apples. In the fall, he would order a wooden box of choice apples, and every day he would choose one from the cardboard separating the layers, rinse it, and polish it with a tea-towel. Then he would sit in the rocking chair that creaked with the weight of his body. When I was a little girl, I would come up beside the carved arms of the chair, and he would extend the apple out to me to take the first bite. Then, quite often, I would slide up on his knee.

That became my time of closeness with my father, sitting on his knee and watching a program on television, that new invention. Sometimes we would talk about my day at school, other times, I would simply lean back against his chest.

One day, I decided that I was getting too old to sit on my father's knee. I had recently grown quite tall, so that my feet touched the floor when I sat with him. I found excuses for several days not to sit with him until my mother called me aside and said, "It's true you are getting tall but I think you should continue to sit on your father's knee. Your father is old and he may not be with us very long."

I knew that she meant that he could have a stroke at any time and that he could die suddenly. I did not know then how long I would be without my father after he was gone. But my mother knew that I would remember these moments.

So I slid back on his knee and he laid his hand on my waist and rocked me gently.

These are some of the books that I found in my father's library:

Hydro-Electric Power Stations, by David B. Rushmore and Eric A. Lof

American Hydroelectric Practice, by William Taylor and Daniel Braymer

Water Powers of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, by Leo G. Denis

The Design and Construction of Dams, by Edward Wegmann.

Water-Power Engineering, by Daniel W. Mead

Diary, 1944:

I had been interested in water power and "La Petite Rivière" at the back of the lot in Weedon was my first chance to experiment with bridges and dams. Father owned about 4 acres across the creek and when I was about ten years old, I built a bridge and put the family cow across it, but she broke the bridge and damaged her milk bag so I had a lot of explaining to do to my father. Then I used to build small dams on the road side ditch after a heavy rain as there was no sidewalk, but within a year or two, about 1891, new sidewalks were put on that side of the road and no more dam. This drove me to "La Petite Rivière" again where a new problem was created as my dam was about 2 feet of a head. I could not make it strong enough to hold back water so I had to give it up.

It was about twenty years after that, when I was thirty, that I had the chance to get a job in that field. While in Montreal in June 1911, I looked for work and I found a position with the Northern Electric Company in the erection department. I was sent to Toronto and started work in the Adelard Exchange. There I think the Foreman was satisfied with me. He put me in charge of installing a special circuit on a large board and I made good at it.

As previously mentioned, I worked on the installation of the complete track of the Seymour Electrical Power Company. After seeing the Electrical Engineer in charge and talking to him, he told me to see the man in charge of the Midland Construction Company, Mr. L.G. Ireland. He took my name and address and asked me to write an application letter, which I did. I was summoned to his office shortly afterwards and he made

me an offer of $85.00 a month to start with and $100.00 in two months if I made good. So it was agreed. I might say that my salary with Northern Electric was $76.00 a month.

I reported to work in Port Hope, Ontario under J.J. Jeffery and started on the erection of pipe superstructure. This required a certain amount of ingenuity in getting the structure up and I know that I was slow at this job. Here I want to say that I was not given a free hand in the matter of hiring workmen. I was given a number of University Students and I must say that out of five—one a freshman was an excellent workman—another freshman was a fair worker although inclined to lie on the job. The other two, a 2-year and a 1-year man were not worth their salt. I worked on this job nearly a year until 1912, when I left once more with the intention of returning to Alberta.

The Port Hope Sub-Station, 1909:

However, first I made a trip to Lawrence and I stayed there for perhaps a week, and then, as was my custom, I went visiting my father and mother in Sherbrooke, Quebec. Father pressed me to stay in the region and find a job and settle down now that I had a family. He has given me no encouragement in my desire to move west, he believes that I will lose my language and religion, I assured him that I would not. As well, since I am the second son, he wants me to stay close to home. I told him I would not abide with the narrow view that my people in Quebec have of the world, most of whom have never traveled out of the boundaries of their parishes. I have tried to study hard and work diligently in learning the new technologies to leave the old way behind, but my father did not understand that. This was the last time saw my father. He died the next January. I was glad after that that I had seen him , but this was the worse trip I had made in all my days. When I left Montreal I told my people they would not see me again for another ten years.

My father worked in the electric power field from 1911 to 1912, after leaving his job in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and going to Montreal, Quebec to find work. This brief time in the field gave him an interest that would last for the rest of his life: the development of hydro-electrical power. After he moved to Edmonton permanently in the spring of 1912 and took up the sport of hunting, he observed that Alberta had many rivers and falls which could be developed for hydroelectricity. He began the formulation of a plan for the large-scale development of these water resources to provide electricity cheaply to every Albertan and to attract new manufacturing concerns. At that time, only one hydroelectric dam existed in Alberta, at Horseshoe Falls, upstream from Calgary on the Bow River. It had been built by a group of Montreal financiers to power the cement plant at Exshaw, close to Banff.

As the electricity and gas inspector, my father traveled, in the course of his work, to all of the power plant installations in northern Alberta. Most of the villages and towns had their own generators. This exposure to all the varieties of electrical plants gave him the opportunity to collect data for his report on the possibilities of development of a province-wide power grid. He compiled long lists of statistics about the towns and their populations, how much horsepower was in use, the cost of a power station, and how much revenue could be expected. In 1917, he put together his first "Report on the possibility of a hydro-electric power development covering the older settled parts of the Province of Alberta."

Some of the data he collected first-hand. On one of his hunting trips, he went north to the Grand Rapids on the Athabasca River. He believed that the island in the river, called Grand Island, would be an ideal site on which to build a dam and a power house to take advantage of the drop in the river bed, which was ideal for power development. He dug five pits at least five feet deep on the island, in many cases hitting large rocks which he broke up by making a fire in the pit and heating the rocks until they cracked. At the fourth pit, he encountered "a hard compact bed of sand in initial formation of hardening into rock." He concluded that this pit

showed satisfactory qualities for carrying the loads that would be required for the construction of a dam of sufficient height to give all the power the City of Edmonton could use for many years to come. He proposed a 150 foot high dam approximately 2,200 feet long. He also calculated the amount of reinforced concrete required for the construction to be 250,000 cubic yards, which he said should cost fifteen dollars per cubic yard.

On February 14, 1917, on page ten of the Edmonton's Morning Bulletin, the headline proclaimed, "Power Possibilities in North, Edmonton occupies enviable position where development of big Hydro-Electric Systems must create a factory center." The article went on to state that the day before, Arthur J. Cantin had presented his report to the Board of Trade at its weekly luncheon at the Macdonald Hotel. The people in the audience listened closely as he read out his ideas for the necessity of hydro-electric development. A large source of power would allow the construction of pulp mills and other industries having to do with natural resources, he said. He did not want the project to be funded by out-of-province financiers because he believed the government should be the one to do it, just as he had seen the Ontario government do. The government of Alberta "would not build for profit but for the good of the people."

One year later, on February 11, 1918, he had ready his one-hundred-page "Report on the possibilities of a Provincial Hydro-Electric Power System for Alberta." The report is typed on long sheets of onion-skin paper and duplicated through several layers of carbon paper. Again, he lists long tables of numbers for the power requirements, the estimated revenue, and the cost of the transformer station and operator. The accumulation of all the data and the typing of the rows and rows of columns of numbers at a time when there was no easy way to correct typing mistakes tell of the time he must have taken to put together his report. The report is complete with eight blueprints of his conception of the hydroelectric generating stations, the

outdoor sub-stations and the proposed dams on the Red Deer River, the Athabasca and the Grand Rapids.

He wrote that electricity generated by the power of the water made more sense than generators run by coal, because water passed through a turbine and emerged unaltered, while a ton of coal was consumed leaving nothing but ashes. The building of such a large-scale project would bring in "young energetic mechanics and engineers," who would help to develop the province. Several industries would be attracted to Alberta as a result of cheap electrical power, particularly the pulp and paper industry and the milling industry for turning wheat into flour. He was realistic in his plans, noting that for such an undertaking at least three engineers should be called in to advise the province as to the best policy: "First a man of engineering ability with financial experience; second, an engineer of wide experience in hydraulic works; third a man of wide experience in the construction of generating stations and high voltage transmission lines."

At the end of the report he added:

> All the work in this report has been done by me and I alone am responsible for it. I have spent years in gathering data and going over the ground. But in order to verify all estimates, it will be necessary to put men in the field and get all the information first hand, have surveys made, and the nature of foundations ascertained for the various power sites. This is my aim and I propose to devote my time now in trying to get the Provincial Government to make this investigation carry the work to completion. Respectfully submitted, A.J. Cantin.

He sent out copies of this long report to certain people he thought could help him in his cause. The first was to Sir Adam Beck, the chairman of Ontario Hydro, and the second was to Charles Stewart, the premier of Alberta. A third copy was sent to H.J. Bell of Toronto. My father kept one copy at home and one at his office.

REPORT ON THE POSSIBILITY OF AN HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER DEVELOPMENT

COVERING THE OLDER SETTLED PARTS OF THE

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

BY

ARTHUR. J. CANTIN

4/6/16

In an undertaking of this nature, it is of first importance, to inquire as to the likely market for power. No one can say what the future need will be. It is perfectly legitimate however to take the present electric power consumption throughout the province for this purpose.

The Dominion Government report, of the companies, and municipalities registered, for the year 1915 is used. It is accurate, being made under oath. It should be remembered that cheap power attracts power using industries, and the rate of increase may be as high as 100% for the first two or three years. If we use the experience of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission we find the maximum load on the Niagara System as follow;- Oct.1910 first load put on syatem,1,000hp. Jan.1911 4,000hp. Jan.1912,18,000hp. Jan.1913 36,000hp. Jan.1914,48,000hp. Oct. 1914 68,000hp. and the O.H.E.P.Commission was facing strong competion from the old established Companies.

It is a known fact that of the three prairie provinces, Alberta is the one pre-eminently situated with respect to raw material, such as coal, gas, oil, iron, and other minerals, also lumber being close to British Columbia, the freight is a minimum.

When I was growing up, I remember watching my father as he pulled out his black scrapbook on his desk. It was filled with clippings from newspapers and sheets of other typed articles. He would carefully place on his nose his pair of glasses with half-moon shaped lenses that allowed him close reading. He would adjust the black scrapbook parallel to the edge of the desk, open to the first page and begin to read. Sometimes he would have new clippings, about the first man in space or the first heart transplant, and then he would take a small paintbrush dipped in water and moisten a row of glue dots on the pages of his scrapbook. He would press these new articles on the dots and then fold the paper into place like the older articles.

Now the scrapbook sits on my desk. It is fifteen inches high by twelve inches wide, stamped "The Ideal Scrap Book" in gold letters on the front. Inside, the pages have turned a deep orange-brown. The "patented directions" on the inside front cover explain that to fasten clippings into the book, first one of the vertical rows of glue must be moistened with a piece of cloth or a brush and then the clipping must be pressed in, working from the left to the right columns of glue. The first row of clippings on the right-hand page should be folded back to make room for the second row, and so on across the page.

Inside the book, on fragile newspaper clippings or glossy magazine pages, I finally read what he so frequently re-read: the articles and letters to the editor he had written, and other writings of interest to him. The earliest clipping dates from August 22, 1912, the year when he moved permanently to Edmonton. He writes about the plan to twin the streetcar tracks, which he says is not necessary if "electric automatic block signals are installed" with turn-outs for the streetcars at close intervals. This would enable the streetcars to continue running even if one of them was disabled. Another letter written in reply to his inquiry states that the city has already ordered these same signals and is awaiting their delivery.

The full newspaper page coverage of February 13, 1917, the day after he presented his idea for the hydroelectric development of the province to the Board of Trade, is included next in

the scrapbook. The headline is impressive, and the full text of his speech is included. The page has been folded and unfolded so many times that the paper has torn in some places. That same year, 1917, he wrote an article in the Paper Trade Journal about the "Opportunity for Pulp Mills in Alberta: There is present here Raw Material in Unlimited quantity and the rivers west of Winnipeg offer some of the Cheap Water Power unequaled anywhere west of Winnipeg." There are articles he wrote for The Research Bulletin, The Electrical News, The Rod and Gun and Silver Fox News ("Draining Sloughs in the West is Seriously Affecting Waterfowl Breeding"), The United Farmers of Alberta, and Industrial Canada. He had an article published in the prestigious The Magazine of Wall Street about investing in property and used his figures from the building of the Brick House on 115 Street in 1923. He wrote letters to the editors of The Edmonton Journal, The Edmonton Bulletin, and The U.F.A., usually signing his name but also "An observing Citizen" and "Another Taxpayer." The entries in the scrapbook were written mainly in the 1920s and 1930s. The most prolific years for him were 1930-31, when he wrote numerous comments under the pen-name "Pertinax."

Between the pages of the scrapbook are the articles written by Pertinax. Most are carbon copies of the original on lightweight paper and all are attached with a straight pin to the article to which they refer. These points of reference were taken from Electrical World, Maclean's Magazine, and Electrical News and Engineering. Some of the titles of his articles are, "Can Steam successfully compete with Hydro power?" "The advantages of a completely electrified farm" and "Transmission of natural gas has possibilities for electricity generation."

In 1918, when he was thirty-seven years old, my father bought the first of a series of twenty-six pamphlets entitled, "The Science of Character Analysis—what it is and what it will do for you." The introduction to the pamphlets stated that Dr. Katherine Blackford's method could be termed a science, based as it was upon the facts of anthropology. She believed that the history of the human race showed that certain conditions developed certain types of mind and body. The introduction continued to state: "The Science of Character Analysis by the observational method offers you organized and classified knowledge about the characters of human beings as indicated by their physical appearance."

One of the examples Dr. Blackford used in teaching her students was an analysis of the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. She looks at his cranium, his expression, the condition of his body and his clothes, among many indicators. She writes about the president:

> Forehead: The convex forehead indicates a practical, analytical, scientific mind. It also indicates keenness and quickness of thought, alertness and good powers of observation.
>
> Eyes: Mr. Wilson's eyes are quite convex. This is an indication of excellent powers of expression, ability to learn, remember and use words.
>
> Nose: Mr. Wilson's nose is strongly convex. It is also especially prominent just above the tip. This is the nose of courage, of resistance, of great energy. This energy finds its expression both mentally and physically, as does also the quality of courage. A man with such a nose has especially the courage of his convictions.

In December 1919, almost two years after giving his hydro-electricity report to the Board of Trade, my father filled out a form of personal data for Dr. Katherine Blackford, Employer's Advisor, 50 East Forty-second Street, New York. He included several pictures of himself, facing forward and in profile, as well as pictures of his hands with the lines of his palms drawn in with ink.

He answered questions on the form about the colour of his eyes, hair and skin, his education and which studies he liked best, as well as what he read and what he desired to know about himself. He included fifteen dollars and a letter:

> My present position is that of gas and electricity inspector for the Dominion Government. I have been on this job for six years, I am against a wall, no further advancement is possible. So I have decided to make a change within the next year or eighteen months. I want your advice as to what this change should be. What has kept me in Edmonton is a Hydro-

Electric scheme of my own for Alberta involving an expenditure of twenty-five million dollars. I would like to know what you think of my ability to see it through. I have been spending a great deal of time and some money on this since November 1912, and I think that if I keep at it, I will see it through. To do this I may have to go in politics.

What I am thinking of doing now is to locate in some good town in Northern Alberta and start a hardware store and automobile supply. When a man has reached 39, has a good home all paid for, a good automobile and enjoy life in his own way, it is hard to break the tie, but I feel that I am losing opportunities which will never return if I stay in my present position much longer, unless, of course, my hydro scheme should come through.

I am anxiously awaiting your analysis and hope you will tell me which is the best line of work for me to follow. Yours truly, A. J. Cantin.

Over a year after sending off his form for character analysis to Dr. Katherine Blackford, my father received a lengthy reply about his character, aptitudes and vocational fitness. Dr. Blackford wrote:

On the intellectual side, you have a broad capable mind, good powers of observation and analysis, and good memory. You are therefore capable of obtaining facts and analyzing them, of understanding the laws and principles underlying them. Because of this, your mind is scientific, rather than philosophical in type, although you are by no means deficient in the meditative, reflective and philosophical. Your mind is practical in type, although your enthusiasm and impulsiveness may, at times, lead you into impractical courses of actions.

It would seem that your plan for a hardware store, in which you would handle not only hardware but electrical goods and automobile accessories is a good one. If however, you decide to embark upon this line of business, it would be well for you to associate with yourself, someone who is much more conservative, cautious, and capable of handling detail than you are. Such a partner would not only look after accounting, credits, collections, purchasing and general administration, but would also serve as a balance wheel upon your ambition, energy, enthusiasm and optimism. Your place in such an organization would be to furnish the ideas, to handle the advertising and meet with the public.

So far as your hydro-electric development scheme is concerned, it is a little difficult to give advice upon the meager data at hand. You may have many of the qualities which would be valuable to a man in promoting such a scheme, but in this also you would need to associate with you a man who was more conservative and better equipped with financial judgment. It would seem to me that it would be somewhat hazardous for you to count everything out at this time and devote yourself exclusively to this promotion of the hydro-electric development. Wishing you an abundance of health, prosperity and happiness, I am yours sincerely,

Katherine Blackford.

The letters that my father wrote to her and her replies are held together in a light green cover, the pages folded in two to fit inside an envelope. He underlined some parts of her reply in red, such as her advice "to leave questions of finance, accounting, collections, credit, and other related questions, to others." He also made note of the sentence, "There is just a little tendency on your part to think that distant pastures are greener than those where you are."

He wrote back to her on February 2, 1921, shortly after receiving her reply.

> This is a sad disappointment indeed. I thought I had all the characteristics of a millionaire. I thought the millionaire or temporal section of my head was well developed and think you have made a mistake when you say I am not strongly financial and commercial or perhaps I do not understand the full meaning of the words as you use them.
>
> Should I decide to make a change, (and by the way, I will try to control my impulsiveness from now on), but not go in business for myself, selling and advertising in electrical and mechanical lines would be a move in the right direction, would it not? On the whole your analysis is correct, but it was a new thing to me to learn that selling and advertising were my strong characteristics. Yours very truly, A. J. Cantin.

Dr. Katherine Blackford replied promptly:

> I do not see, Mr. Cantin, that you and I are so far apart in regard to your capacity as you seem to imagine. The temporal section of your head is indeed unusually well developed, and it is this development which indicates your ability to organize and plan, and your interest in financial operations. All these qualities are indeed necessary and usually found in the man who becomes a millionaire. They do not, however, indicate instinctively strong financial judgment. There are men, as you know, who are natural born money-makers, and turn everything they touch into dollars. Your mind is too broad and too active, and interested in too many different kinds of things to concentrate so intensely upon the making of dollars as these men do.

According to my mother, my father would make impulsive decisions about major matters without thinking things over. One day, long after he was no longer allowed to drive, he bought a small yellow car and had it delivered. Perhaps he bought it because it was a good price, or he thought a second car would be useful. My mother was furious. She accused him of buying things they didn't need and what were they going to do with a second car? She told him he had to get their money back and he said he would not. They argued and then she went downstairs to do her laundry.

It was not my argument, I was only eleven years old at the time, but I remember being angry with him, and, in imitation of my mother, I asked him whatever did he think he was doing buying that car? He did not argue with me, he tried to explain in a conciliatory voice, but I would not listen and I remember taking a stack of magazines that sat on the table and throwing them on the floor. He was just as surprised as I was by this action. I remember walking outside then, my knees weak, and going to hide in the hedges, the way I used to do when I was small.

What was I doing talking to my father like that? I had been taught to respect my elders and especially my parents. And suddenly, in a moment of clarity, I saw that my mother was unfair to my father and that she should not treat him in that way. I decided that, from that time on, I would stay out of my parents' arguments and I would try to see things from my father's point of view. It would not be easy, I had the habit of siding with my mother, but I could at least show him some respect.

As I read through my father's articles, I am reminded of the sound of his voice as he spoke about the importance of water conservation to visitors who came to our house. I can see him leaning forward with his hand emphasizing his words, when he said that the Americans would turn more and more to Canada to get their supply of water. For me, the unlimited supply that came from the faucets in the kitchen and bathroom was the only experience I had with water and I did not understand what he meant. But now as I read his article, almost seventy years after he wrote it, about the "Conservation of Water in Quebec," I am able to grasp what he was talking about. He wrote about the Quebec Streams Commission which, through a system of various power houses and regulating dams, assured a constant flow of water through some rivers to benefit the generation of electricity. After requesting that the same commission should exist in Alberta, he wrote these words which echo in my memory when I read them:

> We should not think of the present generation only; we should think that in the course of a century or two, North America will support a population of five to six hundred million people. Long before this, however, every cubic inch of water will be made to do double duty; that is, generate power and irrigate our land. The country south of us has about completed a thorough survey of the Columbia River at a cost of several millions of dollars and we here in Canada should think for the future generation and prepare for the day when all water available from the mountains has been made to do double duty. It is much cheaper to prepare for an emergency and meet it in a business-like way than it is to do things in great haste; it is not too early to think and act about it right now.

In 1955 and 1958, my father took two trips alone to Quebec to visit his family. My father wrote these words back to me and my mother:

Montreal, Quebec, October 27, 1955:

My dear Lucienne and Marie,

I arrived yesterday at 10 o'clock by plane and I found them all in good health. I am here for a day or two. Montreal has changed a bit but it is still as dirty as ever. Anna, Jos, and Alexina are well but have lots of pains and aches otherwise they are well. I expect to leave here tomorrow or Saturday so write me in Sherbrooke. I do not know just when I will return. A big kiss to each of you and do not worry my health is good. With most sincere love to you both, Papa.

From the second trip, he wrote:

November 21, 1958:

Dear Lucienne and Marie,

A few words to give you the latest of the trip. I will leave here Saturday morning for Ottawa. I have seen all of the family. Clara possibly the poorest in health but with the best management. I do not care to say all I want to, she might see it and there would be friction. I am glad I have made the trip but I want you to prevent me from making another trip to Quebec. I think if we go somewhere again it will be to Hawahi. I hope Marie has been a good girl. I do not know what to buy for her. I will try to get something appropriate. I am anxious to be home again and see my own sweethearts. With the best of love to both of you. Your loving father and husband, Arthur.

The day is sunny and hot as my husband and I drive towards Bighorn Dam, built in 1972, twenty miles from Nordegg, in a remote part of the Alberta foothills. I want to find out about these dams, the prospect of which intrigued my father for more than fifty years. We stop at a viewpoint overlooking the dam and gaze down at the dark blue water of Abraham Lake, thirty kilometers long. It is the longest man-made lake in Alberta, held in place by the mountains at its side and the cement rim of the dam that is level with the horizon. A steel tipi, painted brown and set in concrete, has been erected to commemorate the ancient Indian lands and burial sites that have been flooded by the building of this artificial mountain which is the dam. With the cooperation of the Stoney Indian tribes, the graves of their people were moved to higher ground before the dam was built. The shoreline looks as if it has always been there; the land has adapted to the flooding.

Grasshoppers scatter with each step we take through the dry grass as we walk to the edge of the lake. A lighthouse-shaped structure juts out of the water, the penstock that directs the flow to the power house, which is hidden from view, below the horizon of water held back by the dam. A sign tells visitors to look down another side of the valley to the spillway. Should the wall of the dam burst, the sign says, the water would be directed down this side of the valley and prevent complete destruction of the area. This is an aspect of dam-building that my father did not discuss.

We drive down a steep road to find the power plant, an innocuous building at the bottom of the smooth gravel abutment which holds back the valley of water on the other side. I had been expecting something bigger and more dramatic, considering the height of the dam and the thirty– kilometer lake. The North Saskatchewan River, blue and clear, rushes out from underneath the power plant. Further downstream, three fishermen cast their lines into the quieter water. One boy holds up his string of fish for us to see.

We walk toward the small door of the plant, past the black steel towers holding electric lines and bulbous insulators. We peer into the darkened interior of the building where two round green structures appear to be the only objects. As we step inside, we hear the low hum of heavy machinery and feel the vibration of the floor, as if the earth is trembling with restrained power. Our guide, who introduces himself as Shawn, waves us towards his office, which is set up with desks and drafting tables. A grey steel panel with dials and switches looks exactly like the electric panels in my father's pictures. Shawn shows us a graph on a slowly moving piece of paper over which a red needle moves jerkily. He explains, "This shows how much power is being generated by the one turbine that is switched on at this time. Do you see the peaks here? That's the noon-hour rush when people are using their stoves and microwaves to heat up lunch."

We start the tour outside and he shows us the diversion tunnel that carried the water of the river until the gap in the valley could be filled with earth and the "curtain wall" of concrete could be built.

This was a new technique of building dams developed in the 1960s to deal with the problem of the porosity of the soil. In that situation, water could gradually seep into the sides of the dam, weakening the structure and eventually bringing down the dam. I remember that my father was aware of this problem as he dug his pits on Grand Island in the Athabasca River.

The diversion pipe, as tall as a four-storey building, carried the flow of the whole river for a time, and remains intact in the side of the mountain behind the power plant. Water drips and echoes in the darkness and trickles out of the tunnel, even though the pipe was sealed when the dam was opened. Small pine trees are planted in the former riverbed of the North Saskatchewan River and intense heat radiates from the smooth inclined gravel and earth mound that holds back the reservoir.

Shawn explains that in the winter the sheet ice freezes up on the surface of the lake. By spring, the water level can have dropped as much as one hundred feet because it is continuously used to generate power. "At the end of winter, you can see the sheet ice caught on the shore at the edges of the reservoir and it looks like giant window panes on hinges angling down as the water level drops. Then, the warm weather arrives and the lake reservoir fills up again."

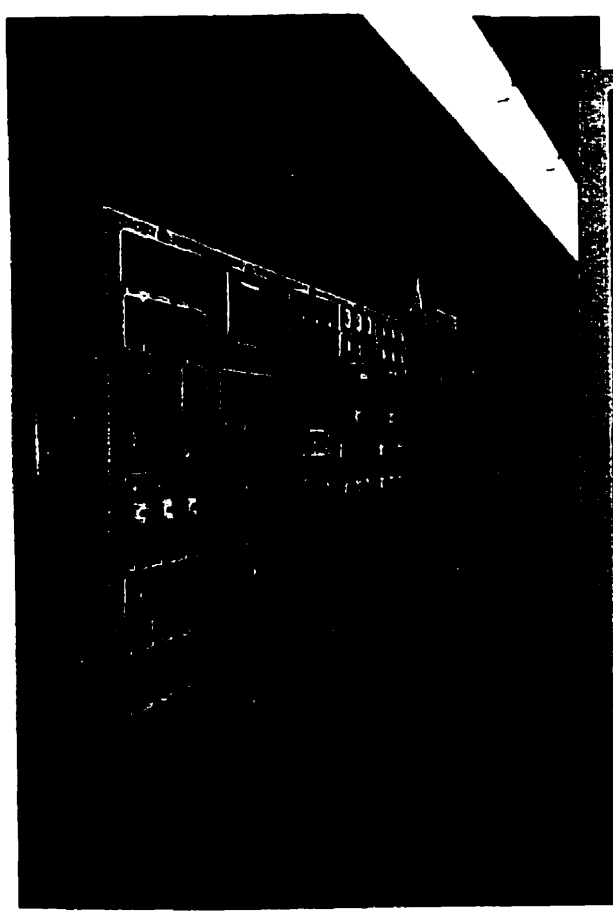
When we enter the lowest part of the power plant, Shawn shows us the room of anchors that hold the building solid against the force of the water. Set deep in the earth and rock behind the power plant, the anchors are squares of metal held in solid wedges of concrete with steel cables that can be tightened. Every year engineers come to check how much the concrete has moved and to re-tighten the cables of the fifty-three anchors. These are the most important components in the building; they prevent the plant from being swept away down the river. Here, below the turbines, close to the anchors, we can feel the earth vibrating beneath our feet.

We climb metal stairs to the next level, under the turbines, where the two penstock carry the flow of water into the power plant. The wall between the penstock is a giant concrete

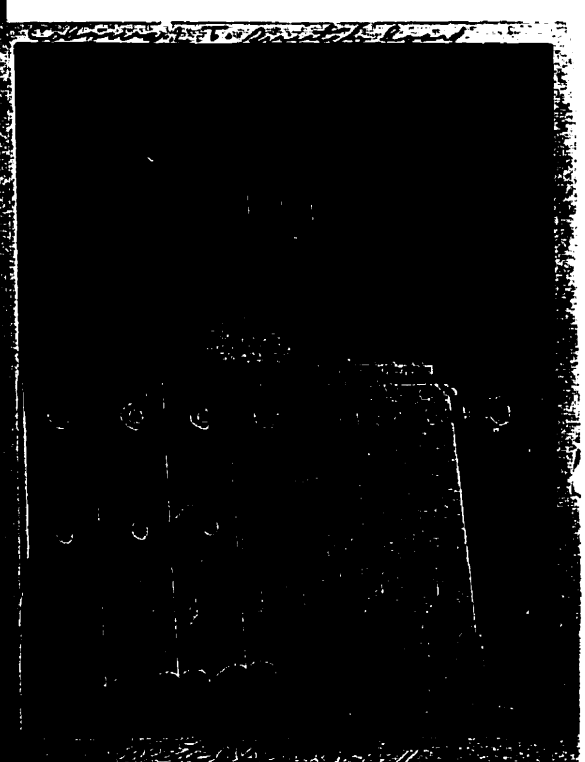
wedge for strength; at the tip, however, there is green fungus and glistening moisture where the water has seeped in. Shawn explains that whenever one penstock has to be repaired, the other one is shut down and a huge "stopper" is secured onto the end of it. The stopper, leaning against the wall, is ten feet high, and black crayon writing on it proclaims that it weighs 17,000 pounds. The outside of the stopper is dotted by large bolts which are tightened by a giant wrench five feet long, hanging on a wall of tools nearby.

We walk beside long rectangular structures with dials and large wires coming out of the top: the place where electricity is sent out. My father labeled these "switchboards" in his album, and I could put the picture that I take next to his pictures and not know the difference between them. There is a chill in the air here from the cold water flowing through and beneath the plant.

Big Horn Dam, Alberta, 1998



Cobourg, Ontario, 1911



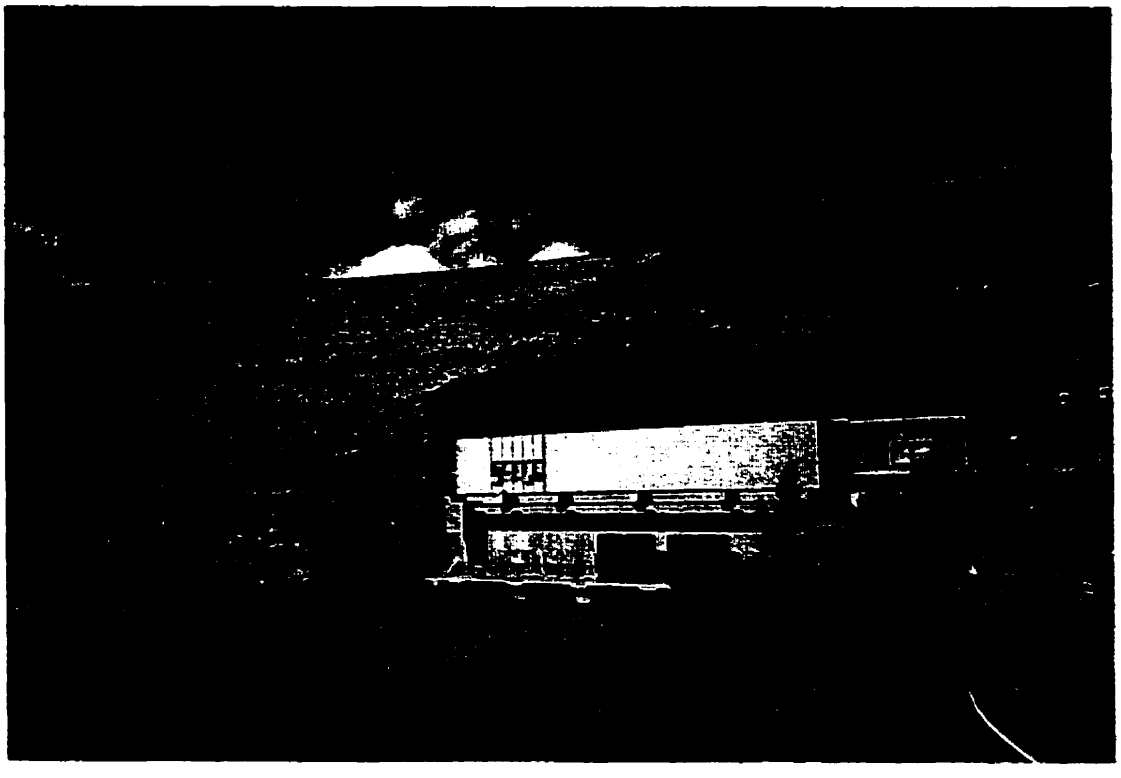
We go up to another level underneath the green turbines to an area enclosed by walls that are six feet thick. The sound of the water as it rushes into the turbines loudly proclaims its strength. A sign by the entrance recommends earplugs but Shawn motions us to follow him. We walk on a narrow metal walkway into the circular room that encloses one of the turbines. Everything is painted a bright orange except for the round stainless steel shaft that runs up to the green turbines on the floor above. Shawn indicates that we can reach down and touch the orange levers, like giant centipede legs, moving very slightly with the opening and closing of the vanes by the rushing water. The metal is cold and damp, and I feel as if I am touching some subterranean monster from the time of the dinosaurs. We watch as the legs angle one way and then recede. Shawn shouts over the sound of the water that the turbines turn at a constant rate of 180 revolutions per minute. When more power is needed, the electromagnetic field is increased, not the rate of revolutions. As we step out on the narrow walkway, Shawn adds, "That's the good thing about hydroelectricity. When the grid needs more power, we simply turn on the other turbine and it provides power right away. With coal-fired plants, it takes a lot more time to heat everything up."

We re-emerge into the warm sunlight on a deck directly above the swirling water that exits from the plant. This is the advantage of hydro-electricity that my father noted, that the water is basically unaltered after generating power—although it is oxygenated and warmer than free-flow water—and can continue along its natural way to the ocean. Shawn tells us that when the dam was built, the engineers used to stop the flow of the river completely in order to service the dam, but they realized that this was disastrous to the fish below the dam. Now when the flow of the water is drastically reduced, a man walks along the banks and throws the fish caught in pools back into the river. He explains that the ecology of the land is more important

than it used to be twenty-five years ago when the dam was built. At that time, as in my father's time, no thought was given about the possible damage to the land and animals.

I ask Shawn why there was never a provincial power scheme similar to the one that existed in Ontario and why the Alberta government never became involved. I ask him why my father's ideas were ignored. He thinks about it a moment and then says:

> Out here in the west, power stayed in the hands of private individuals; westerners tend to be more independent and maybe distrustful of government. Too, Alberta had lots of coal and there wasn't much need for power in a sparsely populated province. From what you've told me, your father advocated developing several rivers in the mountains. You know that many provincial headwaters were designated as national parks and so no development was allowed.



From the "Report on the Possibilities of Hydro-Electrical Development" by A.J. Cantin:

> One of the problems which confronts the engineer in the design of a water-power development in Canada is the method to be adopted for the eliminating or minimizing the effect of ice upon plant operation and power production. So far no great trouble has been experienced in operating the plant on the Bow River due to ice blocking the water entrances, nevertheless the presence of ice in the river has a marked effect on power production.
>
> There are three kinds of ice--sheet ice, frazil ice and anchor ice--which can affect the operation of water power plants. Sheet ice is that kind of ice which is formed upon the surface of lakes, smooth-flowing rivers, ponds, etc. The presence of any sheet ice in a river immediately above a power plant has a beneficial effect upon its operation. Frazil ice, known also as "slush ice, is perhaps the ice formation which has the most serious effects upon water-power operations. It is always formed in the open channels where the current is too swift to allow the formation of the sheet ice. The ice crystals rapidly become distributed throughout the whole body of water; this gives rise to the saying that the water is "thick." And finally, anchor ice, ground ice, the German name "Grundeis" and the French-Canadian term "moutonne" are among the many names given this particular form of ice. This ice forms rapidly on clear cold nights and when the sun appears in the morning, the ice becomes loosened from the bottom and rises to the surface, its appearance when floating resembling the backs of sheep; hence the French-Canadian term.

Notes in the "Canadian Pocket Diary" for January 29 to October 13, 1924:

January 29: Paid $2.00 dog tax on Rex, our Chesapeake Bay. I shall not buy a car this year unless an almost new second hand car at 50% or less of its value. In the meantime, this is the auto maintenance that was required on my five year old Grey Dort Automobile: Radiator repaired, New timing gear and tightening main bearing $35.00. New Gasket $2.00, New Clutch leather $2.75; Rear Spring Reset $7.00, Steering gear $2.24; New top, New Battery, New Pan, New seat cover.

April 24: Song Sparrows arrived today. April 25: Saw Robins today.

June 18: Bought tent, $72.00.

Schedule of travel to inspect electricity plants: June 23 to 28: Camrose, Stettler, Red Deer, Wetaskiwin. July 7 to 12: Fort Saskatchewan, Lamont, Mundare, Vegreville, Vermilion, Hardistry, Camrose. August 19 to 28: Wetaskiwin, Ponoka, Lacombe, Red Deer, Bashaw, Stettler, Botha, Banff.

September: Son Art started at the Jesuit College. In spite of the extra expense, I am pleased that he has the opportunity for a classical education in Alberta in French and with the priests who will surely help my son go on to a higher education.

October 13: I hereby swear that I shall never go out hunting in the same camp with P. Seager.

I had a brother once. Not a regular brother, one that you grow up with in the same house, but a much older brother born to my father and his first wife in 1910, thirty-eight years before I was born. There are not many pictures taken of my brother and me together, but there is one of us when I am about a year old. It is taken outside, where the wind has tousled his hair, and he holds me so that our faces are at the same level.

I remember realizing that I had a brother one day just after I had started school when my mother said that Arthur Junior, my half-brother, was coming to visit my father. My first reaction was delight that I was not alone in the family, because all my classmates at Grandin School had brothers and sisters. However, my knowing about him did not alter the situation that his visits were brief and irregular, with my mother appealing with him not to upset his

father. The two topics guaranteed to cause an argument were my father's having married my mother and having a child, and, on my father's side, Art's choice of wife. My father had chosen a woman from Quebec for my brother—she had been the nurse who had taken care of his mother Virginie in her last years—but my brother was an independent thinker, just like his father, and refused to even consider her. During my brother's visits, my mother's warnings went unheeded: most of their talks ended with a heated argument and my father emerging from the living room, his face red and his hands trembling. My mother would say to my brother, "Why do you do that? Why do you always upset him? Don't you know about his high blood pressure?" Then I would not see him for a long time.

Twenty years later, when I was a married woman, I wanted to know my brother Art and his wife, Pat, and so I invited them for supper. The argument between father and son was not mine and I was determined to stay neutral, to start a new relationship. He was pleased to be invited and stood before me at the door, a portly man of florid complexion, about my height. His wife was a slender, well-dressed woman. My brother looked directly at me with blue eyes that startled me because they were my father's eyes. He wore a French tam, a souvenir of his trip to France, where, he told us, he had visited a city north of Paris that may have been where the family name of Cantin, or Quentin, came from.

I did not have to worry about what we would talk about. He was a garrulous person, with varied interests and a storyteller's flair. He expounded at length about his search for the Lost Lemon Mine in the mountains of southern Alberta. I realized that he had inherited an adventurous spirit and love of the mountains from my father.

His wife Pat had told me he was diabetic, and so in planning supper, I had found a recipe for a dessert made with an artificial sweetener. At one point as we ate the dessert, his wife said, "Wasn't that good of your sister to make you a special dessert?" And I realized that I had never heard myself called "sister" before.

My brother Art and I then made an effort to keep in touch. There was a great difference in our ages; now that I was thirty, he was sixty-eight, retired, with three grown children and the grandfather of six. We would talk on the phone once or twice a year, long drawn-out conversations as if we were catching up on the years between us. He would tell me about the times he went hunting in the mountains with his father, my father, and how his search for the lost gold mine was going. He used colourful language, describing an inept person as one who "couldn't pour piss out of a boot with the directions stamped on it." And people didn't argue, they "lipped off."

One of the questions he asked me was if I had a box of negatives that belonged to his Dad because he wanted to have them. For a long time I did not know the box existed because it was stored in my mother's closet. But one day she pulled out the negatives and asked if I would be interested in looking through them. In this way, I discovered a link to my father's past, the reversed images of what had been, but I did not know the places or the people.

Once, during a long conversation with my brother, I asked if I could see the picture albums that my mother told me he had borrowed from my father. He said without hesitation, "No, those are personal family pictures." And I answered back, the first time I ever showed my irritation towards him, "But I'm part of the family! Who do you think I am?" and that shut him up, him the loquacious, say-it-like-it-is person. He was surprised that his polite sister would stand up to him.

We continued with our conversations after that, but he didn't let me see the picture album and I didn't show him the box of negatives. We held two pieces of the same puzzle that would not be joined in his lifetime.

One day, during one of the yearly conversations with my brother, I mentioned that I had found a picture of a big dog pulling a sled in front of the Brick House on 115 Street. Could that be the hunting dog that I had heard about? He said yes, and then told me a story about Rex:

> Well, you see, we had this Chesapeake Bay dog Dad bought for hunting. A good dog but with a mind of his own. Now that's not what you want in a hunting dog who is kept to retrieve game for the hunter. So Dad and I decided we had to do something about it if we were going to keep him. We took him out hunting one time and Dad loaded some kind of pellet in a light firing gun and we waited for him to disobey. The next time we called Rex and he didn't come back, my Dad aimed carefully and shot him in the rump, just to hurt him a little... You should have seen the expression on that dog's face! It was sort of to the effect, "How the hell can that bugger reach me over here?" And then that dog turned around and came back. It worked though. We never had much trouble with him after that.

On January 1, 1927, when my brother Art was sixteen years old, he signed an agreement with his father:

> It is hereby agreed between A.J. Cantin Senior and A.J. Cantin Junior, that the said Junior will study at home at least two hours a day on school days and one hour on Sundays and Holidays.
>
> It is agreed that Junior will work conscientiously to enter the University in the next eighteen months.
>
> It is agreed that Junior will avoid bad companion and the company of girls, specially those who run after him.
>
> It is agreed that Junior will refrain from smoking and the use of alcoholic liquor until the age of graduation from the university.
>
> It is agreed that Junior will not go out more than two nights a week and to be home not later that ten o'clock on weekdays and ten thirty p.m. on Saturday.
>
> I agree to make it my most important business to complete my education.
>
> It is agreed that Senior will pay Junior $5.00 in cash each time that he comes first or second in his monthly report. Dated at Edmonton this 1st day of January, 1927, signed A.J. Cantin and Arthur J. Cantin, Sr..

I was eight years old when I realized that doing well in school would be to my advantage. My first few years were spent daydreaming out the tall windows of Grandin School, and I had trouble paying attention to what the teacher was saying. But when my father said that he would pay me for good marks, I made an effort to listen and discovered that it was easier to learn something than to wait for the clock to tick to the end of class. I could finally write a test without that panicked feeling of not knowing anything on the paper. I strove to get the maximum number of H's, which signified honors, but I did get something for the A's as well.

I remember my father placing his glasses on his nose and carefully pulling out my report card from the brown envelope. He would examine my marks, nodding with satisfaction that I always had H in spelling and math. The French report card was separate from the English one and he always studied that one with more care. He wanted me to be as proficient in French as in English because he said that a man or woman with two languages was worth two people. Although we always spoke French at home, my father's facility with the two languages meant that sometimes he slipped into English without realizing it. My mother would then gently remind him that he should speak French in front of me.

"Well, my dear. That is a very satisfactory report card. You have brought up your grammar mark from a B to an A. Very good progress. Maybe next time you'll get an H."

Then he would pull out his wallet from his back pocket and look through it, taking out a five-dollar bill or even a ten-dollar bill.

"Thank you, Papa," I would say and give him a hug. "Next time I'll do even better." This was a lot of money to me and I looked forward to going shopping with my mother on Saturday and choosing whatever I wanted. I remember that one of the first things I bought, when I was still shorter than the sales counter, was a "Reliable" plastic washing machine which had a little hose to drain the water and an arm to agitate the clothes. I thought it was the dandiest toy I had ever seen, just like my mother's washing machine in the basement.

On March 28, 1928, my father bought his son his first motorcycle, an Indian Chief 74. In the spring of 1929, when Art was nineteen, they obtained an old sidecar and decided to attempt a trip from Edmonton to Jasper. The road west of Edmonton existed only as far as Evansburg. West of this town, ran the abandoned railroad grades of the defunct Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific railways. The crossties had been removed and the gravel roadbed leveled with horse-drawn graders to make a good though narrow road that ended at Obed. There, men working on the construction of the road suggested that my father and Art try the tote roads that had been built during the construction of the railways to cut and haul the many thousands of crossties essential to the laying of rails.

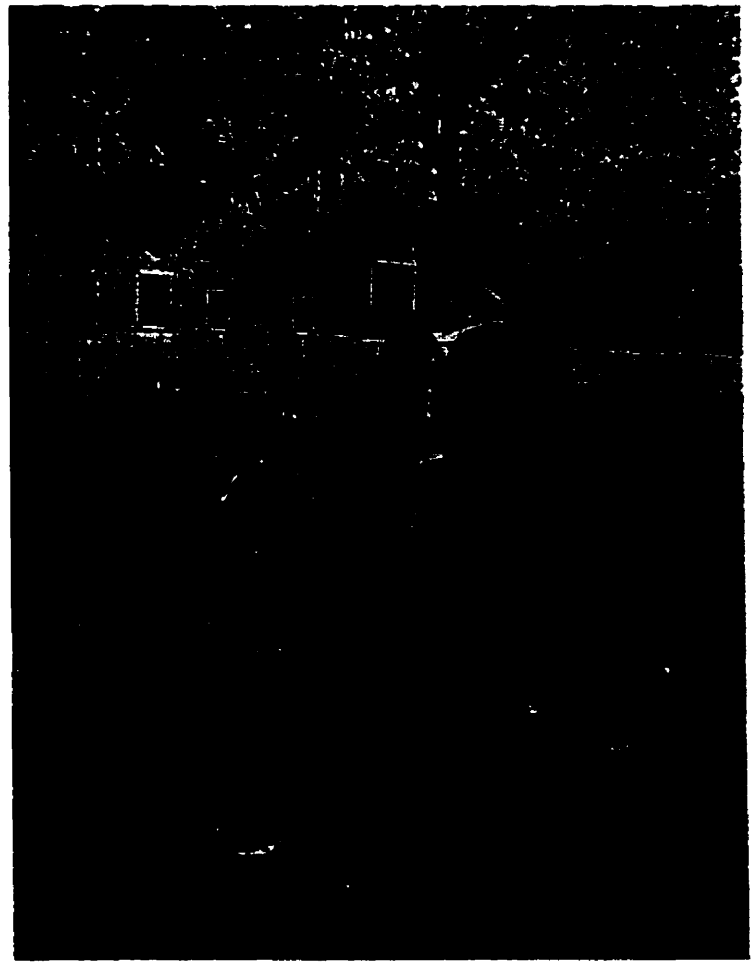
My brother Art wrote of the experience with his Dad:

> As we arrived at a place where a fairly good wagon road wound down into the Athabasca River valley, a few scant miles from Hinton, a short but very heavy rain made the road slippery and impassable. We had just crossed the abandoned roadbed of the CNR near the deserted settlement of Dalehurst, and so decided to return there. There were perhaps a half dozen one and two room shacks that probably were used by the section hands who maintained the roadbed. Dad and I picked a shack that had wooden bunks and a tin stove to spend the night.
>
> But our troubles were just beginning. On checking the oil tank, I discovered that it was empty. A small valve that metered the oil into the engine had picked up a piece of grit. This caused the lubricant to drain into the crankcase and then be blown out under the motor through the breather tube. The nearest oil was in Hinton, at least ten miles away. I searched the empty cabins, hoping to find a tin of lubricant that had been left behind. The shed and boxes that might have held a partially filled can

were bare. But, on a high shelf in a cupboard I found a nearly full quart bottle of medicinal castor oil, which in the early days was extensively used in high-performance engines. I poured our precious quart of lube into the tank.

Early next morning, Dad and I elected to turn back; we were adventurers, we decided, not fools. We chose to try the abandoned railway grade back to Obed, as the distance along the right of way was less than half of that which we had traveled over the tote roads. There was just one catch: while the rails were long gone, the crossties were still in place. On some stretches of roadbed the gravel ballast was level with the top of the ties, but along others it was whump, whump, whump as the bike and sidecar banged along. Slightly rattled, we finally made it back to Obed...

Motorcycle hill-climbing was popular in Edmonton as early as the 1920s and the steep slopes of the Saskatchewan River valley were ideal for the sport. My brother Art started hill-climbing in 1929, when he was nineteen, and developed his skills until 1937, when he won the Western Canadian Hill-Climbing Championship. He rode a 1928 Harley-Davidson JDH outfitted with a "home-brewed" tire for better traction and won in the 74 cubic inch class.



Shortly after the race, he dismantled the Harley-Davidson and it stayed in pieces until his son Bob put it back together for a display about motorcycles at the Reynolds-Alberta Museum. Bob is one of my brother's three children, and in the web of family relationships, he is my nephew, twelve years older than I am.

When he is assembling the motorcycle, Bob phones me to ask if I have any pictures of his dad at the hill-climbing races. I promise to look through the negatives and see what I can find. During our conversation, I tell him that I am researching my father's life and that his dad would not let me see the family albums because he did not consider me a part of the family. Bob is surprised at this and says,

> That's not true. I remember it was a big deal when you were born. We all went over to see you and everyone wanted to hold you. Grampa, your dad, went and sat in the living room. I guess he was sulking because no one paid him any attention. Oh, I think my dad wanted to include you in lots of things but your mother sort of guarded you. I think she was afraid we were going to take you away...

I find a few small pictures that are motorcycle-related, have them enlarged, and invite my nephew for lunch. He comes to the door carrying a large bag. He stands in the entrance, awkward, and we look at each other. He is a fifty-eight year old man, grey and balding, with the light blue eyes and rounded face of his father and grandfather. Again, I am struck by how much he resembles my father: the blue eyes must have run in the males of the family. I kiss his cheek and take his coat and invite him into the kitchen where the soup is simmering.

The large bag contains a coil of moose sausage from one of his hunting trips and I realize that he is a hunter as his father and grand-father were. Then he pulls out two ancient leather-covered photo albums that I have never seen. I give him the pictures of motorcycles and prepare to look quickly through the albums to see what I can remember before he takes them back with him. But he smiles and says, "You can borrow them while you're doing your story about your father. Maybe they'll help you."

The precious albums that reveal so much about my father's life are lent to me by his grandson.

My brother had started his own business in pressure services and was the first person to use and supply scuba-diving gear in Edmonton. He used the equipment in his underwater salvage sideline. In the winter of 1960, he invited my mother and me to come to one of his scuba-diving classes at Strathcona Pool. This required driving to the south side of Edmonton in the dark, which my mother did not like to do. However, she planned her route carefully and we arrived at the class where people in black wet suits stood on the edge of the pool while others balanced on the edge before rolling in backwards.

My mother and I hurried to change into our swimsuits and came out to the deck, where my brother Art greeted us. "I'm so glad you could come, Lucienne, and bring Marie." He handed me an oval-shaped diving mask and blue flippers, just my size. "Here, these are for you. From me. The first thing you do to keep your mask clear is to spit in it, like this." He showed us what to do in his own mask.

He produced a mask for my mother as well, and then two compressed air tanks with harnesses. He showed us how to handle the tanks and breathe through the mouthpiece, and how to swim with flippers. After he made one of his students demonstrate what he wanted us to do, he strapped an air tank to my back and brought me down to the deep end. He placed me in position on the edge of the pool, backwards, and directed me to squat down and roll in.

I remember standing on the bottom of the pool with a feeling of panic that the air would stop suddenly. But my brother was there and he held one of my hands until I relaxed and realized that it was easy to breathe through my mouth. The water was clear and warm and filled with frog-like people who moved slowly and gracefully with air tanks on their backs and black tubes extending from the back of their necks to their mouths. It was a quiet world down under the water except for the sound of my breath as it bubbled up. I remember that I was happy to spend time with my brother, and hoped that he would show me everything he knew about scuba diving so that we could do something together.

There are several pictures in my father's photo album of his hunting and camping trips with his son. The family started camping 1919, because there is a picture of my father, Marie-Louise, Art and a friend, standing in front of a tent in a picture labeled, "our first camp, Big Lake near St. Albert." Other pictures show that the family camped at Egg Lake, Red Pass Junction, B.C., Jasper, Edson, Banff and Calgary. One picture of their camp shows my father's mother, Virginie Cantin, with Marie-Louise and Art, standing in front of their tent and next to the car and is labeled "our camp at Bar Harbor near Buffalo Lake, Sept. 1920."

In another picture, labeled "Partridges, October 1921," dozens of prairie chickens are hung in two rows on the side of the car. Art, eleven years old, is proudly cradling a rifle in his arms, just like his father, who stands at the front of the car, smiling proudly.

Partridges Oct. 1921

One day in July 1983, I received a call from my brother's daughter, Patsy, my niece, telling me that Art had suffered a massive heart attack that had damaged his heart irreparably, and that he was in intensive care at the hospital. She said that he could live another week, but that if I wanted to see him, I should go now. I remember thinking that it could not be true that he was dying.

So I went to intensive care at the Misericordia Hospital and waited in a small holding room with other people who were waiting for news of the very sick and dying. I had to say my name into an intercom before I went in, and I said, "This is Marie Moser and I'm here to see Arthur Cantin." When they asked what relation I was, I said, "I'm Mr. Cantin's mother, I mean, sister..." and flushed as three bowed heads lifted up to look at me. "You forget who you are in a place like this," I said, and one man nodded sympathetically.

I had to put on a hospital gown, and then I was taken to where my brother lay. He was awake as I walked up to him and his face seemed to light up when he said, "Hello, Marie. I'm so glad you could come." He had tubes looped around his face running to his nose for oxygen and an intravenous tube running to his left arm. He had rosary beads wound around that hand. His heart beat in an erratic green line on the heart monitor. I bent over to kiss his cheek and he smiled. I took his hand and held it and realized that his fingers were swollen.

He told me what had happened when he had the heart attack in hospital and what the doctors had done to revive him; he described how intensely painful the electric shock revival had been. Then he told me again about his disapproval of what his father, my father had done. "I told Dad he shouldn't get married again, but he wouldn't listen, and when he told me his wife was pregnant I said what was he doing having a child at that age, what would happen to you?"

He had never spoken of this to me, but I knew that this was one of the things he had argued about with my father.

"Actually, Art, I'm glad I was born. I didn't know I had such an old father when I was growing up. I thought it was kind of neat to come home from school and find my Papa there. I probably spent more time with my father than most kids."

"Is that really how it was?" He smiled, perhaps not believing me, then waved away what I said with a motion of his hand. "It's all past now, isn't it? But you know what I really regret? That you weren't allowed to know my kids. I wanted to include you, but your mother wouldn't let you."

"I didn't know," I said, "that you wanted me around."

"And another thing, I didn't want him to make the same mistakes with you that he made with me. I was alarmed they were sending you to the convent. I thought that would ruin you for sure. My dad sent me to that Jesuit College, had great ambitions for me, the great French Hope. Worst experience of my life. Those priests knew how to kowtow to the guys whose fathers were doctors or lawyers, but I was just the son of a lowly civil servant. They made you learn all that Greek and Latin....God, I hated it."

"I was at the convent only six months when I was about ten years old. I didn't fit in either, you'll be pleased to know. But my parents didn't force me to go when it didn't work out."

"Only six months? Well, maybe there's hope for you after all." He laughed softly, and I could see the agitated beating of his heart line on the monitor.

We lapsed into silence then. He was an old man of seventy-three and now he lay dying just as my father had, sixteen years before. My brother had eyelids that drooped slightly at the corners, and the folds in his cheeks around his mouth were the same as my father's. I wondered whom I would resemble when I reached seventy-three.

My brother had been writing articles for the Alberta Motor Association magazine about early driving in the province. An interest in history and writing was something we discovered

we had in common at these last moments. I spoke about how we would continue to write after he got out of the hospital. He stopped and looked at me then and said, "You talk as if I'm going to get out of here."

"Well, maybe the damage isn't as bad as the doctors say." Part of me still held hope that I would have time to know my brother. He shook his head and looked away from me.

When I was a small girl, I had a favorite blanket. It was about two by three feet in size, with a worn pink flannel backing and a pink ruffled edging. An assortment of puffed velvet balls were sewn on the top. The small balls had long ago collapsed into button shapes, but their variety of colour was still visible. My mother used it to cover me when I was cold, wrapping it around my shoulders, and I used it in the car when I slept while we traveled.

I did not know where the blanket came from until the last time I visited my brother in the hospital and he asked me if I had ever seen a pink blanket with velvet tufts sewn on to it. I thought for a moment and then realized that he meant the small blanket from my childhood. "Yes," I said, "I know which blanket you mean."

"My mother sewed that for me when I was a baby," he said. "I would have liked to have had it at one time, but it doesn't matter any more."

"I didn't know that was your blanket. My mother used it for me and never mentioned where it came from. I have a picture taken with it when I was about three, wrapped in it, wearing my mother's shoes, with a funny hat on my head."

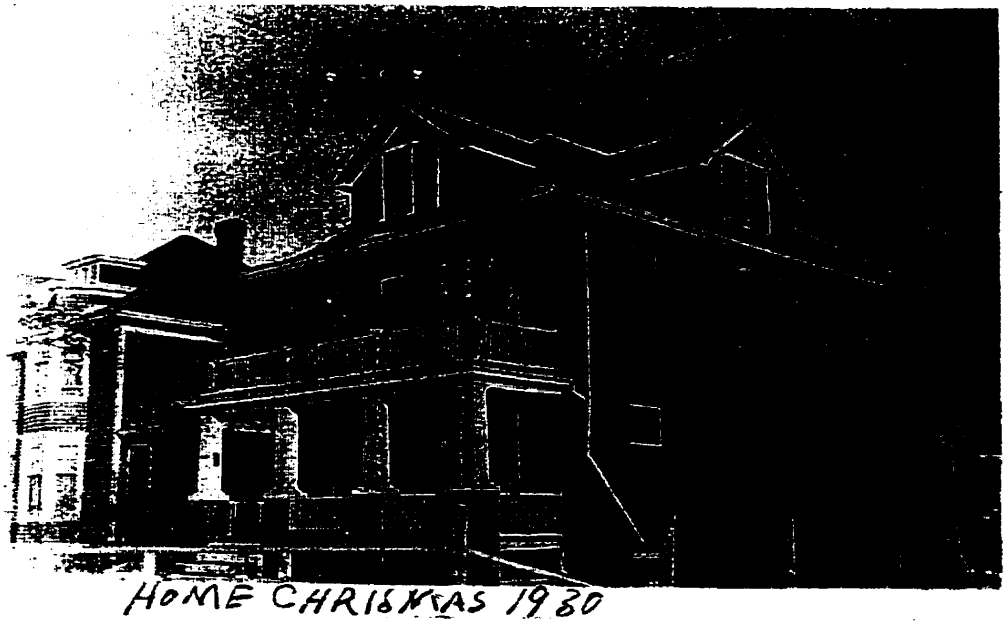
The small blanket with the worn-out tufts is my link to my brother now. The fact that it is pink is not surprising because in Catholic families at the beginning of the twentieth century, pink was the color of St. Joseph and was used for baby boys, while blue was the color of the Virgin Mary and was used for baby girls. The colors had reversed themselves by the time I was born, thirty-eight years after my brother. My father's first wife, Marie-Louise, must have liked to sew, and in my imagination, I can see her fingers carefully holding the puffs of velvet filled with cotton batting and sewing them individually on the blanket. My mother found the blanket in Marie-Louise's trunks and decided to use it for me, perhaps not realizing its significance. She did not tell me that "la première femme à Papa" had made it.

My brother and I were covered by a blanket his mother had made for him, her one surviving child. If I had known this before it was too late to give it back to him, would I have parted with it? It was as much mine as it was his. Just as our father was.

My brother passed away shortly after that last visit, on July 15, 1983.

In 1923, my father was forty-two years old and had lived in Edmonton for eleven years. In his "Canadian Pocket Diary" for April 8, he wrote that the robins arrived and that he heard wild geese but could not see them. On May 15, he notes that the wrens arrived. On June 7, he reported:

> I am pleased to say that I paid the contractor J.O. Durocher $800 to start on the construction of my house on 115 street. It gives a man a sense of satisfaction to see something he has planned and worked toward finally go into the first steps of construction. I drew my blueprints after studying several plans and can say that it is an imposing double house to be constructed of brick. In this way, I will be able to rent one half of the house which will help to pay for it. The banks of the North Saskatchewan are riddled with abandoned coal mines and knowing of one only a few streets away, care had to be taken so that the house did not collapse in a few years. With this in mind, very deep footings were requested of the contractor. I am taking pictures as the house is constructed to send them to the family down east to show them how well the black sheep is doing out here in the far west.



HOME CHRISTMAS 1980

When my father built the Brick House on 115 Street, he was moving his family into the heart of the French-Canadian district in Edmonton, surrounded by all the institutions that would ensure the survival of the culture. The house was five streets from the silver-painted bell tower of St. Joachim Catholic Church which had been calling its parishioners to pray since 1899. The parish had existed in two other buildings since first being established in Fort Edmonton in 1853 to minister to the mostly French-speaking population of the Fort at that time. Next to the church there stood a seminary to educate priests, and down the street from that was the General Hospital, founded by the Grey Nuns in 1895. The Cloister of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, a contemplative order of nuns, was across the street from the hospital. One block west of the convent stood the Misericordia Hospital, built by the Sisters of Mercy. And finally, next to bilingual Grandin School, stood the convent of teaching nuns, the Faithful Companions of Jesus.

Not far away from that district, the Jesuit College, located at 128 St. and 114 Ave., had opened its doors in 1913. Its aim was to offer a classical education in the French language to those parents who desired such an education for their sons without having to send them to Quebec. The college was affiliated with the Arts Department of Laval University in Quebec City. The community hoped that the college would become a training ground for the elite who would lead the French-Canadians in Alberta.

My father involved himself in the 1920s with the preservation of this culture. In 1925, the French-Canadian community saw a need for a strong lay voice to promote their interests in the face of what seemed to be prejudice against the French-speaking clergy by an Irish bishop in Edmonton. A convention of four hundred delegates met on December 13, 1925 to discuss this issue. My father's name, Arthur J. Cantin, appears on the provisional executive of twenty-two people that was chosen at that time. Then on July 17, 1926, "l'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta" was officially founded and a constitution drawn up. The province was to be organized around parish circles, thus keeping the preservation of French-Canadian identity in the hands of the Catholic Church.

My father used to tell the story of his parish priest in Quebec preaching from the pulpit. He warned his congregation that if they voted for Wilfred Laurier they would surely all go to hell. My father, who was a staunch Liberal all of his life, deplored this interference of the church in secular matters. He was aware of how many aspects of life in Quebec were controlled by the Catholic Church, and perhaps one of the reasons he came to the west was to acquire some freedom from that hold. Although my father involved himself at first with an organization that assured the survival of the culture, I could find no other reference to his involvement later on.

At the back of his diary, my father had written some of his predictions as to the outcome of certain elections and the First World War. As well, on July 7, 1916, under the heading of "A Prophecy," my father wrote:

> A rebellion against the Catholic clergy will take place in Quebec. It may be a bloody affair or a passive revolt, same as was experienced in France in the first few years of this century. In making a prediction of this nature, it is hard to say the year, but I think this will take place in the later part of this century.

Underneath this prediction, my father wrote another comment many years later:

> November 15, 1961: As the date above was written 45 years ago, I should state that a few years ago a Franciscan father told me this, "Cantin, after preaching retreats in Quebec for two years, I feel that some day, Quebec will revolt against the Catholic Church, and that will be terrible. I hope I will not see it." I think the time is coming soon.

In July 1923, my mother Lucienne Pagé had finished all of the eight grades offered at Bull Creek School, near Killarney Lake in northeastern Alberta where she had grown up, and then she wondered what she would do with her life. She came to Edmonton with her sister Alice to visit a friend from the region, Laura Roy, who was in training to become a nurse at the General Hospital. Laura took the two of them on a tour of the nurse's residence and the hospital. When they came to the nursery and my mother saw that as a nurse she could look after the babies, she decided that she would like to enter that profession. She was introduced to Sister Wagner, the superintendent of nurses, who invited her to come in September and begin her training.

This was unusual for a woman of that time, leaving home to study, instead of getting married. Her parents did not take her too seriously, but they let her go into training because they thought she would be too lonesome and soon return home. But their attitude only increased my mother's determination to stay, in spite of the convent-like discipline required of nurses-in-training. For my mother, as for all students, a typical day was composed of twelve hours of work extending from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., with one–half hour for dinner and supper and two hours for a lecture during the day. Three evenings a week, a doctor would lecture to the student nurses. The only time off that my mother had was a half day during the week, beginning at 1 p.m.

During the times that she was free, Lucienne liked to take a walk around the neighborhood. She would often walk across the High Level Bridge, which was only a few blocks from the hospital, to go to movies at the Garneau Theater. Also, since the General Hospital was at 100 Avenue and 112 Street, she liked to walk towards LeMarchand Mansion on the crest of the hill at 116 Street and look down into the valley of the North Saskatchewan River.

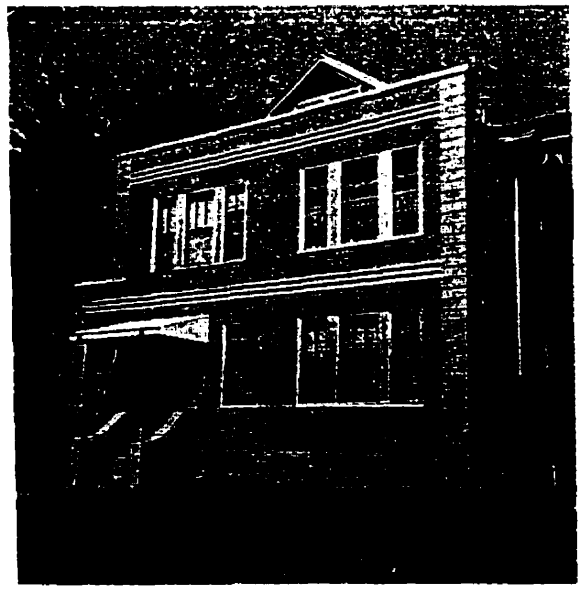
In the autumn of 1923, she stopped at a building site on 115 Street to talk to her brother Romeo, who worked for the contractor Durocher. She watched as the deep piles were set into the ground for the two-storey brick house that was being built for the owner. Perhaps she even had a glimpse of the older man, my father, building it. Later, she watched as the house went up, and admired the large verandahs on the front and back.

When my father and Marie-Louise moved into the new house on 115 Street, my brother Art was thirteen years old. Their home on the main floor comprised an entrance to a parlor, a dining room, a kitchen with a pantry, a bathroom and two "chambers." The upstairs was divided according to the same plan and each residence had its own private front entrance as well as stairways into the basement that was divided in two. I have found two pictures taken inside this house in 1924. The first is an unclear picture of the parlor, with a couch in front of three windows which are hung with lace panels with a medallion design along the bottom edge. A cushion covered with the type of crochet called "granny square" is placed at one end of the couch. In the corner, next to the couch is a wooden plant stand with a vase that glimmers in the shadows with several dark fronds of foliage that drape downwards. A piano with a music book open on it and the keyboard clearly showing is next to the plant stand. On top of the piano are family pictures that are clear enough for me to recognize my father with his son and wife. I did not know that Marie-Louise played the piano.

The other picture I have of the house where Art spent his teen years is of the dining room. A round oak table with heavy fluted legs and covered with an intricate lace tablecloth sits in front of an empty brick fireplace. The mantel of the fireplace is made of wood and decorated with six family pictures and a plant, while a plate railing above this holds three plates. Two oak dining room chairs sit on either side of the fireplace and a matching armchair is angled in the background. A patterned rug covers the main part of the dining room, splashed with intense white light from a window. A lamp sits in the middle of the table, and I realize that there is something familiar about its shape. A small design, like a fleur-de-lys, catches my eye and I realize that I am looking at the red lamp globe I have brought down from the attic in the garage. The globe was not meant to be placed on a ceiling, it was meant to cast light downwards on a table. I wonder if my brother sat at that table and gazed at the red globe of the lamp with the distinct fleur-de-lys on it.

In December 1938, fifteen years after building the Brick House on 115 Street, my father began the work to convert the house into an apartment of seven suites. Perhaps he saw the potential for making money because there was a need for suites in the city. Eventually, many of the tenants would be the families of the Americans working to build the Alaska Highway. The work on the conversion of the Brick House would occupy the next six years, presumably scheduled on the basis of when my father had the money to continue. He drew the blueprints and kept copies of some of the plans that were not practical to build. The large front verandah and back porches were enclosed in a pink stucco in an art deco style and the attic was extended, requiring an alteration to the roof line. The cost of the renovations was $28,000--more that twice the cost of building the house originally.

JAN • 59



By 1961, I had lived at the Brick House on 115 Street, now an apartment of seven suites, for all of my twelve years. I used to play in the hallways and basement as my mother did her wash, as well as in the numerous hidden cupboards of the suites as my mother cleaned them. All the suites were furnished at that time with furniture and drapes and even small rugs. The tenants had only to provide their own bedding and dishes. I had grown used to hearing other people come into the building and could recognize the distinctive sound that each of their doors made as it closed. I was familiar with the smell of bleach and laundry soap that wafted through the hallways when someone was washing in the basement and with the various aromas of supper that greeted me when I came home from school.

Our home was on the second floor, a spacious two-bedroom suite. My parents' bedroom was the larger one at the front of the house, which was cold and dark with heavy drapes over the windows. My father always took a nap there in the afternoon. The living room, on the other hand, was full of light and cheery. Most of the walls were lined with my father's bookshelves and the piano stood in front of the windows with a hi-fi on one side. The couch, reading chair, coffee table with an encyclopedia fitted into it and an office desk filled the rest of the room. The kitchen had bright red, beige and black tiles on the floor, and a buffet and gate-leg dining room table that folded out of sight. The kitchen table was of yellow arborite with matching vinyl on the aluminum chairs. At the other end of the room stood the new television that we could watch while eating.

Our routine was unvarying. Each school-day morning, my parents and I would get up early so that I could walk to Grandin School, six blocks away. My father would dress up in a suit and an overcoat, if the weather required it, and walk to Jasper Avenue to take the bus downtown. Most of the school year I would walk home for dinner at noon, which was the big meal of the day. On extremely cold days, my mother would give me a lunch, so that I could eat in the lunchroom at school. But I did not like to do that because I did not fit into the closed

groups of girls that always ate together. At 3:20, the bell would ring the end of the school day, and I would hurry home.

But one day, when I was nine years old, my father came to meet me after school. It was a frosty winter day; my breath came out in clouds and my face stung with needles of cold until I wrapped the scarf up to my nose. I was about to cross the street at school when I saw him. He had on his dark navy overcoat with the fur lapels and wore a wool cap with flaps down over his ears. The edge of his paisley scarf showed at his neck.

"Papa!" I said.

"Hello, my dear. There's a blizzard warning and I wanted to make sure you got home all right."

Forgetting how cold it was, I ran up to him and grabbed his thick-gloved hand. He had come to meet me! I hoped that some of the other students would see me with this well-dressed gentleman who was my father. We walked the six blocks home together as the wind began to pick up, swirling sheets of snow around us. We didn't speak because he was high above me and I would have had to turn awkwardly, bundled as I was in winter clothes, to make myself heard. We walked home as if there were only the two of us in the whole world.

Old. My father was old. That was a word my mother used when she spoke about him, saying, "My husband is too old to do any work in the yard," and so I would say, "My father doesn't work any more. He's too old." It was a word that excused a lot of things but that also set him apart from us.

While I could hardly keep up with my mother's quick steps when she walked to Jasper Avenue to take the bus to go downtown, I loved to take walks with my father when we lived at the Brick House on 115 Street. He was not in a hurry and we could walk on our street at a tranquil pace and look at the stately houses with wide verandahs and caragana hedges clipped perfectly square. We did not speak much; I simply enjoyed being with him. In the spring, my father would take me to the crest of the hill overlooking the North Saskatchewan River with its dark water textured with clumps of ice breaking up. We would stand looking at the grey leafless trees slowly being transformed by a haze of green buds. He would tell me of the railway that had once run below us on the hill: the Edmonton, Yukon and Pacific. The cut in the side of the river valley still showed as a narrow graveled road that wound towards a ravine.

Walks in the summer along the top of the riverbank meant we looked down at the perfectly kept lawn of the Victoria Golf Course, where I was warned not to walk in case I got hit in the head with a golf ball. The river then became a chipped jade green surface, solid on the bottom of the valley.

But fall and winter were my favorite times for walks. My father's slower pace meant I could crunch through the leaves on the boulevards while my father shuffled through them on the sidewalk. In the winter, we would stare down at the valley, a black and white space, silent, muffled by the snow. The trees sometimes bloomed with hoarfrost, and I wondered how the crystals could attach themselves so perfectly to every tree. Past the snow-covered expanse of the golf course, the river then became textured with hillocks and bumps.

Sometimes on our walks I would have the urge to run and be free, run as if I had to get rid of all my energy, all the way to the next corner, and then I would run back and take my father's hand. Every time I did that, he would say, "Ah, you are lucky to be so young and to have all of your life in front of you." I would laugh at such a remark because I could hardly wait to be older, to be an adult, so that I could do what I wanted. I did not know that he did not have to hurry because he had no place to go anymore, and that people did not want to hear what he had to say.

Diary:

In March, 1929, I and the wife and son traveled back to my hometown and family in Sherbrooke, Quebec. It was only the second time I had returned since my disagreement with my father seventeen years before. My first visit was in 1922. My mother, who is seventy-three years old, has not been in the best of health, and so I decided that a trip to the east would be necessary. However, to her credit, she has come west to visit us several times. It was good to have the Cantin Tribe together. I left as a young man of 31 and now I was returning with a certain degree of success at the age of 48 years. I feel that my decision to move west was the right one in spite of the opposition from my father at the time.

While I was in the East, I took the opportunity to talk to the newspaper in Sherbrooke, La Tribune, in order to promote the West. I told them about the large number of French-Canadians settled in Morinville, the large "canadien" center in Alberta; also in Villeneuve, St. Albert, Legal, Leduc, Lacombe, Picardville, etc. Of course, I boasted about the wide streets of Edmonton, and its beautiful site on the edge of the North Saskatchewan. I told them about the fertility of the soil in the region and how extensive the wheat crop was last year.

And I stressed the lack of representation of our people in Ottawa, in that of the fifty representatives, only a few French-Canadians speak for the population. However, if the three million of our own people who are actually in the United States came to establish themselves in the west, we would see our people acquiring prestige in all spheres and in parliament. And if the government gave the French-Canadians who want to establish

themselves in the west the same transportation rates that they give to strangers who come from Europe and the U.S., the population of the western provinces would grow before our eyes and the French-Canadian race could also consider itself a power in this beautiful part of Canada.

On a folded piece of paper torn from a larger sheet is my father's packing list for a hunting expedition:

Goggles	fur coat
shoes	antifreeze
German socks	5-gallon cans
Belt	plane
Heater	Torch

In his "Canadian Pocket Diary" for 1922, he wrote: "Shot 406 shells. Shot 70 partridges, 3 geese, 27 ducks. Total 90 birds. Very poor shot this year, could not find bird with gun. One moose killed on December 2, 1922."

Then I found an article that my father had written in 1929 for the magazine, Rod and Gun, entitled, "Ten Years of Hunting the Grey Goose in Alberta: the making of a goose hunter." He writes: "With the right companions there is nothing more delightful than a trip after geese for there is a keen delight in matching your wits against one of the wisest birds living."

Later on in the article, after describing several attempts to hunt geese, he writes:

> I have never seen any one else use the kind of hide that I build. Instead of digging a pit about 4 feet in diameter and 5 or more feet deep, I just dig a foot trench deep enough so that the knees will be about two inches below the level of the ground when you are lying on your back. Then digging a small trench so that you can lie on your back and your body will be about an inch lower than the level of the soil. You should go and get as large an armful of straw as possible, spread this over the freshly-turned up soil, then go and pick as many wheat heads as time will allow you and sprinkle this over the fresh straw which has a quite

noticeable shine. This makes a hide that will fool the wariest old bird, if properly located.

These are more of my father's books:

The History of India, by Romesh Chunder Dutt

Sartor Resartus on Heroes: Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, by Thomas Carlyle

The Mysterious Universe, by Sir James Jeans

La Tentation de Saint-Antoine, by Gustave Flaubert

The Three Musketeers, by Alexandre Dumas.

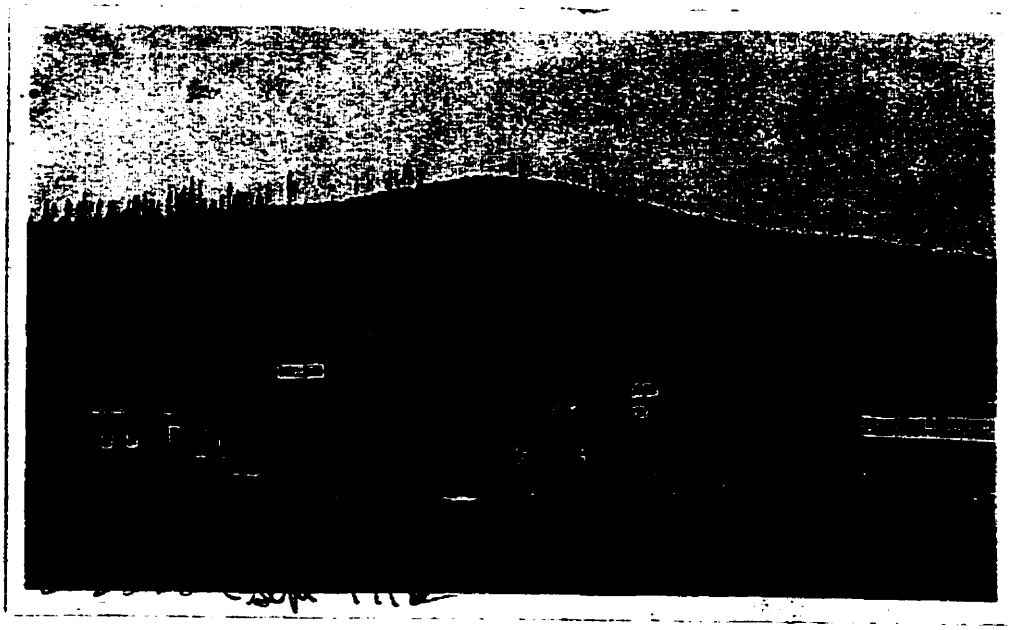
When I was researching my father's life, I would pull out one of his books and look through it to see if he had written anything in the margins, had underlined anything, or if he had left a piece of paper to mark his place. One of the objects I found was a bookmark from the "New Manchester Piano Company," which had on it the embossed figure of a girl with a long orange dress and an elaborate voile-draped hat. The bookmark must have dated from the time my father worked in the United States, before 1912. Other bookmarks included a plasticised card and a pocket calendar from the "Alexander Hamilton Institute," which sold business books, "to impart that understanding of business fundamentals which marked the genius of Alexander Hamilton"; a postcard from 1942, which was a reminder of a business meeting of the Northern Alberta Fish and Game Protective League in 1929; and a red coupon "Good for one packet of Lux" when ordering three packets.

Another source of material about my father's life was the rolls of maps that had been stored in my mother's basement and moved to my house several years ago. There were many large maps glued onto a fabric backing and supported at the top and bottom by round pieces of wood, decorated with a finial. One of the best preserved was a "Map of part of Alberta, by C.T. Lott, August 1903," which I would later see in a picture of my father's office in Edmonton in 1914. Another map in good condition represented the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, an area important in my father's early hunting expeditions.

First draft of an article written by Arthur Cantin in 1914, "After Mountain Sheep":

I started from Edmonton, Alberta on a trip to Mountain Park which is about eight miles in the Rocky Mountains on the McLeod River, two hundred and twenty miles south west of Edmonton. Leaving Edmonton at 9:15 p.m. on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to Edson, first class sleepers are obtainable and one enjoys a good sleep till three in the morning when one has to change trains which leaves in a few minutes to Coalspur, a distance of 37 miles. The writer took a lunch with him thinking that it would come in handy. On a previous trip two years earlier the writer started on the same schedule but did not reach Coalspur till 4 p.m., hungry and weary.

We reached Coalspur, however, in good time for breakfast but the town had undergone quite a change; instead of finding it busy with construction of all kinds in the immediate neighborhood, I found it very quiet. Of the dozen stores, restaurants, shooting gallery, etc. typical of all railroad construction towns, there remained two restaurants and one store doing a small business.

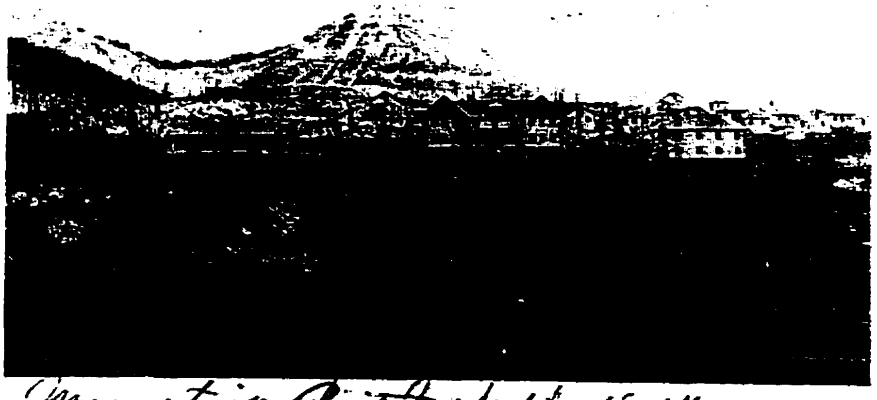


After breakfast, I had to wait till 3 p.m. for the connection which would take me to Mountain Park, so a little excursion was made to the Fire Ranger observation station some two miles among the hills. Being poorly directed, I missed the regular trail and it was an arduous task to reach the observation station after going over two high hills. A few years previous this timber had been burned and undergrowth, together with fallen timber, made it hard going. However, one is well repaid for his labor as a magnificent view can be obtained from this station. To the south and west, the Rocky Mountains with their snow caps are visible and to the East and North, a large plateau can be seen as far as a good field glass can see.

At 3 o'clock that afternoon, I left Coalspur for Mountain Park. Memory after all is a sweet thing, I had not gone more than one mile when I picked up the old trail which I had gone over two years before on park ponies. We reached Mountain Park at 8 o'clock, quite tired after being up since 3 a.m. To my surprise I found Mountain Park had undergone a great change. The Hotel Cheviot, which had been constructed in the interval was all that could be desired: good clean beds, plenty of good substantial food, well prepared.

The village, which has replaced the log cabins built to house the workmen who were ahead of the steel doing the necessary work previous to the opening of the mine (which when completed will be able to handle 2,500 tons a day), consists of fifty cottages, nicely situated on the hills. These cottages are similar in design: painted white with green trimming which has a fine effect on the countryside of green with its snow-capped mountains.

After making arrangement for a party of five together with necessary park horses and guides, in the afternoon I had time to go up one of the high peaks which surround Mountain Park: a grand view can he had of snow-capped mountains and burned timber. A number of pictures showing the highest peaks together with the village were taken.



Mountain Park Sept. 19 14

Arthur Cantin's report of electrical equipment of the Mountain Park Coal Company:

At the present time, the coal mine has three drift shafts and a four day's working per week on a reduced gang are getting approximately 250 tons a day. It holds 360 coal leads. This while still in its infancy is operated altogether with Electricity. The power is located in the center of the shafts. The boiler room at the present time has three Robb Hargontals Return tubular boilers of 150 Horsepower each. There is one Robb Armstrong engine of 100 H.P., belt connected to a 90 Kilowatt Triumph Direct Current Generator of 220 volts. Another engine of 150 H.P. of the same make is belt connected to a 100 K.W. Canadian Westinghouse Generator 250 Volts Direct Current. The switch board is form panel slate with volt meter and ammeter together with necessary switches and usual fittings. There are two fans driven by 90 H.P. belt connected by Westinghouse motors. At present one of the fans is supplying air to two different shafts.

They find that Direct Current gives a more flexible arrangement for controlling the speed of the motor but it has the disadvantage of fluctuating voltage which is quite unsuitable on the lamps. They propose having a thoroughly modern electrical equipment at some future date, but as to the present condition, they will not buy any new equipment for some time.

I discover Mountain Park eighty years after my father went on his second hunting trip to the region. By chance, I find a book written about the Coal Branch in a museum in Edson, Alberta that tells of the years between 1906 and 1916; the discovery of large seams of coal meant the development of the region. As well, two railways, the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern, had established rail yards in Edson. An extra railway line, or branch, extended south of Edson into the coal region in 1912, a fact my father notes when he remembers the railway construction camps he had encountered two years previously.

From the maps inside the book I discover that Mountain Park, which I believed to be another name for Jasper National Park, is an abandoned town on the eastern side of the mountains from the national park. My husband and I set out to discover what remains of the Coal Branch. The road south from Highway 16 begins about ten kilometers outside of Edson and is paved up to the town of Robb, a small settlement of mobile homes, a few old houses and a prosperous looking hotel. Further down the road, we can find no evidence of the town of Coalspur where my father stopped to wait for the train to Mountain Park.

The gravel road is rough and dusty and we meet no other cars. We stop at one point beside a cutting in the trees to search for Saskatoon berries. In the hot sun we trudge a short distance up the road but do not find one berry. It is quiet; the only sound is the occasional metal clicking of the car engine as it cools down. When we drive farther, we find Cadomin set in a level valley with the stacks of the Inland Cement Plant jutting into the sky like ancient towers. The remains of the company town are still in existence: square log cabins painted brown with white mortar between the logs and all the windows and doors covered with plywood. We stop at the "Hole in the Wall Cafe" and service station where the sign proclaims, "Eat here and Get Gas."

Driving out of town, we round a high hill where the Cadomin Caves are hidden and suddenly we are surrounded by mountains, high and rugged. We proceed a short distance and stop at the Forestry Campground of Whitehorse Creek to gaze at a cone-shaped mountain and another one resembling Mount Rundle in Banff. This is the wilderness that my father admired. Farther down the road stands a stable that rents horses for an excursion through the mountains, down Fiddle River Valley, over to Miette Hot Springs, a distance of twenty-five miles. I wonder if this could be the same pass my father followed on his trip to hunt.

The road continues over a bridge crossing Whitehorse Creek and onto a rougher dirt trail that climbs steeply up the other side. This is the road to Mountain Park, the coal-mining town that vanished in 1950 because the advent of diesel trains meant the end of the market for this coal. The roads are recently built and primitive; during the town's existence the railway was the only means of transportation for the coal and the workers.

Abandoned railway tracks in various states of disintegration run alongside the narrow road. Several washouts of the rail bed leave the tracks and ties attached, dangling, like a delicate brown ribbon folded over the landscape. I imagine my father at thirty-three years old, combining his inspection of the power plant at Mountain Park with a hunting expedition. He traveled these same rail lines, sitting by a window to admire the mountains, eating the lunch he had brought from home.

We arrive at a hill where white-painted bricks spell out the name "Mountain Park" in front of a cemetery. I look across a deep and narrow stream that runs like a moat around a medieval town to the plain where the town of Mountain Park once existed against the backdrop of Mount Cheviot. The sun is behind the flat-topped mountain that looms dark and misty as if it is a long way away.

The railway bridge that crossed the stream vanished a long time ago, but the tracks were left behind and criss-cross the gravel like rusted brown lines.

The Hotel Cheviot, admired by my father for its comfortable beds and good food, no longer exists to accommodate visitors getting off the train. The cottages that were painted white with a green trimming were dismantled or hauled away when the company warned that all power to the town would be turned off after a certain date. I wonder if the power generators were the same ones my father inspected that supplied electricity to the mines and to the town.

We follow the steps leading up to the cemetery, which is overgrown and lush with weeds and wildflowers. The graves are demarcated by wood picket fences, painted white, and worn paths indicate that many people still visit the site. Fresh flowers and plastic wreaths adorn some of the headstones of the coal miners and their families who lived here and died, and were left in this pleasant valley in the mountains.

I wonder what my father would have thought to see how a town that appeared to have a promising future should vanish almost completely, leaving only its dead behind.

From the first draft of the article "After Mountain Sheep":

On Wednesday morning about 8 a.m., we started off on a twenty mile hike. We went up the McLeod River for about two miles and then out across a mountain road for another two miles till we came to the headwaters of the Brazeau River. Our party consisted of four people with one packer, one guide and two pack horses and one saddle horse. All had a turn at riding the horse so as to make the trip less arduous.

After following the Brazeau river for a couple of miles, we started to cross another mountain range. This was the highest which we had to cross and I often wondered how the horses could make it with their pack. But somehow or other we arrived at Rocky River without any accident. After traveling hard up the Rocky River, we sighted two Mountain Sheep up a high cliff about 2 miles from the trail but as it was getting late and everybody was pretty tired, we decided not to give them chase that day. We arrived in camp about 4 o'clock in the afternoon and found a canvas which served as a tent already fixed up and ready for us. We built a fire and started to get something ready for supper. Our supper consisted of mutton chops and pretty nearly every meal after that for the next four days. After supper the usual campfire yarns were passed and we turned into bed about 9 o'clock all tired and ready for a good rest.

The next morning about 6 the camp was alive once more and everybody doing his share in getting breakfast ready. We started out about 8 o'clock across a divide and got into the sheep country. After walking about 2 hours, we came upon a flock of four sheep and ewes and

two lambs but as they had sighted us before we did, they were on the move and we could not get within range of them.

After traveling for about an hour the guide sighted a big flock of 30 or more sheep laying down. Here is where he missed. I was walking somewhat below him about a quarter of a mile away and he began to whistle for me to join him which I did as fast as my wind would let me, but by the time I had reached him the sheep were up and away about 400 yards. I took two shots at a likely one and broke one of his front legs near the knee and thinking that I had him badly wounded I did not hurry to get to him. However, when I came within 200 yards, he got up and took to the bush and I lost sight of him there.

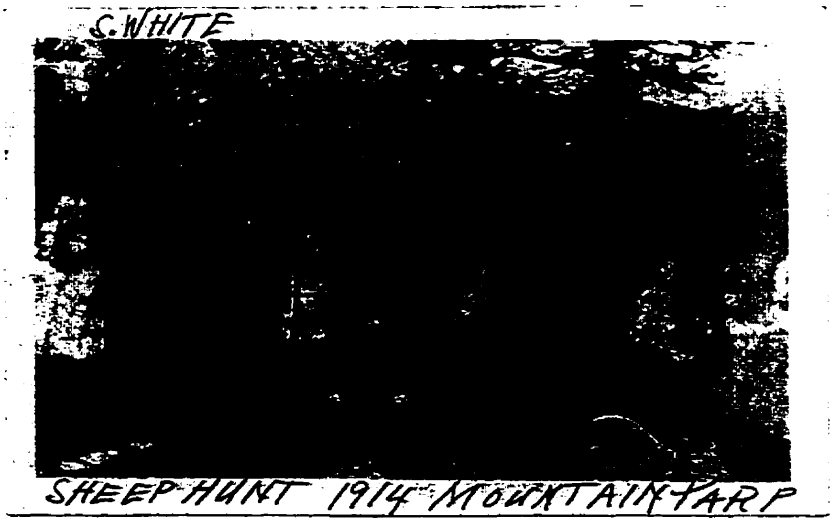
We returned to camp that night about 5 o'clock after locating the way the big flock went and made plans for the next day. It was not late after our mutton supper that we turned in and everything went fine for sleep till about 3 a.m. when cold kept us awake and we had to turn out somewhat earlier than anticipated. We left camp about 8 a.m. and started out in the direction which we thought the flock of sheep had taken, but when we reached the top about 11 o'clock, nothing could be found of them and no descent could be made on that side of the mountain. After having spoiled our day's chances for sheep, we got into camp that night tired and down-hearted as we only had one day left and it looked as if we would return empty-handed.

The next morning, the party divided up in two and we each went our way after walking in a new direction but close to the camp. We did not come in sight of any game until about 3 p.m. A large buck and

another about 2 years old were seen resting about three miles out on top of a ridge. A dash was made to get there as quick as possible but it was a slow and tedious job going up that mountain side. They finally got to within 150 yards of the two and a broad side was let loose but as the guide was quite excited he took a long chance in standing in the way of his companion who could not shoot except at great risk of wounding him. After four shots, the big buck was hit in a vital part and started to roll down the mountain side. The smaller one just took to the hills and was soon lost sight of. After skinning the shot sheep and cleaning him, a piece of mutton together with the head was brought to camp. It was 9 o'clock that night and we were tired out.

We got up the final day at 5 a.m. and got ready to go and get that mutton which was over one mile out on the trail. After a lot of hard work up a canyon, we arrived at the carcass and cut it in four pieces and put it in bags and three of us began the descent to the trail. It was hard going and it took us a good hour to get back to the trail where the pieces were packed and we started off at about 11 a.m. to the town. We reached Mountain Park at 8 p.m., everyone was in good spirits but tired.

The next morning at 7 o'clock starting down the mountain on the Grand Trunk Pacific, the train was not going fast but it was a good deal more comfortable and quicker than over the trail. At Coalspur, I met a party of three Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania sportsmen who had left Jasper Park and had been out 35 days with 5 guides and 20 horses and had bagged five Mountain Goats and a grizzly bear weighing about 800 lbs. I was thinking that I had not done so bad in securing one sheep and out only five days. I reached home without accident and home is home after all and there is nothing like it.



I grew up hearing about the hunting expeditions my father had taken a long time before I was born. He said that he would go up into the mountains with a pack-train of horses and be gone for a week at a time. He had a large collection of guns which had been passed on to my brother, who had been a hunter as well.

While my mother endeavored to bring me up with proper manners as a young lady, with the acceptable feminine pursuit of music, I was curious about this hunting world of my father's. Why didn't he show me how to hunt or explain guns to me? One day I asked if he would teach me how to shoot a gun.

He was surprised that I should ask such a thing. I remember he fixed me with a direct look and said, "Nonsense. Guns are dangerous weapons, not something for a little girl to handle. I gave up hunting over twenty-five years ago and I want you to put all thought of that out of your head."

While I bristled at being called a "little girl" at the age of twelve, he returned to reading his newspaper, dismissing me. I think perhaps the beginning of my alienation from my father was that he always considered me a little girl; that distance between us would increase as I entered my teen years.

I persisted in asking my mother about the gun and she finally agreed that when the time was right, she would let me try the .22. One day, we were out at our farm at Lac St. Anne and my father had walked over to visit the neighbors. My mother took me aside and made me promise not to tell my father what we were about to do. After I agreed, she went to the cupboard and took out a small cardboard box which held bullets for the .22 rifle, the only gun my father had kept. She carried the gun and the bullets and we walked out to the field at the back of the farmhouse where some bales of hay were stacked. She tacked a sheet of paper onto it. "To give you something to aim for," she said.

Before she loaded the gun, she showed me how to hold it, with its stock buried firmly in my shoulder, and how to sight the target along the barrel. I remember that the gun was heavy and cold and that trying to hold it steady was difficult. Finally, when she was satisfied that the preliminaries were adequate, she loaded some bullets into it and carefully held the gun out for me so that I only had to slip between her and the gun. She adjusted my hands and then stepped behind me.

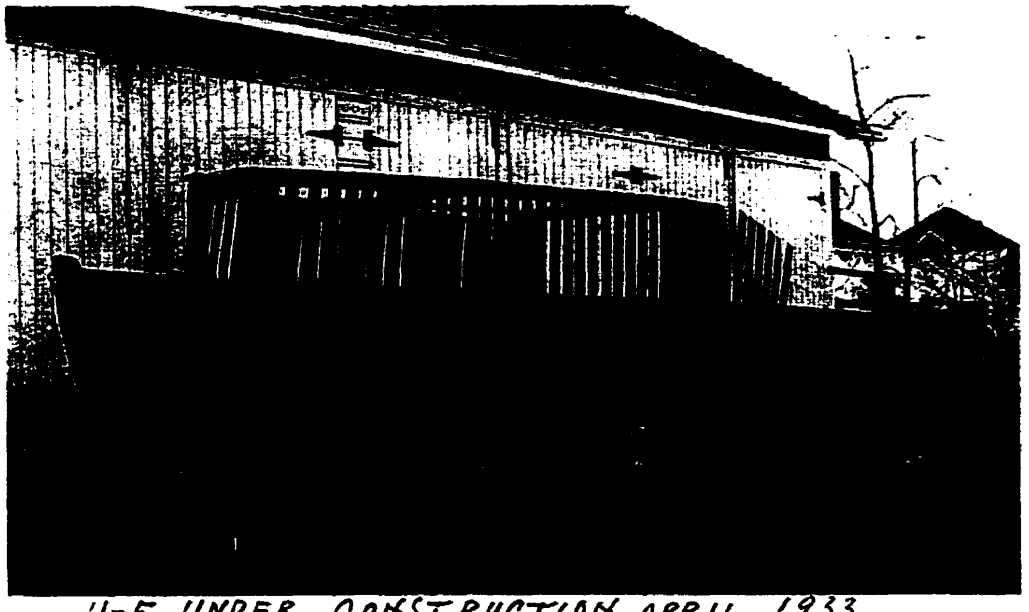
I aimed at the target and pulled the trigger and felt the recoil of the gun against my shoulder. Moreover, I felt a trembling deep inside me because of the dangerous weapon I held in my hands. But I continued aiming and firing until I had used up the bullets she had brought for me. When we checked the white paper, I had actually hit it five times.

My curiosity had been satisfied, but I could not tell my father that I too had fired a gun and that there was a feeling of power and danger in doing so. When I think of the incident, however, I realize that I never did ask my mother where she had learned to shoot.

The 1930s were an active outdoor decade for my father, who was in his fifties. Although he did not write of his experiences, he does leave a record of his hunting trips through the pictures in the album. One particularly successful hunting trip occurred in 1931, and my father noted on his pictures that he shot a mountain goat and a moose. In a picture dated September 4, 1931, he stands with his two companions, Dave Shanks, Junior, and Herb Clark, in front of their horses.

On September 10, 1931, my father and his hunting companion, Dave Shanks, pose next to a moose with a large rack of horns. That picture was made into a Christmas card and mailed out the next year.

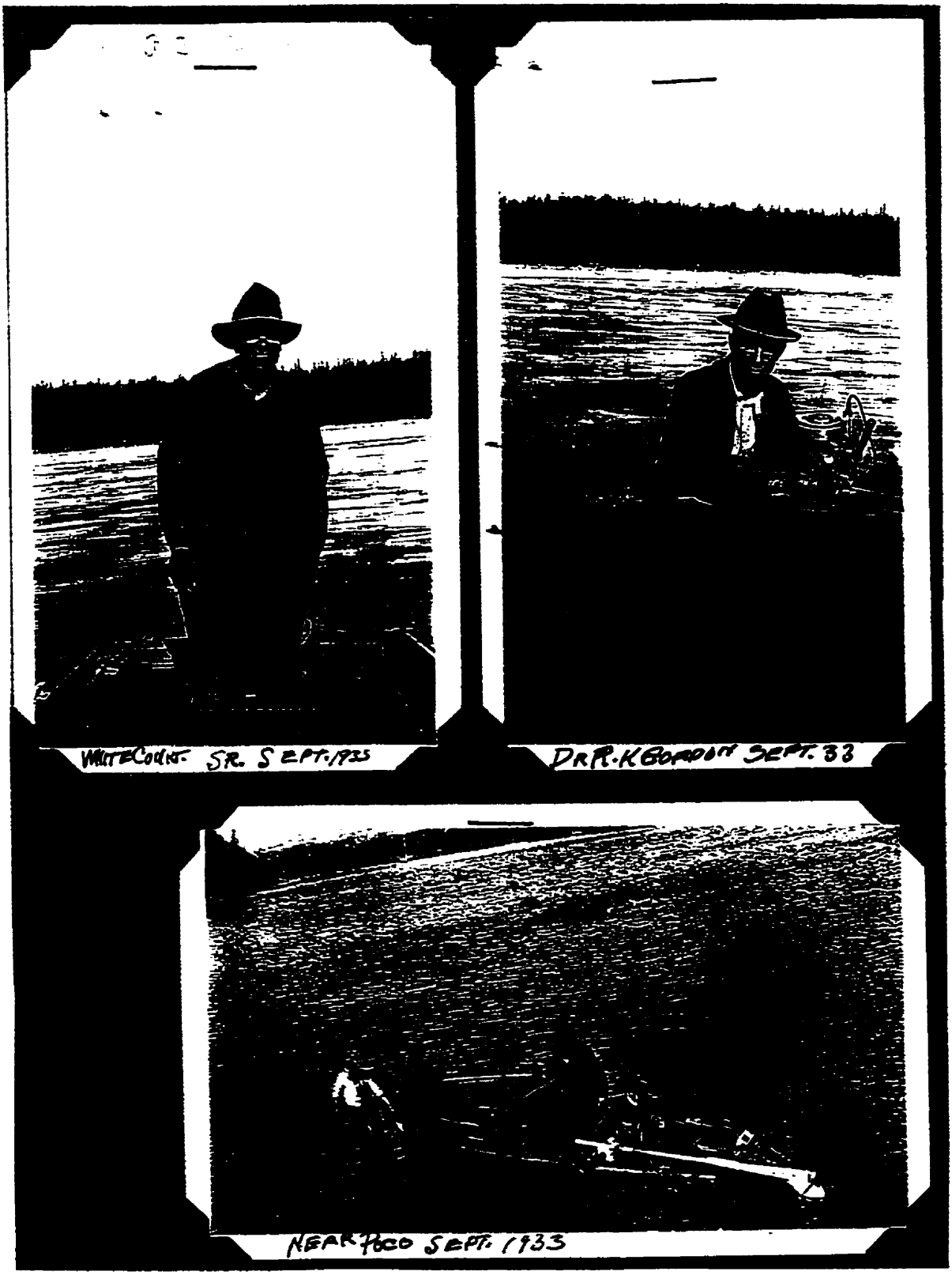
In April 1933, while in his fifty-second year, my father decided to build a boat called the "H.E." behind the garage at the Brick House on 115 Street. The boat was seventeen feet long with a covered cabin, and was powered by an outboard motor. For the next six years he would use the "H.E." for another kind of adventure: boating down rivers in Alberta and British Columbia. Unfortunately, he did not leave many notes behind about these trips.



H.-E. UNDER CONSTRUCTION APRIL 1933

One of these excursions, however, is documented by an undated clipping in the black scrapbook and several dated pictures in the photo album. The newspaper clipping from an unknown source stated, "On 250 mile water trip: Edmonton Party Holiday on Athabasca River: Special from Whitecourt: Dr. H. Jamison, Physician, Dr. R.K. Gordon, Professor of English, M. Cantor, and A.J. Cantin arrived here in the latter's 17 ft. cabin cruiser with outboard motor. They left Pocahontas Tuesday and expect to take two weeks to sail."

There are several pictures of the journey: one when they are trapped on a sandbar near Pocahontas, another of a pensive Dr. Gordon in the boat. My father wears a type of life-jacket and a broad-brimmed hat.

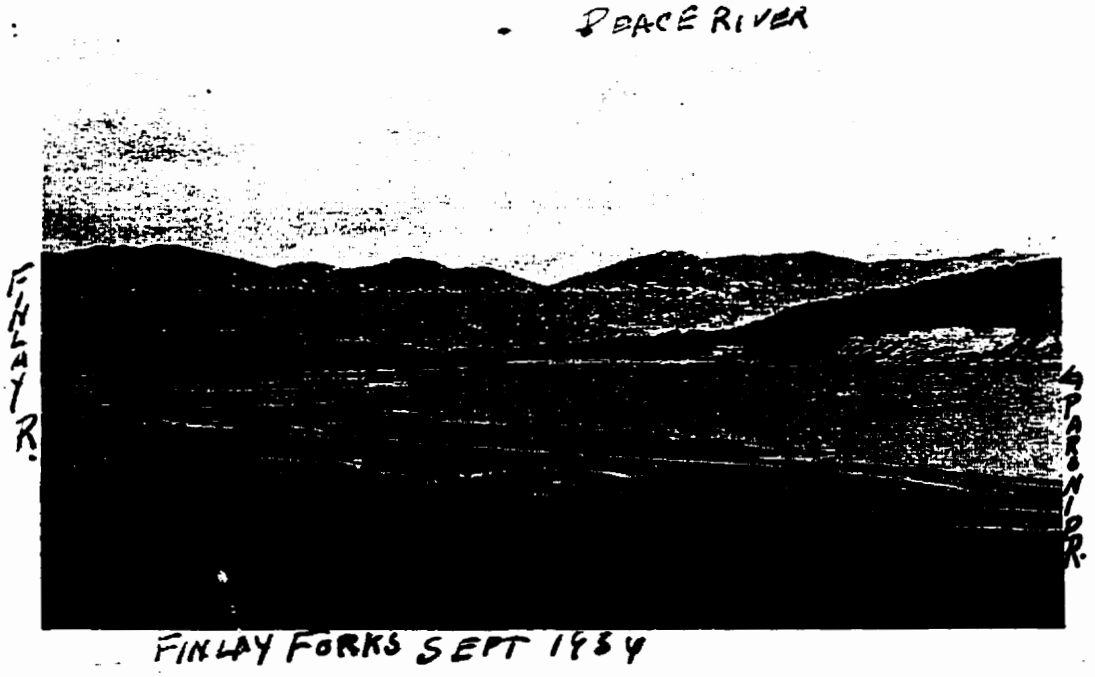

WHITE COUNT. SR. SEPT. 1933
DR R. K GORDON SEPT. 33
NEAR FOCO SEPT. 1933

The other major trip to which my father makes some reference was on the Peace River, the largest and longest of the tributaries of the Mackenzie. He was interested in traveling on the Finlay and Parsnip Rivers, which join to form the Peace, to see for himself the possibilities for hydro-electrical development. Since the trip took place twenty years after his first presentation to the Edmonton Board of Trade, he most likely undertook it for his own interest. The reference to the journey is a cryptic one in a letter to the editor of an unidentified paper. Possibly commenting on the rough terrain in the region, he wrote:

> After completing a 1,500 mile trip through north-eastern British Columbia and Peace River country, going as far north as Finlay Forks, I would like to ask Mr. Clive Planta, M.L.A. for B.C. where he will get the revenue to pay for the axle grease for that Peace River Railroad outlet for the first 50 years of operation? Hope he will answer through your paper, yours truly, Arthur J. Cantin.

The other source of information about the journey is the notes that my father wrote around the pictures in the album. He traveled with three men: Ed Wedemeyer, Judge Robertson, and J.P. Hall. The four of them are shown in a wide flat boat tied up at a dock, in a picture entitled, "Parsnip River, 1934."

The goal of the journey by river is shown in the picture entitled, "Finlay Forks," which is taken at the point of confluence where the Parsnip and the Finlay join to form the Peace River. The picture is labeled on the top as "Peace River," with the left margin marked "Finlay River" and the right margin, "Parsnip River." It is interesting to note that the Bennett dam was built in that location in the 1960's, opening in September 1968, the year after my father died. Many of the places he traveled are now submerged under the reservoir called Williston Lake, the tenth largest reservoir in the world.



By the end of the 1930's, as my father approached his sixtieth year, he decided to give up boating on the rivers. He notes that on March 13, 1939, he brought the H.E. back to town and traded it in with Kerr and Shute for a Star truck to use on the farm.

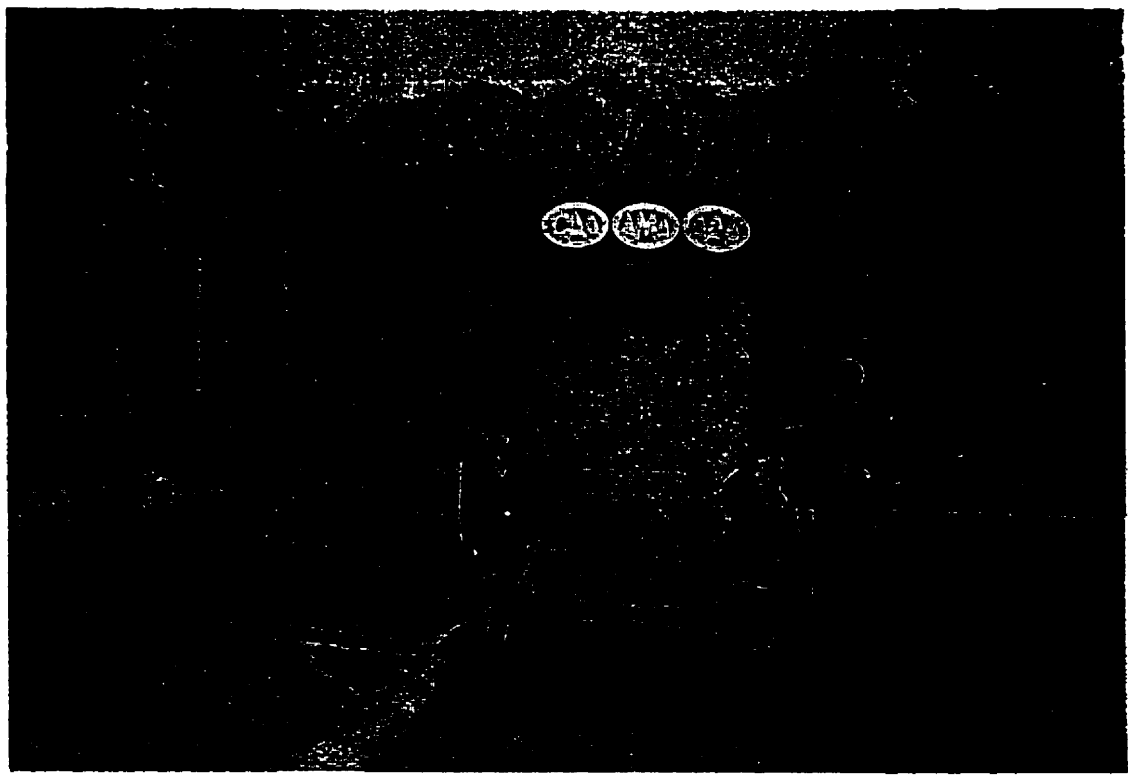
When I was in grade eleven, I wrote a story about a ten year old girl, Monique, whose elderly father is very ill. She has heard many times that her father had gone on hunting expeditions in the Rocky Mountains before there were any highways into the wilderness. She has a favorite picture of him as he crouches next to a fallen moose with a wide set of antlers. Her father holds his gun beside him and looks out into the distance. Behind him are the leafless branches of low shrubs making an intricate design, like veins, against the light sky.

To escape the oppressiveness of the sick house, she spends a lot of time playing outside She becomes friends with Willie, a boy who identifies getting a BB gun with becoming a man. One day, Monique's mother tries to explain to her why her father is so ill. She says he has little strokes which means that sometimes tiny clots impede the circulation of the blood in the brain and that causes him to be confused and weak. Usually, these spells pass quickly, but this time he has pneumonia and might not recover. Monique does not want to think about this.

Finally, Willie gets his BB gun and the first thing he does is aim at a sparrow. To his surprise, he kills it in front of Monique. As she watches the bird dying, she finally breaks down and cries. Soon after, her father dies and when she looks at the hunting picture, she imagines that the branches are like the veins in her father's head that burst into red blooms and took him away from her.

When I was growing up, my parents and I went to the mountains at least once a year. Often we would take relatives and special visitors from the East to show them the splendors of Banff and Jasper national parks. We frequently went to the Columbia Icefields which are the source of several of western Canada's rivers. My father taught me the sequence of rivers that the meltwaters took. At one time I could recite the journey of the water that melted from the Icefields all the way to the Arctic Ocean. I found it hard to believe that the brown water of the North Saskatchewan flowing through Edmonton could originate from the blue ice and the clear azure water that flowed from the Icefields.

Our favorite vacation destination was Miette Hotsprings in Jasper National Park, close to where my father had gone hunting in the mountains.



While my father had slept in white canvas tents supported by sapling poles, forty years later we would stay in small log cabins with canvas roofs at Miette Resort. These cabins were equipped with a table and benches, a small cupboard, a heater and bunk-style double beds. I loved to climb the ladder into the upper bunk and sleep under the canvas roof that I could reach up and touch with my fingers. The sheets on the beds were snowy white, covered with thick Hudson's Bay blankets. When I was up in my bunk, I could smell the odor of warm canvas in the morning sunshine and listen to the falling pine cones and the scurry of a squirrel on the roof close to me.

My parents were happy when we went to the mountains; this was their holiday and time to spend enjoying the scenery. Twice a day we would go to Miette Hotsprings to bathe. Opened in 1931, this was an ornate Swiss-villa-style building nestled at the foot of a mountain, close to where the sulfurous hot water came out of the rocks. There were many stairs to climb at the facility, which my father in his late seventies took slowly, stopping to rest on the landings. But I was used to waiting, and at the top of the stairs I would look down at the swimmers in the clear aquamarine water and smell the sulfur and pine. Then my mother and I would go down to the ladies' dressing room and my father to the men's.

My mother and I were always in the water first, and she would watch for my father and help him out of the dressing room so that he would not slip on the wet area around the pool. Once in the water, he would walk around holding onto the edge of the pool or he would sit up to his chin in the hot water, always finding someone to talk to. My mother stayed close to him and made sure he did not stay too long in the water and get overheated.

Then, at noon, we would return to our cabin for dinner, the big meal of the day. My mother would cook some meat on our Coleman stove and potatoes and vegetables in the pressure cooker. Sometimes she would cook on the wood stove inside the picnic shelter and we

would eat on a checkerboard tablecloth. We would have pork chops or steaks, occasionally chicken, but never lamb or mutton. I remember my father once saying that when he hunted in the mountains, mutton seemed to be the only meat the guides would bring along, and he had developed such an aversion to the meat that he could not stand even the smell of it cooking, which to him was like old wool being boiled.

While my father took his afternoon nap and my mother cleaned up after dinner, I was free to wander around the motel and cabin complex, as long as I did not venture far. I remember exploring the woods, skipping over the maze of tree roots that clung around the cabins and the washroom huts. There was a souvenir shop to look into, with its ashtrays, triangular flags and strange tubes filled with colored water indicating the degree of the holder's passion, all marked with "Souvenir of Miette Hotsprings." Once we bought a ceramic bear holding a thermometer.

In the afternoon, before supper, we would proceed once more to the hot springs and go through the same ritual. In the evening, my mother would make some soup and we would have our supper of sandwiches made with canned ham. After a short walk down the road, we would go to bed early.

I recalled our family holidays on a recent visit to Miette Hot Springs. The entire resort has changed: the canvas-covered cabins are gone and the Swiss-villa pool has been torn down because it was sliding down the edge of the mountain. A new pool has been built on a level plain where the campground used to be. It is a flat, dull building, which has elevators for the elderly and the infirm, and two pools, one for wading and another deeper one for swimming. Tourists can walk past the foundation ruins of the old swimming pool, down a trail to see the source of the hot water.

In 1960, when my father was seventy-nine, we went on a trip to Vancouver. My mother did all of the driving then, in our 1957 Chevrolet. We visited some distant relatives and friends of my parents and then decided to walk through Stanley Park. My father said that he was too tired to walk and would wait in the car. My mother warned him not to take one of his walks on his own because, with so many roads and trails, he could easily get lost. Before she left she made him promise that he would stay with the car.

We were not gone too long, perhaps half an hour, but when we returned, my father was not in the car. While I stayed with the Chevrolet, the four others walked through the parking lot looking for him. My mother kept saying, "I told him to stay with the car, I told him not to take a walk..." She ran over to a park attendant and phoned the police.

For the next hour everyone searched in all the possible directions he could have gone. My mother was growing more and more agitated; she was almost crying. All of a sudden, one of the men called out, "We found him!" and my father appeared, carrying his jacket and wearing his cap. He had taken a walk and then returned to a yellow Chevrolet that was identical to ours. It was unlocked and the seats were the same colour as ours, so he had no reason to think that it was someone else's car. It was only when the person returned to his car that my father realized his error.

My father looked rather sheepishly at all the people who gathered around him, inquiring about him. My mother went up to him and took his arm. "We've been looking for you for an hour and a half."

He replied, "I thought you were taking a rather long walk...I'm sorry, my dear, to have caused you all this trouble."

She was relieved to see him though, and after calling off the search party and thanking everyone, she drove us back to the motel.

There is a picture of my father and me on the grey Ford tractor. I am sitting on his knee next to the fender of the big wheel, and in his hand that rests on the fender behind me, he holds a small scythe as he looks off into the distance. He is wearing blue coveralls over a lighter blue shirt and heavy shoes that are tied up over his ankles. I remember my father smelled pleasantly of the farm, engine oil from the tractor, the scent of straw and wind, and he often had a couple of day's growth of stubble on his face. These are the reasons why I thought my father was a farmer when I was growing up.

These books from my father's library show how his interests changed as he got older:

From my Experience: The Pleasures and Miseries of Life on the Farm, by Louis Bromfield

Crop Production in Western Canada by John Bracken

Gleason's Horse Book by Professor Oscar R. Gleason

Welding Helps for Farmers by James F. Lincoln

The ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture, by A.I. Root

My parents referred to traveling to the farm as "aller sur la terre," or literally, "going to the land." Before I started school in 1954, we lived there from April to October with weekly trips back to the Brick House on 115 Street. My first memories of the farm are of the kitchen, a bright warm place in a new addition built onto the original log house. It had new wooden cupboards with brown arborite on the counters, a linoleum floor, and a propane lamp, fridge and stove. There was a bright blue metal flame on the front of the stove, the logo for Servel

appliances. When I was a small girl, I put my finger on the pilot light to touch its perfection, thinking it was the same coolness as the metal one, and learned quickly why it was to be admired but not touched.

On another wall of the kitchen, over the white sink, was a four-paned window framed with small shelves where my mother kept various bottles and a red wooden cat that held coasters. A white porcelain clock rimmed with a band of green was centered over the window. The kitchen table sat next to a large window that overlooked the farmyard. I remember sitting there and looking at the objects that my father often brought in for me to examine: the two halves of a robin's egg after the chicks had hatched; a sprig of bluebells and a dandelion, both taken apart to show me the parts of a flower; and an abandoned mud-chinked swallow's nest.

In the spring, part of the farm kitchen was barricaded and my mother set up a temporary brooder for the chicks. Chicks in the house! I could watch them all day if I wanted. I was fascinated by the inverted quart sealer over a dish of water that provided the chicks with fresh water. The balls of yellow fluff grew quickly, and, as soon as white pin-feathers dotted their yellow, they were moved outside to the chicken coop.

In the summer, I would go out with my mother and my yellow "Tenderleaf Lard" bucket to gather the eggs. The chicken house was long and narrow with two or three shelves of boxes filled with straw where the hens clucked and laid their eggs. Sometimes the hen would remain on her eggs and I would reach under her and steal her warm egg and place it next to the others in my bucket. One brown hen, that I named Jocelyn, became a special pet who followed me around outside and came when she was called. Sometimes I could bring her into the house, and she would stay on the rug by the door, never walking where she was not supposed to go. When fall arrived, my mother arranged to board her at a neighbor's chicken coop over the winter. I don't know how many winters Jocelyn was cared for in that way, because I did not have the concept of years then. Jocelyn eventually died, an old, old hen.

The other chickens were not given the luxury of being boarded out. Before my family moved back to the Brick House on 115 Street, the chickens had to be killed. I did not watch their actual beheading but my father gave me an anatomy lesson afterwards, which served to distract me from their slaughter. As the hens were eviscerated, my father laid out the various organs: intestines, heart, liver and crop. This latter organ was a bag my father would cut open to reveal the stones and grains the hen had eaten that morning. He explained that the hens had to eat stones to help grind up their food in the crop. The other organ I was shown was the long tube in which eggs were formed. My mother would explain that part to me as she cut the tube to reveal the eggs that were enclosed in a membrane but not a shell. Sometimes we would go into the house and she would cook the small eggs for me.

That same day she would start to can the chickens in her large blue canner that rattled with steam for hours. I recall the row upon row of jars filled with pink flesh in the storage room downstairs and the salty, chalky taste of the chicken meat.

My father bought the farm of two hundred and forty acres beside Lac Ste. Anne in 1933, when he was fifty-two years old, for 555 dollars. He said that at one time the land had belonged to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. In October of that year, he paid Mr. Laderoute 275 dollars for a log house. Later, he spent another forty-five dollars on improvements to it.

In 1934, he wrote in his notes that he broke about fifteen acres in a section called "Block F," which he seeded to timothy. He also cleared another nine acres that fall, paying Ed Treichel ten dollars for his work in clearing with his bulldozer. On September 1, he spent twenty dollars for seed, twenty dollars for trees, thirty-five dollars for stone and twenty dollars for a bed.

In 1935, he wrote:

> Seeded 9 acres in Block F to barley, had it badly frosted, harvested only 27 bushels of cull.

Cleared and broke about 4 acres in Block A, seed to Legacy Oats on May 10, which was damaged by heating in the stack and light touch of frost. Harvested 97 bushels. Also planted 10 fruit trees of which 9 of them lived. Also seeded Quebec Maple seed which did not grow, also plum, apple, cherry, cedar seed. None of it grew. Will try again next year.

My father had learned drafting from the International Correspondence School between 1909 and 1914, and in 1937, he used his skills to draw the first of a series of meticulous plans of the farmyard and fields. The farm is drawn to the scale of one inch to 100 feet. Around the house on one side is a large garden and beside that is a chicken and goose pen, and across the farmyard are the well and barn. Farrowing pens for the pigs are located across from a sweet clover pasture, and several granaries sit in a large field on the other side of the road seeded to wheat. An electrified fence surrounds the fields. This was the diversified farming operation he began when he was in his fifties, still working as inspector of electricity and gas, and going out on his hunting and river-boating expeditions. He managed his farm by hiring extra help to do the work, but that did not turn out to be efficient.

By 1937, my father had apparently changed his mind about the feasibility of running a full mixed farm while still working at his government job, because he hired Clyde S. Smith, Auctioneer, to sell some farm equipment and most of his animals. Among the items sold were a sleigh, two wagons, a breaking plow, a walking plow, a gang plow, a binder, a mower and a rake. Among the animals that were sold there was one bull, one Rone heifer, a white-faced calf, five cows and one cow with a bell, two colts, a sorrel team with harness, a sorrel mare with harness and a bay mare.

After that year, he would direct his attention towards growing certified seed, and also he would begin bee-keeping, a venture at which he was successful and which gave him much personal satisfaction. He notes inside The ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture by the A.I. Root Bee Library that, "Arthur J. Cantin, October 29, 1937, bought Alcide Guertin's Bee Hives, 32 hives."

My father especially enjoyed looking after his bees and telling people who came to visit all about them. Even though I was only a small girl, he shared his enthusiasm with me. He showed me the enlarged cross-section of a bee in the anatomy section of his book about bee culture and then he brought in a dead bee which he set on a white card under the lamp. I couldn't believe that the tiny body could hold so many organs and structures and could change pollen into honey. He told me about the queen bee, whose only function was to lay eggs and continually provide the hive with workers; the drone who mated with the queen to enable her to lay eggs but then died after that; and finally the workers who were really undeveloped females who did all the work and gave their lives to save the hive, if necessary. In the spring, I was as excited as my father when we went into town to pick up the shipment of bees. I got to hold the queen bee in her special wire box with a hard candy at one end that nourished her until the workers could feed her.

My memories of growing up on the farm in the 1950s are related to the scent of honey and clover. The field of clover that stood beside the farmhouse had been planted for the bees. I remember that I was taught not to be afraid of the bees that buzzed over the field. My parents supplied me with a small pair of white coveralls, special gloves and a bee-veil so that I could go with my father when he went to check the honey frames.

My father would prepare a special can with a type of bellows on it with some burning material that would make a lot of smoke. When he approached the hives, he would pump some smoke into the top section, which had the effect of calming the bees. Then he could remove the cover of the hive and pull out a frame to check if it was full of honey and ready to be extracted.

Late summer was extraction time for the honey and I remember sitting on a wooden chair without a back to watch the process, in view of my mother. I was not allowed to wander around as there was a lot of machinery and motors in operation. My father used a fork-lift in front of his tractor to lift the frames up to the second storey of the red-painted extraction house. Once they had all been lifted, he would take out each frame in turn and, with a special heated knife, trim all the wax from the top of the honeycomb. He would place the frames inside a centrifuge and start the motor to spin the frames until all the honey had been thrown to the edge of the barrel. From there, the honey would drain out through the bottom of the centrifuge. As the liquid flowed by gravity to the vat on the first floor, my mother had a series of cheesecloth filters arranged for the warmed honey to flow through to clean off all the bees' wings and other debris. Then the honey was run into big barrels which McGavin's Bakery bought and used in their bread.

The air would be thick with the scent of honey, so that every breath I took brought a touch of sweetness to the back of my throat. Warned of the dangers of motors and belts, I stayed in my chair and watched as the golden honey flowed through the cloth. The gasoline engine that powered the centrifuge sputtered and drowned out all other noise as it spewed out clouds of blue smoke.

My father liked to tell this story of a young boy who came to visit the farm.

> I would bring in this small frame of honey that we used to eat, honeycomb and all. We could take it in a spoon and spread it on toast and such. You know the wax gave it a pleasant taste. Well sir, this boy's eyes lit up when he saw the honeycomb, and he said that he loved honey so much that he could eat the whole thing.
>
> So I gave him a spoon and I said, "All right, son, you can eat as much honey as you want. All of it."
>
> The boy said, "Really, I can eat it all?" He couldn't believe his good fortune and set out to eat the entire comb. However, in just a short time, the boy was so saturated with the sweet taste that he couldn't take another bite and he gave me back the spoon.

My father laughed every time he told this story.

When I was married and lived again in the Brick House on 115 Street, my mother found a twenty-gallon drum of honey left from the 1950s when they had kept bees. She rolled it out from the shadows under the tool bench of the garage and said it was a forgotten barrel of a lesser grade. Did I want to use it in my baking? When I said yes, she took the barrel home and melted the solid honey down and scooped it into a dozen ice cream pails and several jars. Over the next fifteen years, I used most of the dark-colored honey, one-half cup at a time, to make bread.

Recently, I found one of those jars forgotten in the bottom of my storage shelves. I warmed the hardened honey in a pan of water on the stove, and suddenly the distinct smell of the two-storey shed wafted through the house. The scent brought me back to my days of sitting on a chair that was missing its back and watching as my parents worked together extracting honey.

After leaving the family farm when she was eighteen to pursue a career in nursing and living in town for the next twenty years, my mother must have found it ironic that she married a man who aspired to be a farmer. My father notes her reluctance to move to the farm before they were married. Nevertheless, she was a farmer's wife, tending a large garden, keeping chickens, cows and bees. She was also known as the nurse of the area, and she kept a medical supply kit on hand, including some morphine, needles and syringes in case someone had a serious accident with machinery.

My mother said that my father was an impulse buyer of farm equipment. One day, he decided that the manure that was shoveled out of the barn where the milking cows were kept could be put to good use as fertilizer. He went out that same day and bought a manure spreader. He vigorously shoveled manure into it and drove it around his field. However, the machine did not meet his expectations. He parked the implement in the yard and told my mother to clean it up because he was going to return it.

Perhaps she was torn between the desire to rebel and to tell him to clean it himself, on the one hand, and the determination that the implement be returned so that they did not have to pay for it, on the other. She knew my father would not clean it and that it would have to look like new if they were to get their money back. She cleaned the spreader.

Forty years after the incident, she still spoke of it with bitterness. The manure was distributed by a series of shafts that were caked and dry. My mother had no running water or hose by which to rinse the shafts; all she had was a bucket and a hand pump for water. She had to pump the water and pour buckets and buckets of it down the shafts until the manure softened, and she could scrub it away. Then she had to pump and pour more water to rinse it. It took her hours to finish; her shoes and clothes were wet and covered with mud and manure, but the machine looked as if it had never been used, and my father drove it back to the dealer the next day.

My father did not want to be simply an ordinary farmer; he wanted to become a certified seed grower. However, his attempts to grow the best seed were fraught with difficulties. On August 12, 1946, shortly after he retired and could spend more time working on the farm, he wrote this letter to the Sangudo Seed Grower Cooperative:

> Gentlemen, are you in a position to handle the following acreage of registered seed grain, field inspected and a heavy crop is expected: 30 acres of Ajax Oats; 40 acres of Thatcher Wheat; 30 acres of Titan Barley; 15 acres of Red Wing Flax. This grain has been grown on land summer-fallowed last year and is reasonably clean. If you can handle this crop it was my intention to put all of it through the fanning mill then ship it as early as possible after threshing same. What advance will you make per bushel on each of this crop? What will be the charge for recleaning and other incidentals? Please let me know at your earliest convenience what you can do for me. Yours truly, A.J. Cantin.

On November 5, 1946, the Canadian Seed Growers' Association wrote back:

C.S.G.A. Form No. 8

Canadian Seed Growers' Association

251 BESSERER STREET
OTTAWA, CANADA

November 5, 1946.

Mr. A. J. Cantin,
10013 - 115th St.,
Edmonton, Alta.

Dear Sir,

We regret to inform you that for the reasons given the following crop cannot be registered:

Titan barley - 20 acres.

This crop contains more weeds (Ball mustard, sweet clover, sow thistle and ergot) than is permitted under the standards for registration.

Redwing flax - 10 acres.

This crop contains more weeds (Canada thistle, wild oats, lamb's quarters, stinkweed, wild mint, ball mustard and sweet clover) than is permitted under the standards for registration.

Ajax oats - 30 acres.

This crop was not isolated in accordance with the regulations from an adjoining crop of wheat. Wild oats was also present.

Thatcher wheat - 25 acres.

This crop was not isolated in accordance with the regulations from an adjoining crop of oats. This crop is also very weedy with wild oats, sow thistle, ball mustard and lamb's quarters.

Yours very truly,

CANADIAN SEED GROWERS' ASSOCIATION.

J. E. D. W.

JEDW/EAS.
cc: PPD-Calgary

After receiving this reply, my father wrote this letter to Mr. C.A. Weir, Acting District Supervisor, Plant Products Division, Calgary, Alberta:

> Dear Sir: For several years previous to 1942, I was a member of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association in good standing. However, I had to give up the active management of the farm owing to the heavy amount of work as District Inspector of Electricity and Gas.
>
> In 1945, I spent over $500 to have the whole of the cultivated area of this farm summer-fallowed by two of the neighbors. The work was not done to my satisfaction but it was the best I could do. This year I did all the work myself and greatly improved the look of the soil, yet I feel it will take another two years to have this farm in first class shape.
>
> I am the only farmer in my neighborhood who plants only the best seed available in the hope that someday my farm will be the best in the district. I know that there were a few patches of thistles and other weeds but I shall get after weedy patches with chemicals etc. and clean it up within the next year or two.
>
> If it is possible to allow this grain to be sold as registered it will be considered a great favor and I assure you that I will follow the regulation as closely as possible in the future. Yours truly, A.J. Cantin.

However, on December 24, 1946, my father received this reply:

> Dear Sir: After further consideration and keeping in mind the decision reached by the Executive Council after they had reviewed a number of appeals, we are not prepared to revise the decision in refusing registration on your crops. Yours truly, The Canadian Seed Growers' Association.

My father would tell the following story to almost everyone who came to our house. He would tell them that his choice of wives had caused a great deal of confusion all of his life. First, he had been married to Marie-Louise, who was nine years older than he was. As she aged and became white-haired more rapidly than he did, people would often ask him, "Your mother?"

Then when he was in his sixties, he married my mother, who was twenty-four years younger than he was. People would then ask him, "Your daughter?"

My father's second wife, Lucienne Pagé, was born in St. Albert, Alberta, the eleventh of thirteen children, on September 19, 1905. Her parents, Felix and Eugenie had been married in St. Anne's church in Ottawa, Ontario, on July 16, 1890. In the ten years they lived in Ottawa, seven children had been born to them. In 1900, after the Ottawa Fire, the family decide to emigrate to St. Albert, in what was still known at that time as the Northwest Territories, where Felix's older sister Celine and her husband were already established.

Eugenie bore six more children in St. Albert, including my mother, although three children would die in the eleven years the family lived there. In 1911, Felix decided that he would take a homestead in the Chauvin area of Alberta to provide work for his many sons. This is where my mother grew up, and attended Bull Creek School, before she decided to move to Edmonton and become a nurse.

From 1928 to 1937, she worked in Wainwright, Alberta, where she became the matron of the hospital. She was an independent woman with a career at a time when most women were married and mothers. Her salary allowed her to take numerous vacations throughout her working years. The reason she had been hired to go to Wainwright in the first place was because the hospital wanted a Catholic and French-speaking nurse to be able to communicate with the large number of French settlers in the area. However, when she returned from her vacation in 1937, she discovered that the hospital board policy had changed, voting against keeping a Catholic nurse, and so she had been replaced. At the age of thirty-two, she had to move from the town she considered home and find a new place of employment.

With numerous letters of reference, Lucienne decided to apply for work close to where her parents had settled after leaving the Chauvin area. She was hired at the hospital in Westlock, a town about fifty miles northwest of Edmonton, and shortly afterwards she bought a small house where she lived with her parents. They celebrated their fiftieth wedding

anniversary on July 16, 1940, and all of the family except one son attended the occasion. Shortly after this, her father Felix was diagnosed with throat cancer and died in February 1941.

From that time on, Lucienne kept her mother Eugenie with her since she was the only unmarried daughter in the family. My mother was thirty-five years old at that time and had been a nurse for fifteen years. Life settled into a routine for my mother for the next three years until March of 1944, when her cousin Roseanna's husband, Walter Veness, introduced her to a widower who was looking for a wife.

The story of my parents' courtship in 1944 was made clear to me when I found in the attic some carbon copies of letters my father had typed to his brother and sisters. The correspondence begins with a letter from my father's sister, dated one month after Marie-Louise's death in June 1943, and continues until September 1944, one month before my parents married. In January 1944 my father wrote, in French, to his older sister Alexina, and invited her to come and stay with him in Edmonton, because she had been ordered by her doctor to take a rest. These letters are translated from the French.

February 5, 1944:

Dear Alexina. Perhaps it is better for you to leave all your furniture in Montreal but if I were you, I would take a rest of a year or so and if you cannot work perhaps you could have work at home and not work as long hours as you work in the factory. And, if things go well between us, you might well finish your days with me.

I have not yet met a woman to whom I would like to give my name. I do not believe I will be interested in an old married woman or rather widow, I want a wife of 35 to 45 years old and if I am not able to find one of that age, Alexina, then I will remain a bachelor. Your loving brother, Arthur.

February 15, 1944:

Dear Sister, You should see how some of the old widowers around here behave. Mr. B. I believe is making a fool of himself and another who lost his wife at about the same time as me, is going out with a young woman of twenty-five years or younger perhaps. As for me, up to this time, I have not gone out with anyone. I said after my wife died that I would not re-marry before a year had passed and so I will follow my

first idea and perhaps I may be single for several years. If everything went well between us, Alexina, and if you wanted to stay with me, well, I might stay single. I am getting used to being alone and it is peaceful that way.

If you leave on the 23rd, you will arrive Saturday and have a rest that day. Sunday morning you could meet Jeanne as she always goes to 7:30 mass. Also, there is a dance school not far from here and maybe you and I could learn to dance together. Well, I do not want to go to all the dances but I would like to be able to dance a little if the occasion presents itself. That's all for today, I hope everything goes well on your trip. With love to all, Arthur.

June 1, 1944:

My dear brother Philemon. I hope that you are well and that you do not have any more trouble with your eyes. Alexina is doing much better but she certainly isn't well and I don't believe she should return to her job. Perhaps she would be better off taking work at home.

Well, old man, I am hoping that if all goes well, I will be married on the 15 or 17 of July. I have only known this girl for about three months but she is very nice and I believe her to be worthy to succeed Marie-Louise. For this reason, I want Alexina to return to Sherbrooke before the middle of July, which she is not happy about, but I believe that five months rest here is long enough. The girl that I am to marry is a girl of 39 years, a nurse who was in charge of a hospital for eight years and who works now for a doctor in Westlock, 55 miles north of Edmonton. A girl who is very pleasant and everyone who knows her well, speaks highly

of her. I hope everything goes well between us and that she will make me a good wife.

That's all for today, greetings and love to all, Arthur.

July 18, 1944:

Dear Rose-Alba, I received your last letter and I am glad that you are all well. For us here too, everything is first class and Alexina will stay here until the 20 of August when she will return home. I was to get married last Saturday but I will not marry the girl I was engaged with, a bit the fault of Alexina. She didn't want me to marry Miss Boisjoli and when she saw that I was going to marry Lucienne Pagé she found that that didn't make any sense and she made me change my mind. I believe Miss Boisjoli is of a preferable family and also in better health. Miss Pagé is rather sickly and does not want to go on the farm with me and I want to finish my days on the farm.

It is more than likely that I will marry Miss Boisjoli at the beginning of September, she has a few hundred dollars savings, I don't know exactly how much. Miss Pagé also has certain savings, not that much, but also worthwhile. If the money is available, it is my intention to repay you as well as Alexina. Rose-Alba, I am worried about marrying again, I am afraid of making a mistake. You know that I had a good wife and if I took a woman with whom I could not get along with, then I assure you, I would not find that funny. Miss Pagé is a girl who is not a beauty, but she looks good; however, she has her own mind and I am sure that we would not get along. She wants to do things her own way, as she has always done, and her tastes are not the same as mine. Miss Boisjoli has a

different kind of character, somewhat passive. And, my first choice, Jeanne would not have been the girl for me as she is not too intelligent and I thank God for having kept me single. Well, that's about all for now, love to all, Arthur and Alexina.

September 1, 1944:

Dear Sister Alexina, Well, things are getting complicated, I received a letter from a lawyer about Lucienne and she wants damages for the trouble and sorrow that she had because I canceled our wedding and I really don't know what to do. I talked to my friend Dubuc and he told me not to worry, just to answer the lawyer in about two weeks but it is probable that I will have to pay something. For Ernestine, I don't know what will happen yet. I am having supper with her tonight at home and I will tell her the truth, I will not hide anything from her.

My son came to see me at noon and he was quite opposed to my marrying Miss Pagé. He said if you marry her, she will make you miserable, and you will not stay with her, look at what she's done. If that doesn't put me in a difficult position—really, I don't know what to do. I might have married Lucienne if she hadn't gone to the lawyer but now that she shows what kind of woman she is, well, I don't want her. In any case, I might have to go to court with that and I hope if it goes to court, that it will be in the newspapers to show what kind of person she is. I am going to make a donation to the Monastery of the Precious Blood and ask the good sisters to pray that everything will go well. Hoping that your health is good, your brother, Arthur.

September 11, 1944:

Dear Sister, Alexina, I am still a bachelor and I don't know how long that will last. I would like to marry Ernestine but I believe I am losing more than I am gaining. Be careful what you say in your letters because I let her read them and I don't want you to say something that can be interpreted in more ways than one.

I wonder if I have not let go of the substance to grab at shadows, I am not sure yet. I am certain that Lucienne loved me enough to marry me, the other one is rather indifferent. Alexina, I am not a young man of twenty years and I will not wait indefinitely.

Ernestine doesn't like me to talk about Lucienne but nevertheless she often asks me questions about her. She says it is certainly taking a long time to break off with her and, well, that is not my fault if Lucienne has approached me again which means that she still wants of me. I was happy when she did call me. No doubt Ernestine would make me a good wife but I believe that Lucienne would make me a good wife as well, and so I'll have to marry one of them to find out. Everything went well with Marie Louise and I believe that with a wife who tries to get along with me, we should have no difficulty.

I suppose you are all settled in Sherbrooke and that your health is stable. My suites are all rented and things are going well here in Edmonton. Don't worry about me, everything is going well and I sleep well, I am not losing any sleep. Your brother who thinks of you, Arthur.

My mother, Lucienne, said that the first time that my father brought her to see his house in the city, she could not believe her eyes. "This is the Brick House on 115 Street?"

When my father answered yes, she said:

> When I was in training at the General, I used to walk over here. My brother Romeo worked for Durocher and I came to talk to him. I watched this house being built and I admired the verandahs on the front. I saw all of it being built. I never imagined for a moment that one day I would come to live here....

My father gave my mother a diamond ring with one large diamond and two small ones set at each side. On Monday, October 23, 1944, three months after they were originally supposed to marry, Arthur Cantin married Lucienne Pagé in St. Mary's Church in Westlock and gave her the wedding band of gold that matched the engagement ring. A newspaper article in the Westlock Witness described the occasion:

> A quiet but pretty wedding, the bride was charmingly gowned in rose crepe with floral hat, veil and gloves of powder blue and navy shoes. Her flowers were roses and carnations in colors to contrast. Her bridesmaid, Isabel Gingras of Vimy wore a lovely gown of gold crepe with beige hat and gloves, and brown shoes. The groom was attended by Walter Veness. Following the ceremony a wedding breakfast was served by the immediate relatives at the home of the bride's mother, a beautiful wedding cake centering the daintily decorated table. The happy couple left on Monday for a honeymoon at Banff. They will reside in Edmonton.

I found several pictures of the wedding and honeymoon in a box of loose pictures. One group picture shows the newlyweds with many of my mother's family, and my brother Art and his wife. Of the many pictures of the Banff honeymoon, the pictures of my parents feeding the deer, shows them smiling and happy.

My parents make a handsome couple: it is difficult to believe that there is twenty-four years between them. I found several copies of the formal wedding picture of the two of them, including one wrapped in Christmas paper and tucked away in the bottom of my mother's cedar chest. I wonder whom it was intended for and why it was not given.

When I was twelve years old, my mother lost her diamond in the swimming pool at Miette Hotsprings. Eventually, she had the stone replaced with a pearl, but in 1979 thieves broke into her house and stole the ring.

When she married my father, my mother was a woman who had worked for seventeen years as a nurse, had her own car, and owned a house in Westlock. She had traveled across Canada several times, had camped throughout Oregon and California, and had made her own decisions throughout her life. Suddenly she found herself married to a man who believed in the old Quebec Napoleonic Code that said that after marriage, a wife's possessions became her husband's.

She liked to recall my father's surprise when he went to his lawyer after the honeymoon to lay claim to what she possessed and the lawyer told him that my mother had a right to her property and he could not do anything without her consent. She held on to what she had, except that she did cash in some savings bonds so that they could build the large kitchen onto the farmhouse. However, my mother, whose favorite book was Jane Eyre, must have lost any notion of romantic love when she became an entry in my father's ledger book, under "income." And yet, in spite of that, she was a practical woman and resolved to be a good wife, to provide him with a home because he was alone. I believe that my father tried to be a good husband to her, having met his match. When asked to compare his two wives, he always said without hesitation that his second wife was the best.

Entry in Arthur Cantin's "Canadian Pocket Diary" for January 1, 1947:

I am approaching my first year of retirement in three months time. I retired on superannuation on March 29, 1946, the day of my sixty-fifth birthday, and let me tell you that I am enjoying my work at the farm. Last year I had 150 acres in crop, and harvested over 4,000 bushels all by myself with the Harvester. I spent less than $200 for help during the summer. I know that if you want to have a job well done you have to do it yourself, but that was not possible when I was working. However, my main intention in buying this farm was so that I could spend my retirement doing something that I enjoyed. In that, the farm has given me much satisfaction and contentment.

I have been married to Lucienne for over two years now. The decision was a good one because I have acquired not only my own nurse and companion, but also a woman of good business sense. I believe that she will be the one to get me out of debt in my retirement. She is quite content sharing life between the farm and the city, and her mother Eugenie is a woman who knows to mind her own business. I accept her mother as my family out of respect and duty and I do not expect any payment for her room and board.

This year I want to clear about 100 acres of bush land, most of it ex-beaver meadow burnt over. I believe very little work will put it ready for the plow and, for the heavy bush, I expect to cut two to three thousand logs to saw for lumber. I am told the bush cannot be broken with an ordinary tractor breaker but with a heavy brush cutter. I am thinking of

using a heavy Oliver six foot tiller with the seed box filled up with sand to give it more weight. I would tiller it once then go over it with a heavy single disk, then harrow it and again disk it. My idea is to have a good mulch three to four inches deep. If I can have a reasonable amount ready in time, I am going to seed it this spring to flax as a nurse crop for alsike clover, then harvest this clover for seed with an All Crop Harvester. If I do this for three or four years, then back set it with an ordinary plow, then all the roots should be rotted enough to cause very little difficulty for plowing.

I remember that when I was a young boy, my father cleared about three acres of heavy spruce, black birch, maple, etc. and left the stumps standing. He had to cultivate this with a spring tooth harrow and cut it by hand and he had a real good crop of oats. That land has been under cultivation ever since. I wish he could see my land now, and see how I have followed his example.

When I was growing up, I noticed that sometimes my father did not trust my mother, probably because of the unknown factor of all her years as a single woman. I remember one time when I was eight or nine years old, my mother had enrolled in a "Dale Carnegie Speaking Course" with one of her friends, a nurse. As she waited for her friend to come and pick her up, she sat at her makeup table with the mirror propped up applying powder and lipstick, while I watched.

My father came into the bedroom where she was getting ready and he was upset. He must have been thinking for a while about what to say. "I don't want you to go out tonight."

"But I've already registered. Regine is going to pick me up. It's a public speaking course. I thought I would like to do that...."

He shook his finger at her to emphasize his words: "I forbid you to go and that's final."

In the face of such fury, she did not reply. After a few minutes, the door bell rang and she had to go downstairs and tell her friend that she could not go. She did not look at me or speak to me. I went to my room and sat next to the cage of budgie birds. I could hear her sobbing quietly. I think she was doubly humiliated in front of me and her friend, and perhaps she realized that she could not always do what she wanted.

When I was researching my father's life, I visited an old couple who, for as long as I could remember, had lived three streets away from the Brick House on 115 Street. I asked, as I always did, what they remembered of my parents. Mr. Turcotte said that he knew my father after his first wife died and he recalled a story that was going around at the time my father was looking for a wife. It seems that three old widowers were talking about their plans for the future. The first one said that he wanted to find a woman who was a good cook and housekeeper and wasn't tied down by too much family; the second one said that he was actively looking for a rich widow so he wouldn't have to worry about money and could travel with her. But when they asked my father what kind of woman he was looking for, he said, "I want to marry a woman young enough to have children." Although the others laughed at him and asked whatever did he want with children at the age of sixty-three, my father was quite serious.

Four years after my parents were married, when my mother was forty-two years old and my father sixty-seven, they became expectant parents. My mother had had one miscarriage before this, and my father must have been reminded then of the children he had lost with his first wife. The first time my mother went to see the doctor, he told her, without running any tests, that she was entering menopause because of her age and, therefore, she was not pregnant. In her fourth month of pregnancy she went back to see him and told him she was feeling movement and to reconsider his diagnosis.

I was born on October 2, 1948, at the General Hospital, and my father and grandmother had to return to the farm because there was a lot of work left to finish harvesting the garden before the major frosts arrived. One of the mementos I have of that time is a letter my grandmother wrote to my mother in the hospital. She describes how my father is finishing the work in the fields and how his son Art and his family have come to dig the potatoes. She says my father is looking after her very well because he makes the porridge in the morning and sets the table, placing an orange for her on the plate with the paring knife beside it.

When my mother came home from the hospital with me, my father had arranged to take me to the church with his son and daughter-in-law and have me baptized. He told my mother to stay at home and recuperate. She did not want to stay at home, but he insisted and she spoke of this with bitterness even forty years later. Yet, perhaps my father did not intend to be cruel. In Quebec, traditionally, the newborn was carried to church by a woman called a "porteuse," so that the baby could be baptized, leaving the mother to recuperate at home. As well, in the 1900s when my father first had children, the mortality rate of infants was high. He may have worried about my survival because of the boy and girl he had lost, and so wanted to get me baptized as soon as possible.

There is a picture taken of my father and me, on November 2, 1948, when I was one month old. It is a black and white picture, hastily taken because half of my father's head over his ears and half of one side of my face is missing. He is holding my back and head with his left hand so that I face him, while his right hand supports the rest of me. I am looking right at him and he appears to be talking to me. He is holding me in the same way he held my brother in the ornate oval picture taken in Lowell, Massachusetts, thirty-eight years before. The man who holds me is an older father, his body filled out, wearing a white shirt with one button open at the collar. In the background of this picture is a vinyl and aluminum chair from the 1940s and two cushions that I recognize because I still have the covers.

What was my father thinking as he gazed down at me so intently, his second child, born to him in his old age? There must have been the surprise of life, and a certain anxiety as he wondered if he would see me into adulthood. By the time I was born, my father no longer kept notes in his "Canadian Pocket Diary." Perhaps since he was retired, he did not find it necessary to keep a running account of his travels and expenses and so I have no written account of what he thought. There is only a comment my mother wrote in one of my birth announcements, that was recently returned to me, that he was a "proud Daddy."

Forty years later, when I cleaned out my mother's house after her death, I opened the green Bible that my father had bought after his first wife died. Inside, my father had kept four of my Father's Day cards to him, all with the date written on them. One of the cards was inscribed by me, "To Papa, Happy Father's day. From your little girl." I think being my father must have been important to him; to have saved my cards suggests as much. I am touched by these mementos and I wonder if he knew that I loved him, or were we perpetually divided by the chasm of years between us?

My parents took two extensive trips with me in the early 1950s when I was three and four years old: one to California and the other to Eastern Canada and then down to Florida. These were perhaps my father's trips in retirement. My memories are blurred of this time, with orange groves, the bells of Capistrano, and a picture of me in an apron standing next to a formally set table, the only child in a group of adults. For all I knew at the time, Orange, California could be somewhere near Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which could be next to Sherbrooke, Quebec. How could those distances we traveled for hours be simply a line on a map? I had my blanket, with the coloured puffs sewn on to it, and a pillow, and I slept curled up under the dashboard of the Nash. When I was not sleeping I had to sit in the front seat and look straight ahead because I was frequently car-sick.

After we returned home, my parents spoke of these trips often. My mother would bring out two large coconut shells sawed in two which she kept stored next to the world globe on top of the oak bookshelves in our suite at the Brick House on 115 Street. These were not the small sort of coconuts bought at Safeway; rather, these were the size of over-inflated basketballs, the outer enclosures. My parents would tell the story of how trained monkeys in Florida climbed up the trees and threw the big shells down on the ground. At other times, my mother would take out boxes of seashells of all shapes and sizes and amaze our visitors with the array. Whenever I had to bring something interesting to school, I would bring the collection of shells, carefully laid out in a wide box lined with cotton batting.

For years afterwards, I heard the familiar stories of the long trip to Florida and through the States: of how my father went to drink at a fountain in the deep American South that he didn't realize was marked "For Colored Only." A black man called him aside and in a friendly manner told him he could have been beaten or even killed if anyone had seen him.

Another story my parents would tell was about the time they were invited to see a real mermaid near Clearwater Beach, Florida. The spiel must have been convincing because they

drove out of their way to see the mermaid and paid a dollar twenty-five to enter the tent where she was. "It was a joke," my mother said, "Simply a woman wearing a kind of fish tail." They laughed that they were taken in so easily.

I remember that my father fed the seagulls on the beach from a small bag filled with pieces of bread. He had a gentle way of coaxing all kinds of birds to come and eat from his hand. This is a picture of my father and me at San Juan Capistrano, where he is feeding the doves:

My own mementos of the trip, the dozens of "Little Golden Books," are dutifully inscribed with the location and the date of purchase. One of the books is from Fort Myers, Florida, where my father visited the laboratory of a man he greatly admired, Thomas Edison, who had invented the electric light bulb. In Lucas, Ohio, we also called upon one of my

father's favorite writers, Louis Bromfield. My father chatted with him for half an hour while my mother took my picture sitting on a wrought-iron bench in the man's garden.

What I remember is playing with some flat metal fish and a magnet on a fishing pole. As I lay on a couch, dangling my fishing line, I lost my balance and slid off, extending one hand to catch myself. Unfortunately, I cut my hand on one of the fish. I remember the searing pain and how much I bled. My parents wanted to throw out the toy but I liked it and they relented. The metal fish still exists at the bottom of my dresser drawer and I still bear the curved scar, my souvenir, on the side of my hand.

Beginning in 1952, many things would change for my father, who was now seventy-one years old. Part of the farm on the shores of Lac St. Anne was subdivided into lots to be sold to cottagers who wanted a summer place at the lake. Over the next fifteen years, all of the farm would be divided, a piece at a time, and sold. My father kept four lots near the woods at the end of the clover field where the bees used to fly, and he built a new cottage of plywood and siding in 1956. The old farmhouse, that had been built in 1933 for 275 dollars was sold against my mother's wishes. In a few years, the house, with the new kitchen my mother had paid for, burned down.

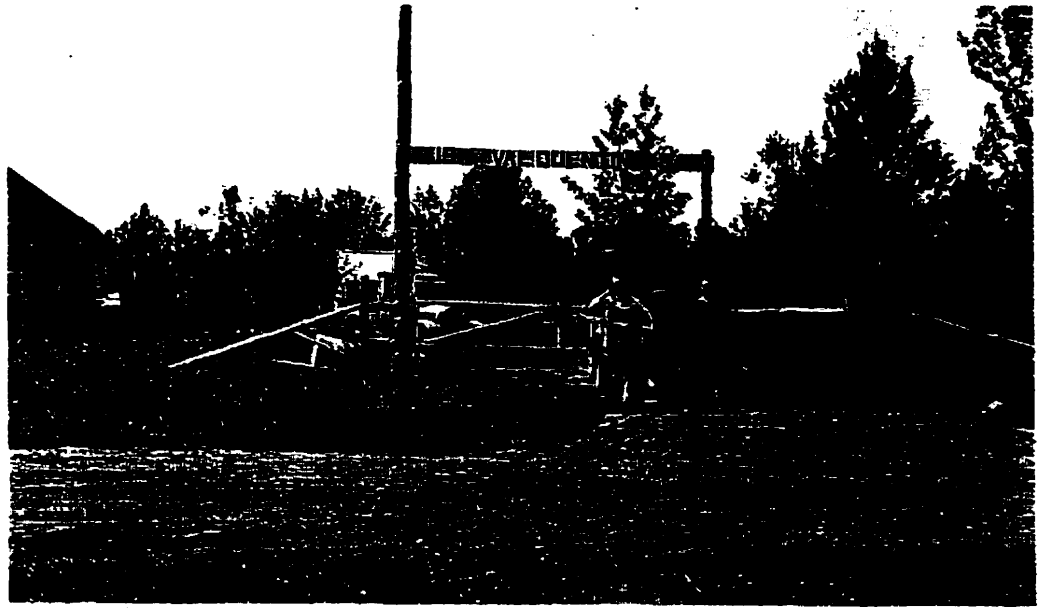
In 1956, my father commissioned Mr. W.T. Usher, a land surveyor, to give an evaluation report of his land. The report was as follows:

> This property consists of 248 acres and is located 6 miles from Gunn and one mile from Alberta Beach on Lac Ste. Anne. The soil is a black loam to dark brown clay loam about 12 inches deep on a clay subsoil. There is very little sand except in the North-west corner, an area of two or three acres and there are no stones to speak of. There is a good well about 20 feet deep with lots of water. There are approximately 205 acres under cultivation of which 80 acres is seeded down to sweet clover. The farm has not been well worked and while the land is not particularly weedy except for stink weed, it has not been productive the last few years; in fact last year we understand the return from the crop was $191 and the taxes for the same years were $186.
>
> The buildings consist of a one and a half storey frame house, shingle roof, brick chimney, 24 by 16, and a one story frame addition, rubberoid roof, 24 by 12; a two story frame and log barn, shingle roof, 35 by 45; a log and frame garage and workshop, 32 by 22, with a frame

addition, 14 by 22; a frame honey house, shingle roof, 12 by 16, two frame portable granaries and pump house. Buildings are fairly old and not in good condition.

This property has been apparently farmed by renters for a number of years but they had very little interest in making money for the land owner and the land is not in good shape, and while a considerable amount could be put in crop this year, yet most of it needs working over before cropping.

Twenty years after buying his farm and ten years after retiring, my father watched his dream disappear. By 1967, the year he died, all of the land had been divided as lots with one large part sold as farmland. That year as well, the summer village that grew up from his land was called "Val Quentin," the name he had given his farm in 1934: "Quentin" was an old French spelling of the name "Cantin." By 1978, the log barn, the garage and workshop, and all the extra buildings would be dismantled or burned down.



In 1960, when I was twelve years old, my father tried to write his biography. He was seventy-nine years old at the time but still in good health in spite of the mild strokes. He got up one morning and announced at the breakfast table that today he was going to start writing the story of his life. The first thing he did was take the bus downtown to find the newest technology: an eight-track Philco tape recorder. He wanted to dictate his life on tape and then have someone type it. But he must have found it difficult to dictate into the machine because I have not found any tapes of his voice. He did write a few pages though, in one of my school scribblers.

> February 23, 1960: Am I wise in putting this in writing? It is my intention to write my own life in writing or on a recorder from the time of my birth to the time of my death.
>
> I was born in Weedon, Quebec, on March 29, 1881, and baptized at the church of St. Janvier which burned down several years ago. I have been to Weedon only twice since I came to Edmonton in April 1908, the first time, and the main town has been moved from its original location since that time.
>
> In about the year 1908, I wanted to go into hydro-electric construction. I had experience in telegraph and telephone, so I left the New England Telephone and Telegraph and took a train for the end of the C.P.R. line north of Calgary and came to Edmonton. I got here about the end of April. The telephones in Alberta were very poor, only one line and about ten telephone subscribers so I was hired by an Englishman who knew nothing about the business and he gave me the job of traffic manager. My first job was to make the rate schedule based on the distance between the towns. I took the line distance which would have

been fair. The rate for a telephone in Edmonton was a dollar fifty and the poorest management that could be put together. Then a graduate from Queen University of Ontario—being a protégé of the president of Alberta University—was hired, and a protégé of Sifton—who was not so hot—got the job of Deputy Minister and it was then that I could not see any justice being done to me so I decided to go back down east. I took work with Midland Construction of Toronto, erecting engineer on general construction. I held the job for about two years.

I have seen the Saskatchewan River in flood where a gravel train had to be kept on the bridge with two engines to be sure that it would not drift away. It was the second flood of the river in about 16 years. The first flood came in 1898-1899 and today you can see the mark where the piers were raised about 6 feet, then again another 18 inches to 2 feet, just recently when a second bridge adjoining the old one was built. During the flood of June 1915, as said previously, the old Low Level bridge was in danger of being washed away.

A prophet has no standing in his home town but I predict another flood within the next few years. The reason is that as the land is cleared for cultivation, the poplar trees, that shed the leaves that make a mulch and hold the water at spring run-off, are cut and the water from the melting snow flows directly into the river. These excessive floods occur three times in a century, according to Daniel W. Mead, professor of Hydrology, Wisconsin, University, based on nearly 200 rivers' measurement. By this it does not mean that the flood is exactly on time.

> There may be two maximum floods only a few years apart then a much longer period before the next flood.
>
> I studied hydrology for possibly 35 years and spent over $5,000 of my own time and money with the idea of promoting an Alberta Hydro-electric system but having no higher education, I did not carry enough influence to set it up. Me to be young again, there are so many things that could be done.

After writing a few more times about his hunting experiences, my father gave up his project. My mother did not encourage him, belittling his attempts. She asked, who would want to read about his life? He had been simply a civil servant; there was nothing remarkable about him. Perhaps she convinced him that it was useless; perhaps he found it too difficult to continue. I like to think that he started writing the second biography for me, just as he had written the first one for his son.

#5

BLACK MAISE & JACK THE FROG

I remember the first time I was in Mountain Park and I visited

Black Maisie she was a striking looking negress ~~I first met on the train between~~ Edson and coal spur on my way to mountain park. She moved up with Jack the FROG she was running a sort of a stopping place and her husband was making moonshine of good quality and the revenue man could not catch up to him he made it out in the bush a few miles from the village. he never fright any to his but if any one in the know he would say about two miles or just by the tree you will find a bottle or may be a gallon you can pay me and pick up the hootch.

This system was in force for a few years until two detective went to Coalspur to go fishing so they ask Jack if they could use his horses for a trip to the fishing spot. sure go ahead if you can catch the horses go ahead and use them so they caught the horses late one summer afternoon and they knew to stated from the village and went around a hill and gave the horses their head go on and they did take them to a camp properly equipped to make a full kind of moonshine and got it on the frog he was brought into court and neil McLean was his lawyer it cost him a few thousand dollars to get out of this Jam. Black Maisie made him a good wife but eventually she drank enough moonshine and she became blind have not been to Coalspur for a number of years so do not know the end of the story is of maisie and Jack

On July 17, 1957, when I was eight years old, my mother, age fifty-one, received a letter from the secretary of the "Association Canadienne des Educateurs de Langue française," or ACELF, inviting her to a luncheon honoring five pioneer women. The secretary, Father Jean Patoine, informed her that she had been chosen as the dean of Franco-Albertan nurses; that is, she was the first Franco-Albertan born in this province to graduate as a nurse.

The others honored at this convention of Canada's French-speaking educationalists, would be Mrs. Phydime Joly, 89, of St. Paul, who had 287 living descendants, Rev. Sister Marie Alphonse, 66, a pioneer teaching sister, Mrs. Maxim Desrosiers, 91, a pioneer mother, and Mrs. Jean-Baptiste Dolhagary, 55, of St. Albert, a pioneer teacher. Mrs. Valerie Boulanger would make the presentations of rosary beads and engraved prayer books, and Senator Marianne Jodoin of Ottawa would congratulate the women.

On August 14, my mother had her picture taken several times in her new maroon dress with a carnation corsage. At the luncheon, my mother sat at the head table. After the presentations and short biographies of the honored guests, there was a break for a few minutes. All of a sudden, my father stood up and walked behind the head table, making his way to the microphone. He wanted to speak to the crowd gathered there. People turned to look and whispered among themselves while I shrank in embarrassment. Even though I was young, I knew that he was jealous of all the attention my mother was getting.

Just in time, my mother saw what was happening and she stood up quickly and took his arm and spoke to him quietly as she pulled him back, away from the microphone. Then she walked back with him to our table, coolly, as if there was nothing wrong. He sat back down.

What did he want to say that day? Did he want to speak about his life, his plans for hydro-electric development, his experience of being a French-Canadian in the west? Perhaps it was all of those things; perhaps it was none. My mother never spoke of it again, nor did my father.

Occasionally in the 1960s, my father would pick up the phone and ask to speak to a Member of the Legislative Assembly or other government office. He would stand close to the wall phone, turned away from the kitchen, next to the buffet on which he would place his notes. He would speak quietly, as if he did not want my mother and me to hear him speaking about his ideas for dams throughout Alberta. The men at the other end of the line were polite, because they would listen as he explained his project in great detail in the rambling way of an old man reminiscing to himself. In most cases, they would decline his offer for him to come and see them with his plan. He would say, always patiently, "Yes, of course I understand that you are busy and that you have no time in your appointment book right now. I'll be awaiting your phone call. Yes, I'm available. Thank you very much for your time."

My mother would shake her head then and reproach him for disturbing the men who had no interest in what an eighty-year-old man had to say. He would reply with an abrupt, "I'll phone whoever I please," and then gather up his notes and go back to the den where the desk and papers were.

The last time he spoke about his hydro-electric plan was on July 7, 1962, when he phoned an Edmonton Journal reporter who came and interviewed him for a human interest story. I remember that my mother was annoyed that he had bothered someone like that. I was going through the typical teenage embarrassment period, feeling that everything my parents did reflected on me. I should have been more interested in what my father would say, but mostly I was interested in the next dance at school and whether or not I should wear high heels.

My father mentioned to the Journal reporter that he had had a plan for the hydro-electric development of the province but that he was forced by his bosses at the federal government to drop the plan because they were alarmed at his meddling in provincial affairs. He spoke extensively about his life, growing up in Quebec, working at the textile mills, studying

through correspondence school and moving west. He spoke of his work as electrical inspector and of buying the farm in the 1930s. He was probably delighted to have someone listen to his life story.

When the article came out, it was placed in the financial section of the newspaper. The reporter stressed that my father's investment in the farm was now a source of income, as the lots were being sold. The angle of the story was that a wise investment could reap benefits for years to come, even in retirement.

When I was sixteen years old and in grade eleven, I took a creative writing course. I had enjoyed writing in my years at Grandin School, where composing stories was an important part of learning French. For a high school short story contest, I wrote a story called "Scarlet, Scarlet" about a young girl who is the foster child of a kindly woman named Edith who also looks after her elderly father. The old man is very frail and has a bushy beard which must be looked after by his caregivers.

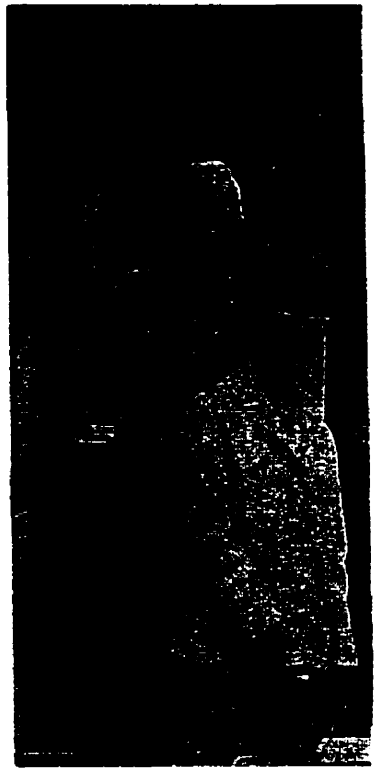
One weekend Scarlet is left alone with the old man and she decides that she will stay with him just long enough to ensure he will be all right, and then she will run away. But as she watches the old man, who cuts out articles from newspapers about hydro-electricity and pastes them carefully in his scrapbook, she realizes that he has an interest that has not been diminished by old age. She sees the gold watch he was awarded for working at the same job for thirty-five years and is tempted to steal it, but she cannot.

She makes soup for lunch and watches as he struggles not to spill any on his shirt because his hands are shaky. Finally, she empathizes with him when he cannot get up from his rocking chair and she sees how he is trapped inside a failing body. She is reminded of the look of a wounded deer that her own father had hunted once, a long time ago, and she decides not to run away.

I didn't want my father to read it, but he did when it was published in the school yearbook. He said the story was about him, wasn't it, except that he didn't have a beard? I said no. He nodded and said that it was very good.

In my father's last year of life, he stayed mainly in his pajamas and dressing gown because it was difficult for him to dress. He was eighty-five years old. His body had stiffened, and though he tried to walk straight as he always had, his posture was slightly stooped. He wore bedroom slippers and walked with short shuffling footsteps, advancing inches at a time. When he ate, he spilled things often on himself, and to save some stains and laundry, my mother insisted that he wear a towel around his neck. He laughed quietly about this and tried to joke about his "bib."

My father at eighty-five and me at eighteen



One day in the summer of 1966, after ensuring that my father had had a good lunch and that he would read for a while in the rocking chair before he took his afternoon nap, my mother and I decided to see a movie. When he saw us preparing to leave, he said, "Wait for me. Help me dress and I'll go with you."

"No, Arthur," my mother said. "We're going to be late. The movie starts in half an hour."

"I want to go. Just help me for a minute." He pushed himself out of the rocking chair and turned to go to the bedroom.

My mother sighed. "You know you can't come. You know it's too far to walk."

My father's face assumed a set expression, the way it did when he was digging in for a long fight. He retorted angrily and my mother lost her patience. As they argued, I went outside. I didn't want him to come either. It was an argument I knew he could not win. Then my mother came out, locked the door, and we left. I did not empathize with him then, or think about how he must have felt: not wanted, confronted with his infirmities. My image of him in those days is of his face, unshaven every second day, with his look of apology for being weak and old.

Most of the pictures that I have of my father and me were taken when I was small for he was the father of my childhood. I recall vividly that picture of us in the field and his gazing at the tiny Hungarian Partridges in his hands. I remember the blazing sun and the scratching of the straw on my legs and wondering why I had to stand beside my father. Only recently have I understood why the Hungarian Partridges were important and why he would want to have his picture taken with them. I read an interview with my father about his work as the Inspector of Electricity and Gas, which was published in the Calgary Herald in September 1928. He spoke about how the number of electricity meters had doubled in one year's time, meaning that more and more electricity was being used.

The article continued:

> Mr. Cantin, who is an enthusiastic nimrod and fisherman, is deeply interested in the conservation of fish and game, being a member of the executive committee of the Alberta Fish and Game Protective Association. He was recently asked by the president, Dr. R.F. Nicholl, to establish branches wherever possible in central and northern Alberta.
>
> The aim of the association, he said, is to instill regard for the existing game laws and to bring new species into the country. It was this association that imported the Hungarian Partridge a few years ago.

My father wanted his picture taken in his field of hay with the baby Hungarian Partridges that he had been instrumental in bringing to Alberta thirty years before.

To the end of his life, my father's books were his faithful companions. He read about people, wars, philosophy, astronomy, religion and health. He read as if every volume was important to him, as if ideas would always be useful to him, even as he knew that the book of his life was closing. The last book I remember my father reading was a two-thousand page tome called The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, by Cornelius Ryan, which he did not have the time to finish.

That is what made the deepest impression on me: his quest for learning until the last moment of his life. His intense love of books was transferred to me, and I have sought my father's approval throughout my own life as I have read and studied. Learning was so important to me that I went to my chemistry lab on the day of his funeral. And now, thirty-four years after I first enrolled at university, I am writing my thesis about him, a book for my father.

How do you find a father between the lines of writing? Perhaps he has become a character in his own life, reconstructed by his child. My father is the stories and images he left behind: an imperfect mosaic of past and present, pieced together from the words he left me:

Weedon;

Manchester, corner of Elm and Central;

Marie-Louise, la première femme à Papa;

Arthur, Junior;

Lawrence and Lowell;

International Correspondence Schools;

Telephony and Telegraphy;

Grand Trunk Pacific Railway;

Hydro-Electricity;

Mountain Park;

Penstock, Turbine, Generator;

Sheet Ice, Frazil Ice, Anchor Ice;

The H.E.;

Lac Ste. Anne;

Lucienne;

Titan Barley, Redwing Flax, Ajax Oats;

Sow Thistle, Stinkweed;

Bees and Clover;

The Brick House on 115 Street

Papa

After the Christmas of 1966, my father's health began to decline rapidly. His body was no longer at his command; he was becoming incontinent, the final indignity, meaning extra work for my mother, and she was tired and impatient. He awoke in the middle of the night on January 26, 1967, because he was not well, and my mother had to phone the ambulance. She asked me to please come and sit with him. I was resentful because I did not want to see my father ill. He sat slumped at the side of the bed and looked up once at me and then shook his head, understanding how I felt. "I'm sorry," he said. "My dear."

After a brief stay at the General Hospital, in the old French-Canadian neighborhood he had lived in for thirty-eight years, he was moved to St. Joseph's Hospital on Whyte Avenue. The first time I walked in and smelled the hopelessness, I recalled everything my parents had said about the place: that here, no one looked forward to tomorrow. I was in first-year science at university, busy with labs and lectures, but I went to see my father every day. He was on the edge of consciousness and appeared to be sleeping all the time, but I would try to wake him by shaking him gently and saying, "It's Marie, I'm here. It's your little girl."

He would reply, "Marie. Yes," and squeeze my hand. Then he would sleep again, and all I could do was sit and look at the tranquil, silent form of my father, who had slender fingers laid over the sheets. It struck me that these were not the hands of a farmer but rather the sensitive hands of one who should hold a pen or a paintbrush.

I believed in the power of doctors and medicines, but as the days went by I became angry with everyone who was looking after him. Why couldn't they give him a medicine to make him wake up? Why didn't they give him antibiotics and cure his pneumonia? One night they moved him into a central porch where he could be alone, and when they moved him back to his shared room, I was angry again. Didn't he deserve more consideration?

As his breathing became more labored and he inhaled through his mouth, I would take a glycerin and lemon preparation and swab his lips. Although he was unconscious at the time, he would close his mouth for a moment and his puckered expression indicated that the taste was quite sour. I wondered why the swabs had to be so bitter, instead of sweet, and so give the dying one last moment of pleasure.

On February 10, 1967, I phoned the hospital before going to see him and the nurse informed me, in a level voice, as if she were telling me the time, that he had passed away just a few minutes before. And as easily as a few spoken words, a life ended.