Dear Mr. Lothian:

I am sorry to have been so long in writing you. Like everyone else I am busy and the weeks fly by so fast.

Your History of Canada’s National Parks is delightful reading, lively, very well written and, of course, your material is wonderful. One wonders just what the people were like who were involved in such a magnificent undertaking as setting up a system of national parks and the many anecdotes you tell help to bring them to life and add so much to the straight information.

The western National Parks interested me most, of course, but certain of the eastern parks also had their fascination for me. It is interesting, also, to come across familiar names. For example, in connection with the Georgian Bay Park, the mention of General Crumack. We have, in our Public Library’s Canadiana collection, his writings on the War of 1812, and Miss Williams although twenty years younger than Mrs. Crumack was her most intimate friend until she died.
In the beginning of your book, Sir, Helen Simpson’s mention of finding heather made me think of Miss Williams’ little booklet, “A Spray of Mountain Heather,” in which she goes into the subject extensively and delightfully.

I thought that illustrations and some maps would have added to the interest of your book, but it is a very fine piece of work and I shall treasure my copy.

Every time, however, that I think of your history, I feel great sadness and a strong sense of guilt. It is dreadful to think that Miss Williams is given no credit for the vital and important work she did for the National Parks in making known to Canadians the great treasure that was a Canadian heritage. I understand she was spoken of, while still living, and after so many years away from the scene, as “a legend in her own time.”

She and Mr. Barkin did a marvellous piece of work.

It is in no way your fault, Mr. Hathie, that she has been overlooked completely in your book, except for a
brief quotation). I let her down completely, as did her family also, (though they are very proud of her), by not seeing to it that a careful record was kept of her outstanding work and her fascinating experiences. It would have meant much to her to have had the rightful place in your book. You tried to get the information, but without success. If only you had come here during her lifetime!

Many thanks again and my grateful appreciation.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Shaw
Eleanor Shaw, London, to Lothian, 18 October 1980

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The western National Parks interested me most, of course, but certain of the eastern parks also had their fascination for me. It is interesting, also, to come across familiar names. For example, in connection with the Georgian Bay Park, the mention of General Cruikshank. We have, in our Public Library’s Canadiana collection, his writings on the war of 1812, and Miss Williams, although twenty years younger than Mrs. Cruikshank, was her most intimate friend, for years until she died.

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