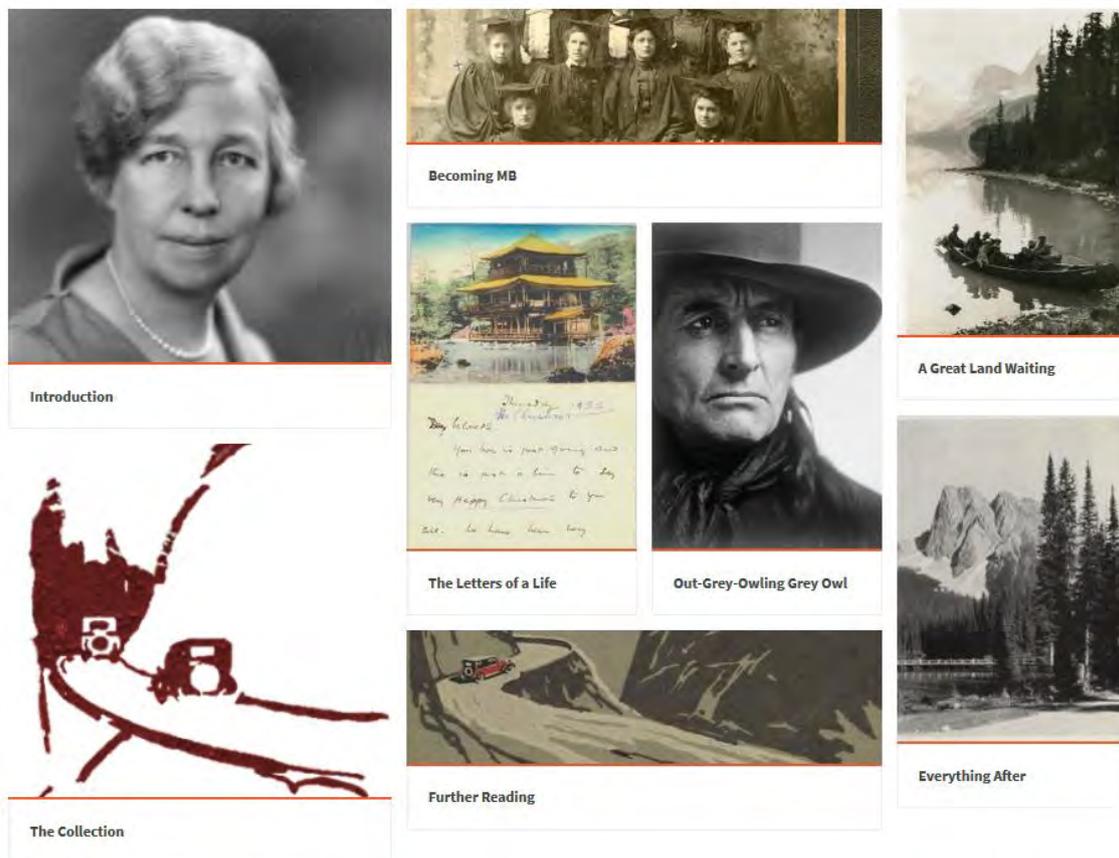


## MB Williams: Living & Writing the Early Years of Parks Canada

Alan MacEachern

This exhibition tells the story of Mabel “MB” Williams, an extraordinary, ordinary woman who became devoted to national parks and engendered that devotion in others. Historian Alan MacEachern documents her role in shaping the philosophy of Canada’s Dominion Parks Branch (the precursor to Parks Canada) in the early to mid-twentieth century. Digitized photographs and letters from Williams’s life, her guidebooks and other publications, and audio interviews with Williams herself reveal her influence on, and love for, Canada’s national parks.



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## Introduction

In 1911, Canada set up the Dominion Parks Branch (the precursor to Parks Canada), the first organization in the world devoted to national parks. The file clerk in the new agency was Mabel Berta Williams, a young woman who had never visited a national park before. In fact, she did not know what they were.



MB Williams picnicking during a research trip in the Rockies in the 1920s

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of MB Williams.



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But within a decade, “MB” Williams was the agency’s lead writer of promotional material, and the author of a series of guidebooks that would be the centerpiece for tourism promotion of Canada’s national parks, the Canadian Rockies, and Canada itself. She drafted parks policy and helped articulate the emerging philosophy of parks in Canada, a philosophy that stressed both their humanitarian and commercial value to the nation. Soon

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she was also in charge of transitioning the bureau's publicity work into the movie era, and she produced scripts for fifty of the Parks Branch's documentary and travel films. But at the onset of the Great Depression her entire female staff was laid off, and she resigned in solidarity. Williams spent the rest of her life struggling to make it as an author, only ever succeeding when she returned to the subject of national parks.



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A photograph from the Associated Screen News Ltd. of Montreal of MB Williams, ca. 1929. The company produced travel films in cooperation with the National Parks Branch.

M. B. Williams fonds, Library and Archives Canada, R12219-0-3-E.



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MB Williams was instrumental in both developing Canada's national park system and documenting that development. But whereas the Parks Branch's first director, James B. Harkin—whom she greatly admired—is still remembered as “the Father of Canadian National Parks” and an environmental hero, Williams's career has been almost entirely lost to history. This speaks to the way the work of a single senior figure is so often allowed to stand in for the efforts of an entire organization, even a movement, undervaluing the contributions of more

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junior people and, worse, obscuring the degree to which change is the product of teams, to say nothing of broader cultural forces. It also speaks, of course, to the marginalization of women and their work both in the past and in our writing of that past. Although women made up close to half of the Dominion Parks Branch headquarters's staff in those first decades, they were clustered in lower positions—Williams a distinct exception, and she too soon confronted the glass ceiling—and their contribution to Canadian national parks history has been forgotten.

*MB Williams: Living & Writing the Early Years of Parks Canada* is an exhibition and archive that tells the story of an extraordinary yet ordinary woman who became devoted to parks and engendered that devotion in others. My intention is not to argue that Williams, rather than James B. Harkin, was the mastermind behind the development of Canadian national parks—to replace one hero myth with another—but rather to use her life to document the germinating philosophy of parks in early to mid-twentieth-century Canada, as both expressed in and produced by Dominion Parks Branch staff. What anchors the exhibition is an unusually rich and varied collection of sources from MB's life: more than thirty letters, compiled from her private papers; nine published guidebooks, long out-of-print; fifteen photographs; and an oral interview from 1969, never before heard.

I have [written about MB elsewhere](#), offering my own interpretation of her career. But this exhibition is designed to be a place where visitors can explore her written and spoken words for themselves. You can read through the narrative, which links the story of MB's life to items in the collection. Or you can just browse [the collection](#)—reading, listening to, and composing MB's life on your own.

### Websites linked in this text:

- [http://dspace.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/1880/48466/7/UofCPress\\_ParksCanada\\_2011\\_Chapter02.pdf](http://dspace.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/1880/48466/7/UofCPress_ParksCanada_2011_Chapter02.pdf)
- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/exhibitions/mb-williams/collection>
- <http://niche-canada.org/>
- <http://www.mqup.ca/natural-selections-products-9780773521575.php>
- [https://books.google.de/books?id=YpjhCwAAQBAJ&pg=PT50&lpg=PT50&dq=Canada%E2%80%99s+Best+Idea?+The+Canadian+and+American+National+Park+Services+in+the+1910s&source=bl&ots=kh9YsyzBga&sig=CtcnQRXCf6f93oUQs\\_zIIFl5KIo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiq29Os7PFOAhUH1hQKHZ9wCjAQ6AEIJDAB#v=onepage&q=Canada%E2%80%99s%20Best%20Idea%3F%20The%20Canadian%20and%20American%20National%20Park%20Services%20in%20the%20191%23v%3Donepage&f=false](https://books.google.de/books?id=YpjhCwAAQBAJ&pg=PT50&lpg=PT50&dq=Canada%E2%80%99s+Best+Idea?+The+Canadian+and+American+National+Park+Services+in+the+1910s&source=bl&ots=kh9YsyzBga&sig=CtcnQRXCf6f93oUQs_zIIFl5KIo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiq29Os7PFOAhUH1hQKHZ9wCjAQ6AEIJDAB#v=onepage&q=Canada%E2%80%99s%20Best%20Idea%3F%20The%20Canadian%20and%20American%20National%20Park%20Services%20in%20the%20191%23v%3Donepage&f=false)
- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/arcadia/banff-hell-struggle-being-canadas-first-most-famous-and-most-visited-national-park>
- [https://dspace.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/48466/UofCPress\\_ParksCanada\\_2011\\_Chapter02.pdf;jsessionid=AE8BF78B8D5950C1CF03D4B04B3D6718?sequence=7](https://dspace.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/48466/UofCPress_ParksCanada_2011_Chapter02.pdf;jsessionid=AE8BF78B8D5950C1CF03D4B04B3D6718?sequence=7)
- <https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305>
- <https://www.carsoncenter.uni-muenchen.de/index.html>

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## Becoming MB



A portrait of MB Williams's family, 1881. In the back row are father David Williams, brother Ernie ("Stalky"), and mother Sarah (Longley) Williams. In the front row are sister Eva ("Brownie") and MB ("Fuzzy").

Photograph by Frank Cooper, London Ontario, "Family, 1881." Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of M.B. Williams.



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Mabel Bertha Williams was born in Ottawa in 1878, and her family moved to London, Ontario when she was young. She became one of the first female graduates of the University of Western Ontario—one of the "Double Duck Egg" class of '00—and then went on to the University of Toronto. An uncle in the civil service helped get her a job in Ottawa with the Department of Interior, cutting out newspaper clippings related to the department's business, at a starting salary of \$300 per year. It was the sort of low-level position available to a woman of the day, even a university-educated one. "There's not much show here for anything but the slowest advance," she wrote her family in a 1902 letter. Nine years later, Williams was still in much the same position when her boss, James

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Bernard Harkin, came and asked if she was sick of politics. She replied, “I’m fed up to my teeth now.” He invited her to join him at the new Dominion Parks Branch he was setting up, the first agency in the world devoted to national parks.



MB Williams and her sister Eva (“Brownie”) from 1892

Photograph by Frank Cooper, London Ontario, “MB and Brownie, 1892.” Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson.



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MB Williams (seated left-hand corner of the second row from the bottom—note small “x”) was a member of the first group of women to graduate from the University of Western Ontario, in 1900. This photo also includes those who graduated in 1901 and 1902, so may date from 1902.

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of M.B. Williams. Photographers: Shannon & Brockenshire, 201 Dundas St., London Ontario, “MB Williams and the first female graduates of the University of Western Ontario, ca. 1902.”



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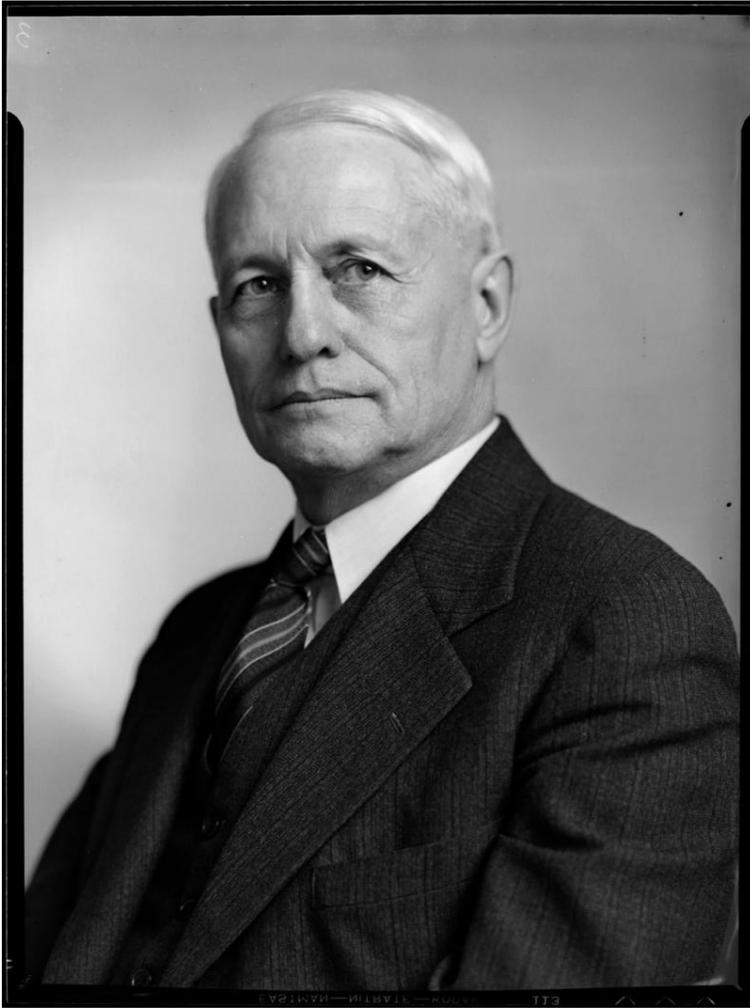
The seven employees who joined the Branch that autumn faced a daunting task. They were to create and oversee a national parks system out of the handful of parks that, beginning with Banff, had been established and developed piecemeal in the Rocky Mountains over the previous twenty-five years. The staff had little inherent expertise, little in the way of models from elsewhere, access to just one percent of the departmental budget, and were 3000 kilometers away from the parks themselves.

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Commissioner James Bernard Harkin, MB's boss. Photograph by Yousuf Karsh, 1937.

Yousuf Karsh fonds / Library and Archives Canada, Accession 1987-054



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Mabel Williams's papers provide intimate, behind-the-scenes snapshots of the early Canadian national park system—although, ironically, some of the most relevant sources were created long after the fact. There is [Commissioner Harkin's warm, rambling letter to Williams in 1941](#), after they had both retired, in which he recounts how the Branch learned to justify parks to Parliament and the public not only in terms of spiritual, mental, and physical wellbeing — “You did more than anyone else to provide the proof”—but also in financial terms. (But Harkin suggested that to really learn more about the early parks, “you read a book entitled *Guardians of the Wild*, written by a person named Williams.” MB had published the first history of the Canadian park system five years earlier.)

There is “[An Interminable Ode](#),” a bit of doggerel written for a party in honor of Commissioner Harkin's 1936 retirement, which depicts the day-to-day working of the Branch.<sup>1</sup> The poem not only mentions every member of

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the early staff (“Wise A.K. and witty F.V. and quiet M.B. too”), but reminds us in a flash of bawdy humor (“a newspaperman’s life is as good as a wife to stiffen a man’s persistence”) that these people of the past were just as real as we are.



From left to right: MB’s mother Sarah, sister Eva, and MB at Grand Bend, Lake Huron, Ontario. Photographer and date unknown.

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of MB Williams.



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And there is Williams in her own voice, in an [oral interview given at age 89](#), almost six decades after she had joined the Branch. Here she cheerily describes the creative, collaborative environment that Harkin fostered in the office and, with neither false modesty nor embellishment, tells of her own contributions to the Branch’s early success in formulating and communicating a coherent philosophy.

It is in Williams’s proud voice and in the loyalty she showed the Parks Branch throughout her entire life that we come to see just how important the 1910s were to her. The bureau was new and unnoticed enough, the office small enough, the work important enough, and the boss progressive enough that a woman with talent could flourish. And she did: Mabel Williams began the decade as a file clerk and ended it a trusted senior staff member. Her ability to accomplish whatever task given her was about to make her the Parks Branch’s—and so, Canada’s—leading writer of promotional literature. She would adopt “MB” as her name for writing and, tellingly, for her private life as well.

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MB Williams—sixth row from the bottom, second from the left—at the Polytechnic Party, Pilatus Kulm, Switzerland, on 7 September 1909

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of MB Williams.



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#### Websites linked in this text:

- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/exhibitions/mb-williams/everything-after#MBAudio1>

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## A Great Land Waiting



“Rockies Scene, 1920.” A photograph from one of MB’s 1920s research trips in the Rocky Mountains.

Courtesy of Sylvia Watson.



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If in 1920 you were looking for someone to introduce readers to the national parks of Canada’s Rocky Mountains, MB Williams would seem the unlikeliest of candidates. She had passed her fortieth birthday without ever visiting Western Canada, let alone its national parks, and was not in the least bit outdoorsy. She also suffered from a poorly understood form of anemia, which periodically kept her bedridden for weeks or months at a time. Despite all this, Commissioner Harkin sent her out west to explore and write about the parks.

MB would later tell her niece Frances Girling that at the end of her first day horseback riding through Jasper National Park, she got off the horse and fainted. But when Girling herself took a train through the Rockies, the

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conductor regaled her with stories about a woman from Ottawa—MB—who, having never been on a horse before, rode the length and breadth of the mountain parks. In the few surviving photographs of MB's 1920s research trips—shots of canoeing, picnicking, and relaxing at Jasper Lodge—she certainly seems to be enjoying herself.



MB Williams picnicking during a research trip in the Rockies in the 1920s

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of MB Williams.

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MB (seated, in white), J. B. Harkin (seated at right, under lamppost), and others gather at Jasper Lodge in August 1923.

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of MB Williams.

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Williams's timing in becoming an author of park guidebooks was impeccable. The early 1920s saw the rise of auto tourism and the parallel rise of government expenditure on tourism promotion. MB's first guidebook, the 1921 *Through the Heart of the Rockies and Selkirks*, was the Branch's first mass-market one, available to whoever wanted a copy. Approximately 100,000 copies of the book were printed in its first half-dozen years. It led to the equally successful 1923 *The Banff-Windermere Highway*, created for the road's opening, and from there over the rest of the decade to *Waterton Lakes National Park*, *Kootenay National Park and the Banff-Windermere Highway*, *Jasper National Park*, *Prince Albert National Park*, *Jasper Trails*, and *The Kicking Horse Trail*. They are the most comprehensive and highest quality series of guidebooks that Parks Canada ever produced.

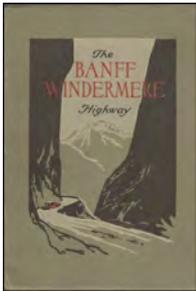
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The original exhibition contains a dynamic gallery for viewing the series of guidebooks. Access the full-text books on the LMU University Library Open Access Server (arranged by year of publication): [https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/view/research\\_centers/4305.html](https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/view/research_centers/4305.html)



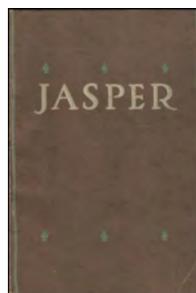
***The Banff-Windermere Highway, 1924***

A compact, beautifully-photographed guide to the new highway that vastly improved automobile travel in the Rocky Mountain parks. Read the book [here](#).



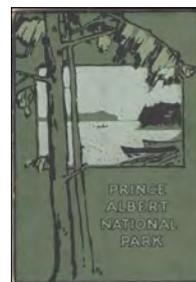
***Waterton Lakes Park, 1927?***

Focusing on the southern Alberta park that shares a border with Montana's Glacier National Park, this travel guide is from around 1927. Read the book [here](#).



***Jasper National Park, 1928***

At 176 pages, this is really more of a book than a tourist guidebook; parks commissioner JB Harkin had to defend its size and expense to his superiors. In its production design and its detailed examination of Jasper past and present, it is one of the finest parks guidebooks of the 1920s. Read the book [here](#).



***Prince Albert National Park, 1928***

This 1928 guidebook about the Saskatchewan park includes a foreword credited to Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King - but written by MB Williams. Her name would be removed entirely from the 1935 edition. Read the book [here](#).

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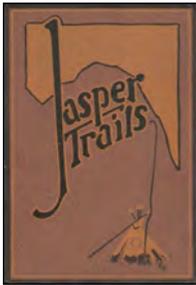


***Through the Heart of the Rockies & Selkirks, 1929 [1921]***

The first guidebook under MB Williams' name, the first Parks Branch one of the 1920s, and still one of the loveliest.

This is the fourth edition of a guide first published in 1921.

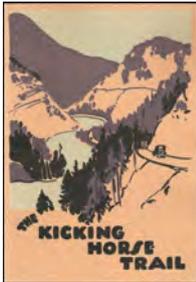
Read the book [here](#).



***Jasper Trails, 1930?***

This guidebook from around 1930 offers a more concise exploration of Jasper National Park.

Read the book [here](#).



***The Kicking Horse Trail, 1930 [1927]***

The scenic trail between Lake Louise, Alberta and Golden, British Columbia is the jumping-off point for a fawning tribute to the automobile. This is the 1930 edition of a guidebook first published in 1927.

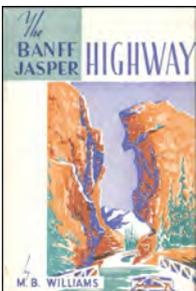
Read the book [here](#).



***Guardians of the Wild, 1936***

The first history of Parks Canada and of the Canadian national parks system was written and published in Great Britain. Williams never mentions her own part in that history.

Read the book [here](#).



***The Banff Jasper Highway, 1963 [1948]***

This is a 1963 edition of MB's 1948 book, itself a close replica of her 1920s guides.

Read the book [here](#).

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MB's guidebooks differ from the few previous examples of Canadian parks promotional guides. Her writing seeks a relaxed, literary effect. Chapters begin with a quotation, linking the parks to noted thinkers. Williams not only discusses the park's history and traces an area-by-area excursion to sites of interest throughout it, but also takes time to express how parks, in general, fulfill important social, spiritual, and environmental goals: her guidebooks are as much an advertisement for parks in general as for the individual park.

But what strikes today's reader the most is the sense that all of the park was opened up for the visitor, and for the reader. Perhaps that speaks to the time when MB was writing: it was after the automobile had made the entire park—the entire country, even—accessible to travelers, but before sufficient services and destinations had been established that regulated their travel. Or maybe it just speaks to MB's skill as a writer. She would later use as an epigraph for *Guardians of the Wild* a quote by British socialist Edward Carpenter:

I see a great land waiting for its people to take possession of it.

The line could as easily describe how she promoted Canadian parks to tourists in the 1920s.

MB's success writing travel guides changed her career, and her life. Whereas her salary had only risen from \$1200 to \$1300 in the 1910s, it jumped to \$1560 the year she published *Through the Heart of the Rockies and Selkirks*, and to \$2160 the next. Her job title shifted to "publicity assistant" and then "publicity agent." She was soon overseeing much of the work in the Branch's new Publicity Division, and when the agency started making travel and wildlife documentaries, she found she had a knack for matching pictures to prose, and penned the script for fifty films. But she never became "publicity director," a position instead given to J. C. Campbell. A 1928 letter suggests a certain bitterness to him. She had risen farther and faster than almost all female government employees had, but she reached a ceiling.

When the Depression hit, many positions at the Parks Branch's Ottawa office were lost. MB Williams's job was likely safe, given both her seniority—she oversaw a considerable staff, including all of the women in the office—and the fact that she was good friends with Prime Minister R. B. Bennett's family. But when her staff was laid off, she chose to join them. The year 1931 introduced a decade of great change for MB, just as 1911 and 1921 had.

#### **Websites linked in this text:**

- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/through-heart-rockies-and-selkirks>
- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/banff-windermere-highway>
- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/book-waterton-lakes-national-park>
- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/jasper-national-park>
- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/prince-albert-national-park>
- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/jasper-trails>
- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/kicking-horse-trail>

## The Letters of a Life

Museums tend to have better collections of wedding dresses than work clothes. Archives are likewise often filled with papers that are unrepresentative of peoples's lives, but are the kinds of papers people keep. MB Williams's papers suffer somewhat from that affliction: she was more likely to hold onto letters from famous folk such as [Parks Branch Commissioner J. B. Harkin](#), or [anthropologist and folklorist Marius Barbeau](#), or Minister of Natural Resources and future [Prime Minister Jean Chrétien](#) than from her own family. But to [her family](#), she was the famous (or at least exotic) one, so they retained a lovely collection of her letters, dating from 1899 to 1972. Whether written in Ottawa or London, England, on cruise ship or hotel stationery, these letters offer a blend of everyday life—toothaches and nylons, friendships and feuds—with social commentary, and the occasional insights into historical figures.



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An undated photograph of MB Williams  
M.B. Williams fonds, Library and Archives Canada, R12219-0-3-E



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MacEachern, Alan. "MB Williams: Living & Writing the Early Years of Parks Canada." *Environment & Society Portal, Virtual Exhibitions* 2018, no. 2. Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. [doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305](https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305).

**Chapter:** The Letters of a Life

**Source URL:** <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/8309>

**PDF created on:** 25 January 2021 14:05:50

MB's proximity to Canadian Prime Minister R. B. Bennett and his family in the 1930s dramatically shaped her life, in ways both personal and professional. She was a longtime friend and companion of Mary Bird ("Zoe") Herridge, the stepmother of William Duncan Herridge, Bennett's policy advisor and husband to his beloved sister Mildred. This drew her into the Bennett orbit, which must have made the draconian staff cuts he imposed early in the Depression all the more upsetting. In a 1930 letter, she tells family of attending the opening of Parliament with Bennett's sister, watching as the Prime Minister "perspired in gold lace & white satin trousers, cocked hat with the same grim determination with which he raises the tariff & cuts down the Civil Service." Her own job was likely safe, given her seniority—by this time she oversaw a large staff, including all the women in the Parks Branch headquarters—and her proximity to the Bennetts. But when told to lay off most of her staff, she resigned in solidarity. Ironically, whereas Bennett's cuts ended her career, it was likely his personal fortune that then subsidized her travel to Europe as companion to Mary Bird Herridge, and their setting up camp in London, England.

The sixteen letters from MB to family between 1931 and 1935 (five of which are below; the rest can be found in [the collection](#)) paint a picture of a woman experiencing life on her own terms. Her very first London letter tells of seeing "the Lord Mayor's Show" from their window at the Palace Strand Hotel, then going to the opening of the British Parliament, and then off to the Armistice Celebration. She soon tells of her role in writing, with Herridge, the King's first Empire radio broadcast for Christmas morning, 1932. There are recommendations of authors, descriptions of fashions, updates about health, and lots about her dog and about the car she drives on occasional returns to Ottawa. And there are also the first rumbles of unease in Europe. In 1933, "Hitler ... talks like a madman – the same kind of madness that led to war before," and by 1935, "been listening to Rudyard Kipling who evidently thinks we should stop talking of peace and get ready for war."

The original exhibition contains a dynamic gallery for viewing this multi-page document. It features five handwritten letters from MB Williams to her family between 1930 and 1935.

Click on the links below to view the letter and its transcription in the exhibition's correspondence collection.

[MB Williams to her family, 10 October 1930](#)

[MB Williams to her family, 16 November 1931](#)

[MB Williams to her family, December 1932](#)

[MB Williams to her family, 18 October 1933](#)

[MB Williams to her mother, 6 May 1935](#)

The original exhibition contains a dynamic gallery for viewing this multi-page document. It features handwritten letters from Alfred B. Buckley to MB Williams and from MB Williams to Mr. Buckley to her family between 1935 and 1936.

Click on the links below to view the letter and its transcription in the exhibition's correspondence collection.

[A. B. Buckley to MB Williams, 18 May 1935](#)

[MB Williams to A. B. Buckley, 8 June 1936](#)

Many of MB's letters from this period are to her niece, "Rufus" (Ruth). In a February 1934 letter, she responds to a question as to whether modern life is bad for women. Rather than answering directly, she tells of having recently read John Cowper Powys's *A Philosophy of Solitude* (she gets the name wrong). She writes of the differences between extroverts who experience things outside themselves and introverts who experience within—and that everyone who has experienced both knows the inner seems somehow more real. Williams in the early 1930s was still very active, but more so than in previous decades she was watching the world go by—and seemed at peace with that. Her answer to Rufus seems to be that modern life gives women some opportunities to cultivate the inner self. She then tells Rufus to get Powys's book and see what she thinks for herself.

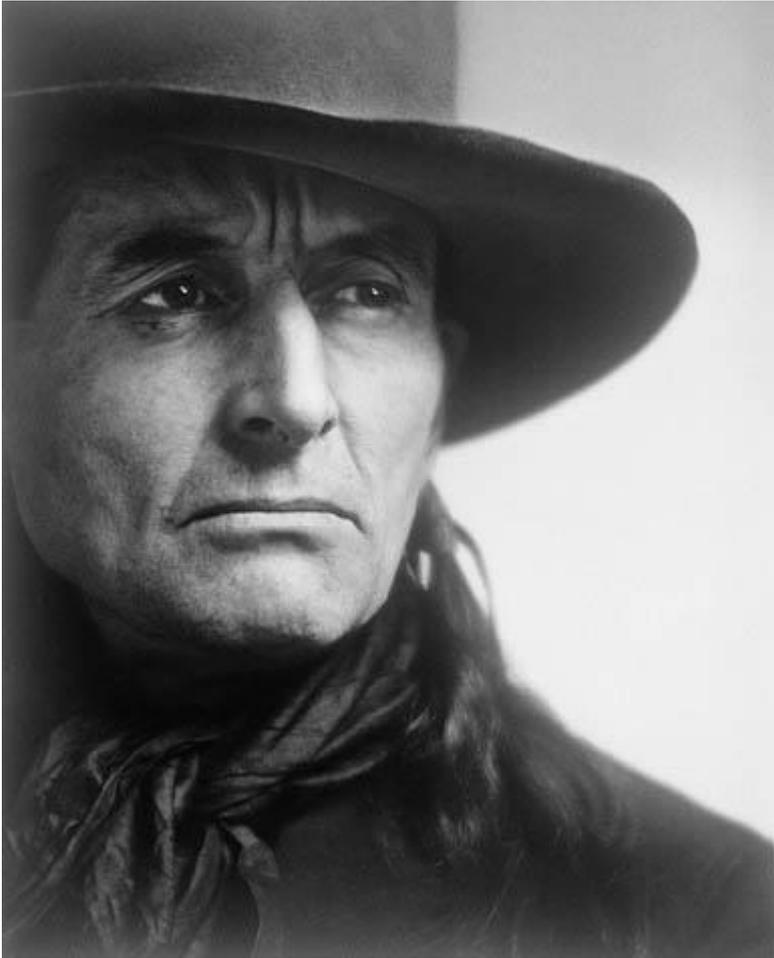
A selection of letters are given in this chapter, but you can peruse the entire collection of MB Williams's correspondence in [the collection](#) .

## Out-Grey-Owling Grey Owl

MB Williams had been living in London, England for four years when her past in parks caught up with her. J.C. Campbell, the man for whom she had been passed over as head of publicity at the Canadian Parks Branch, contacted her in late 1935 about the speaking tour that Grey Owl was about to begin in England. Grey Owl was the Indigenous nature writer whom the Parks Branch had taken under its wing in the early '30s, giving him a place to live at Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba and then Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan, making him its spokesman for conservation. (That the Branch, having evicted Indigenous people in creating national parks, now saw value in hosting a single cultural representative of them, speaks to the way national parks were to be places associated with a symbolic indigeneity but not an actual Indigenous past or present.) The arrangement had been mutually beneficial, drawing international attention to both the Canadian park system and the Indigenous author. Except, of course, Grey Owl was not Indigenous at all, as the world would learn following his death in 1938: he was an Englishman, born Archie Belaney.

The remarkable series of four letters that Campbell wrote Williams in December 1935, January 1936, March 1936, and April 1936 offer the most candid record of the Parks Branch's knowledge and opinion of Grey Owl—far more candid than anything found in the Branch's own archival record. Campbell knew Grey Owl well, having “discovered” him for the Parks Branch by visiting the writer's backwoods home and filming a short silent movie there, *The Beaver People*, which brought Grey Owl some of his earliest fame. While at the Parks Branch, Williams had gotten to know Grey Owl, too. In an October 1932 letter here, Grey Owl invited her, now that she was retired, to take the “long deferred and oft-promised visit” to see him, his wife, and “the Beaver People”—that is, his beaver pets.

In preparation for Grey Owl's 1936 tour, Campbell asked Williams to do whatever she could do to keep the author out of trouble, to save the Canadian park system from potential embarrassment. The picture Campbell paints is of a Parks Branch terrified of what its increasingly celebrated spokesman, “either through liquor, women, or temper,” might say or do. To Campbell, he is a prima donna who feels he has moved beyond the nature writing, the park agency, and the nation that have made him famous: “He is obsessed with one idea and that is that he [is] a great backwoodsman. He ... does not want to be known as an author as he thinks that is synonymous with being a crooner or gigolo par-fumier.” There is blunt mention of Grey Owl's manipulative nature, his egotism, his drunkenness, his impatience for renown. And there is cryptic reference to worse. “There are many things I know that I cannot write to you,” Campbell writes, “and my constant prayer is that there will be no outbreak that would cast discredit on the National Parks and those with whom he is associated.” Although circumstantial, these letters are the strongest existing evidence that the Parks Branch, Grey Owl's employer for a half-dozen years, knew full well before his death that he was a fraud.



Grey Owl (Archibald Belaney), photographed by Yousuf Karsh

Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Acc. no. 1987-054, PA-164228. No restrictions on use. See [http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam\\_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem...](http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem...)



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As for MB, she was still loyal to the Parks Branch and so did as Campbell asked. She gave a talk about parks alongside Grey Owl, deflecting some of the attention away from him—she “out Grey Owled Grey Owl,” in Campbell’s congratulatory terms. And yet the publicity director warned her against doing more, fearing that becoming associated with Grey Owl would only embroil her in whatever future trouble was sure to come his way. “The unfortunate thing about it,” wrote Campbell, “is that while we know the truth now we will have to let him carry on if the Publishers so wish until such time as he meets his Waterloo.”

The original exhibition contains a dynamic gallery for viewing this multi-page document. It features four handwritten letters to MB Williams by J.C. Campbell and one letter written by Grey Owl.

Click on the links below to view the letter and its transcription in the exhibition's correspondence collection.

[J. C. Campbell to MB Williams, 2 December 1935](#)

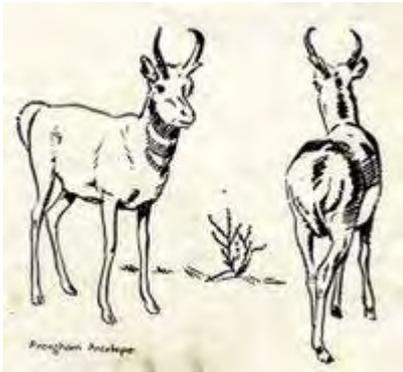
[J. C. Campbell to MB Williams, 20 March 1936](#)

[J. C. Campbell to MB Williams, 4 January 1936](#)

[J. C. Campbell to MB Williams, 16 April 1936](#)

[Grey Owl to MB Williams, 29 October 1932](#)

## Everything After



An illustration of prong-horned antelope in an article titled “National Parks and Sanctuaries in Canada” by M. B. Williams in *The Animals' Friend* magazine, June 1936. Click [here](#) to read the article.

Illustrator unknown.



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MB's involvement with Grey Owl's lecture tour revived her interest in Canadian national parks, and she published a short article about them. It also got her talking to the London publishers Thomas Nelson & Sons, who were putting out a book on Grey Owl. Would they be interested in a book about Canada's national parks? The publisher accepted in April 1936 and asked for the manuscript by June. MB fretted to A. B. Buckley that summer about writer's block, but nonetheless in the space of just five months she wrote and saw to publication the first history of Canada's national parks and its park service.

*Guardians of the Wild* opens with the rain beating down on an Ottawa office window in September 1911, and an unnamed “Commissioner”—who is presented as having the genius and far-sightedness of the Creator—contemplating the responsibility of having a 20,000-square-kilometer kingdom under his control, thousands of kilometers away. It goes on to describe how parks came about, what they do for people and for nature, and how much the Parks Branch had accomplished in its first quarter-century. And yet, Williams's book never betrays her own role in the history of the park system. *Guardians of the Wild* earned good reviews, including a radio review transcript sent to her by Commissioner Harkin. Another reviewer noted that Harkin himself cited Williams as being “an inspiring and dominant factor in the works of the Parks Branch for some twenty years.” Williams received many notes of congratulation, including two from [Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King](#). In the second, he apologizes for taking a whole two weeks to reply personally to Williams's letter, saying it “dropped out of sight at the time of ‘the constitutional crisis.’” This truly was a different era.

MacEachern, Alan. “MB Williams: Living & Writing the Early Years of Parks Canada.” Environment & Society Portal, *Virtual Exhibitions* 2018, no. 2. Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. [doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305](https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305).

**Chapter:** Everything After

**Source URL:** <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/8311>

**PDF created on:** 25 January 2021 13:43:38

The original exhibition contains a dynamic gallery for viewing this multi-page document. It features a letter from J. B. Harkin to MB Williams from 23 November 1941.

Click on the links below to view the letter and its transcription in the exhibition's correspondence collection.

[Letter from J. B. Harkin to MB Williams, 23 November 1941](#)

The original exhibition contains a dynamic gallery for viewing this multi-page document. It features letters from Marius Barbeau to MB Williams, 1936 and 1955.

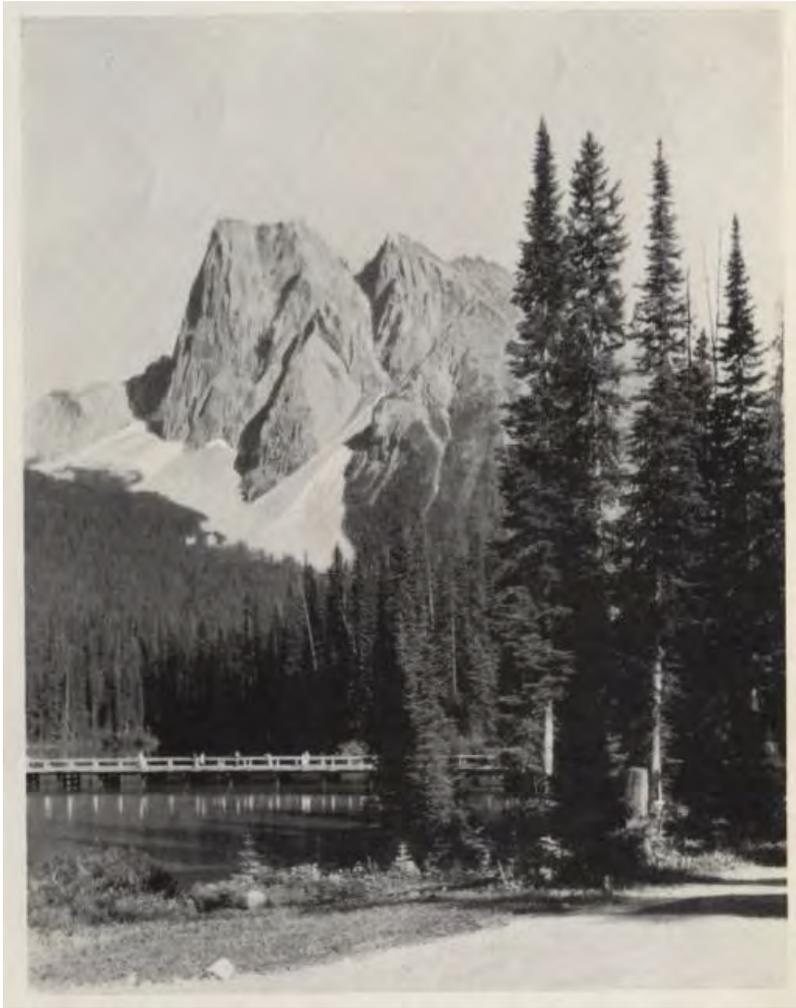
Click on the links below to view the letter and its transcription in the exhibition's correspondence collection.

[Marius Barbeau, National Museum of Canada, to MB Williams, 5 March 1936](#)  
[Marius Barbeau \(retired\) to MB Williams, 10 May 1955](#)

The original exhibition contains a dynamic gallery for viewing this multi-page document. This features letters from politicians written to MB Williams, 1936 and 1972.

Click on the links below to view the letter and its transcription in the exhibition's correspondence collection.

[Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King to MB Williams, 5 November 1936](#)  
[Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King to MB Williams, 2 December 1936](#)  
[Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to MB Williams, 16 February 1972](#)



The frontispiece of *Guardians of the Wild*, written by MB Williams

Courtesy of Amicus, the Canadian National Catalogue.



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Williams and Herridge returned to Canada for good just before the war. At some point, MB alone moved to London, Ontario, to take care of her mother, although she and Herridge remained close. MB then moved to Vancouver following her mother's death, but in 1949 returned to London, Ontario, to live with her brother after his wife's death. During this long period, she continued to write—vigorously researching book projects on subjects as diverse as David Thompson and Carl Jung—but apparently never completed anything. Her writing career went nowhere. But at the suggestion of Saskatoon publisher H. R. Larson, she drove—at almost 70 years of age—through the Canadian Rockies for research and inspiration, and reworked some of her old guidebooks,

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**PDF created on:** 25 January 2021 13:43:38

such as *The Heart of the Rockies* (1947), *The Banff-Jasper Highway* (1948), and *Jasper National Park* (1949). Larson also helped MB in compiling and publishing J. B. Harkin's papers posthumously as *The History and Meaning of the National Parks of Canada* (1957). It is as if only when writing about the national parks that she had the passion and commitment to see things through.



MB's house on Queens Avenue, London, Ontario (post-1949)

Photographer and date unknown.



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In the 1960s, MB corresponded regularly with longtime park staffer W. F. Lothian, who was writing a four-volume official history of Parks Canada. She shared with him her memories of the park service's early years, crediting Harkin more than ever for his leadership and brilliance. MB Williams died in 1972. When Lothian finally completed the first volume of his history four years later, he sent a copy to Williams's close friend Eleanor Shaw. On reading it, Shaw was distressed to find that Harkin and other senior civil servants and politicians receive all the recognition; Williams's name barely appears. [Shaw told Lothian bluntly](#), "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 now theirs for all time."

MacEachern, Alan. "MB Williams: Living & Writing the Early Years of Parks Canada." *Environment & Society Portal, Virtual Exhibitions* 2018, no. 2. Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. [doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305](https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305).

**Chapter:** Everything After

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**PDF created on:** 25 January 2021 13:43:38

The original exhibition contains a dynamic gallery for viewing this multi-page document. This features letters between W. F. Lothian and MB Williams, and between W. F. Lothian and Eleanor Shaw (MB's close friend) 1960-1980.

Click on the links below to view the letter and its transcription in the exhibition's correspondence collection.

[MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, Assistant Chief, Parks Branch, 20 March 1960](#)

[W. F. Lothian to MB Williams, 13 June 1967](#)

[MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 15 June 1967](#)

[MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 16 June 1968](#)

[MB Williams to Mr. & Mrs. W. F. Lothian, 11 December 1968](#)

[MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 24 June 1969](#)

[W. F. Lothian to MB Williams, 24 July 1969](#)

[MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 7 August 1969](#)

[MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 9 August 1969](#)

[W. F. Lothian to MB Williams, 22 August 1969](#)

[MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 16 November 1969](#)

[MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 27 June 1970](#)

[MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 7 September \[1970\]](#)

[W. F. Lothian to John I. Nicol, Director, Parks Canada, 7 January 1972](#)

[W. F. Lothian to Eleanor Shaw \(MB's close friend\), 26 November 1972](#)

[Eleanor Shaw to W. F. Lothian, 20 November 1972 \(wrongly dated by Shaw\)](#)

[Eleanor Shaw to W. F. Lothian, 18 October 1980](#)



Mabel Berta Williams

MB Williams in her eighties-nineties. The two audio interviews below focused mostly on MB's work with the Parks Branch, conducted over two sessions in October 1969 and June 1970 by her niece Ruth and Ruth's husband Len Wertheimer.

The original exhibition contains two audio interviews that focused mostly on MB's work with the Parks Branch, conducted over two sessions in October 1969 and June 1970 by her niece Ruth and Ruth's husband Len Wertheimer.

Listen to the interview on the Portal:

[Interview 1](#)

[Interview 2](#)

[Read the interview audio index here.](#)

MB opened *Guardians of the Wild* with British socialist writer Edward Carpenter's line, "I see a great land waiting for its own people to come and take possession of it." (She had made this something of a mission statement for the Canadian national park system, having used it in two previous publications.) MB Williams's work writing guidebooks and policy for the fledgling Dominion Parks Branch helped Canadians take emotional and intellectual possession of their land, and build a national park system that rivals any in the world. And it helped her take possession of her land, and her life, too.

MacEachern, Alan. "MB Williams: Living & Writing the Early Years of Parks Canada." *Environment & Society Portal, Virtual Exhibitions* 2018, no. 2. Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. [doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305](https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305).

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## The Collection

This exhibition tells the story of Mabel “MB” Williams, an extraordinary, ordinary woman who became devoted to national parks and engendered that devotion in others. This collection contains digitized correspondence from Williams’s life, her guidebooks and other publications, and audio interviews with Williams herself which reveal her influence on, and love for, Canada’s national parks.

I wish to thank three sources for the letters, photographs, publications, and oral interview that make up this collection. MB Williams’s niece, the late Frances Girling, allowed me to digitize what is now the bulk of the collection while assisting her in donating them to Library and Archives Canada. (See [M.B. Williams fonds, R12219-0-3-E, LAC.](#)) Williams’s grandniece, Sylvia Watson, shared some wonderful photographs and a few letters. Finally, the archival collection of the Second Century Club, a group of retired Parks Canada staffers, provided the letters about parks history to and from Williams in the 1960s-70s. (See “[The Second Century Club’s Second Life.](#)”) Permission to digitize and share these documents were granted by all three parties.

## Correspondence

This is a chronological collection of the letters and correspondence between MB Williams and the people she worked with, admired, and loved.

[MB Williams to her mother and sister Eva, 1899](#)

[MB Williams to “Dear People” \(her family\), 15 August 1901](#)

[MB Williams to “Home-birds” \(her family\), 18 February 1902](#)

[Postcard “Chateau at Lake Louise” from Frank Williamson, Assistant Controller, Dominion Parks Branch, to MB Williams, 1 April 1912](#)

[MB Williams to her family, 11 October 1928](#)

[MB Williams to her family, 10 October 1930](#)

[MB Williams to her family, 1931](#)

[MB Williams to her family, 16 November 1931](#)

[MB Williams to her brother Stalky, 19 November 1931](#)

[Grey Owl to MB Williams, 29 October 1932](#)

[MB Williams to her family, December 1932](#)

MacEachern, Alan. “MB Williams: Living & Writing the Early Years of Parks Canada.” *Environment & Society Portal, Virtual Exhibitions* 2018, no. 2. Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. [doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305](https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305).

**Chapter:** The Collection

**Source URL:** <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/8327>

**PDF created on:** 25 January 2021 14:05:51

MB Williams to her family, April 1933

MB Williams to her family, 1 June 1933

MB Williams to her niece Frances, 23 August 1933

MB Williams to her family, 25 August 1933

MB Williams to “334” (her family), September 1933

MB Williams to her mother, 18 September 1933

MB Williams to her family, 18 October 1933

MB Williams to her family, 29 November 1933

MB Williams to her mother, 1934

MB Williams to her niece Ruth (Rufus), January 1934

MB Williams to her niece Ruth (Rufus), 6 February 1934

MB Williams to her niece Ruth (Rufus), 14 May 1934

MB Williams to her mother, 6 May 1935

A. B. Buckley to MB Williams, 18 May 1935

J. C. Campbell, Director of Publicity, Parks Branch, to MB Williams, 2 December 1935

J. C. Campbell to MB Williams, 4 January 1936

Marius Barbeau, National Museum of Canada, to MB Williams, 5 March 1936

J. C. Campbell to MB Williams, 20 March 1936

John Hampden, of Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, Publishers, to MB Williams, 23 April 1936

J. C. Campbell to MB Williams, 16 April 1936

MB Williams to A. B. Buckley, 8 June 1936

Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie to MB Williams, 5 November 1936

Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie to MB Williams, 2 December 1936

Radio broadcast, forwarded by J. B. Harkin, (retired) Commissioner, Parks Branch, 20 February 1937

Judge Lees to MB Williams, 3 February 1937

MB Williams to Mary Bird Herridge (Zöe), 1940

J. B. Harkin to MB Williams, 23 November 1941

MB Williams to her niece Ruth (Rufus), 1947

Marius Barbeau (retired) to MB Williams, 10 May 1955

MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, Assistant Chief (and parks historian), Parks Branch, 20 March 1960

Telegram to MB Williams, October 1961

W. F. Lothian to MB Williams, 13 June 1967

MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 15 June 1967

MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 16 June 1968

MB Williams to Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Lothian, 11 December 1968

MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 24 June 1969

W. F. Lothian to MB Williams, 24 July 1969

MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 7 August 1969

MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 9 August 1969

W. F. Lothian to MB Williams, 22 August 1969

MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 16 November 1969

MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 27 June 1970

MB Williams to W. F. Lothian, 7 September [1970]

W. F. Lothian to John I. Nicol, Director, Parks Canada 7 January 1972

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to MB Williams, 16 February 1972

W. F. Lothian to Eleanor Shaw (MB's close friend), 26 November 1972

MacEachern, Alan. "MB Williams: Living & Writing the Early Years of Parks Canada." *Environment & Society Portal, Virtual Exhibitions* 2018, no. 2. Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. [doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305](https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305).

**Chapter:** The Collection

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**PDF created on:** 25 January 2021 14:05:51

[Eleanor Shaw to W. F. Lothian, 20 November 1972 \(wrongly dated by Shaw\)](#)

[Eleanor Shaw to W. F. Lothian, 18 October 1980](#)

[W. F. Lothian, "Short Biographical Sketch of Mabel Berta Williams," 20 March 1984](#)

## **Publications**

Williams, Mabel Berta. *The Banff-Windermere Highway*. Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1924.

Williams, Mabel Berta. *Waterton Lakes National Park*. Ottawa: Department of the Interior, [1927?].

Williams, M. B., *Jasper National Park*. Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1928.

Williams, M. B., *Prince Albert National Park*. Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1928.

Williams, M. B., *Through the Heart of the Rockies and Selkirks*. Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1929.

Williams, M. B. *Jasper Trails*. Ottawa: Department of the Interior, [1930?].

Williams, M. B., *The Kicking Horse Trail*. Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1930.

Williams, M. B. *Guardians of the Wild*. London: Thomas Nelson, 1936.

Williams, M. B. "National Parks and Sanctuaries in Canada: Part II." *The Animals' Friend* (June 1936): 193-95.

Williams, M. B. *The Banff Jasper Highway*. 2nd ed. Saskatoon, Sask: H. R. Larson Publishing Co., 1963.

## **Oral Interviews**

Below are two audio interviews (and their audio index) with MB Williams conducted by her niece Ruth and Ruth's husband Len Wertheimer in 1969 and 1970.

[The original exhibition links to two audio tracks. See description here.](#)

[MB Williams's oral interview audio index.](#)

## **Miscellaneous**

["Homeland Dear Forever," date unknown](#)

["An Interminable Ode," date unknown](#)

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They had a  
good question  
competition he had  
weight-<sup>mother</sup> advertisement  
well known like  
Plans <sup>topp</sup> <sup>topp</sup> <sup>topp</sup> <sup>topp</sup>  
etc. Cat out of  
magazines and  
just he have <sup>come</sup>  
It would be very  
easy to arrange.

P. M.  
This must  
be a joint - shock letter for  
I have not time to write two  
separate ones. I am up in  
my little room watching the  
heaters to be a big rain storm  
come up. My window faces the  
west and I have a very good  
view of the sky at sunset with  
a glimpse of the Parl. building  
standing out against it. Have  
just had a little nap after  
lunch so - called tho. it would  
have done nicely for dinner  
on a pinch. Tomato stock soup  
cold roast beef & fried potatoes

rolls and cranberry sauce. Mr.  
Saelle has got a cook now,  
so that things are just-booming.  
She was in bed Sat. Sun & Mon  
with what she called pleurisy  
but is up now with renewed  
spirits. I have got to like our  
table real well now, there is  
such a nice man here, a Mr.  
Marshall, who makes me think  
of Charlie Billings a little only  
he is not gruff like C. He is  
a college graduate, & is here  
representing a big pottery concern  
of the U. S. He tells us great  
yarns about his college days

He is married and writes to his wife  
every day. Now that I have just  
got to like our table Mrs. Latta  
says I am to go in to the other  
one. There are three others coming  
to ours. a Mr & Mrs. Langley  
and their son. However the other  
tables are nice too and I will  
take in the whole house. I  
went Monday for my parcel  
to Mrs. Lewis' but she was out then  
and had not left it out for me, so  
I had to go again on Tuesday. It's  
a long walk from here. but she was  
in again. I got the parcel

but did not see Mrs. Lewis <sup>who was</sup> ~~she~~ <sup>out</sup>. She  
left word that I was to call  
again. Monday night I went  
to a reception at Jarvis St. and  
had a very nice time. It was  
very friendly and informal.  
We had two solos by <sup>ready</sup> members  
of the choir, both very nice. The  
was the Love Love Song, and the  
other girl who had a very pretty  
voice sang "I love him" a  
very amorous ditty which seemed  
to appeal to the male members  
at any rate. Every other line or  
so she would throw back her head  
and warble out that she loved him  
she loved him, and nothing so sweet

As the sound of his feet ere taught  
like the want of his Russes" I advise  
you to get that song B. if you ever  
have to sing before a lot of students  
and - dont care what they think of you.

Who do you think has just been  
here to call, Mrs. H<sup>m</sup> Lewis. wife  
of an Angel - was with it nice  
if her to come and see me. She is  
going home on Sat. I had no  
idea she was going so soon.

I got the \$6.<sup>00</sup> all right  
paid Mrs. Sater, \$2.<sup>00</sup> because  
she could not change the v. She  
said it was all right. She was as  
kind as she can be, tho something  
in the same flight as the old woman

who lived in a shoe, she has  
a small family of 25 boarders  
3 maids & a laundress. husband &  
child to look after. Not much is  
it. I have discovered that the man  
I don't like, he's very nice, pays  
\$4.00 a week and only takes  
his meals here. Don't you think  
keeping boarders must pay?

I am sorry you sent me so much  
when you are so hard up. The  
fees are due any time before the  
1st of November. If they are not  
paid then a fine of \$7.00 per month  
is charged. then there is a library fee for  
the use of the modern language library  
wh. is not really a fee but consists

mainly in the deposit of \$2.00 wh. is  
returned to you at the end of the year  
provided you have not injured any  
books. There is a fee of 25 cts for the  
Y. W. C. A. wh. I think I shall have to  
join. I am not going to give the list  
my clothes are all right another. I wore  
my Sapphires waist the other night & Leticia said  
it looked very swell. I bought my blue skirt  
Sat. night you forget to put the velvet in  
but I got a remnant for 10 cts & fixed  
it nicely. I am a little afraid that cloth is  
not going to wear as well as we expected. It  
shows signs of wearing off. in time of course  
you should see the lovely serge Aunt Rella  
got. 8 yds for 65 cts. - 40 or 50 ct value.  
I think I shall really have to invest

in a bottle of shoe polish as my shoes will  
be respectable so much longer. Then I had to  
buy some soap. I got 10cts worth pure Castile  
enough to last a year. Because the soap in my  
room was eating the tops of my fingers. My gloves  
are the worst feature of my wardrobe, but I  
think I shall get some gasoline & clean them.  
I went to look at the shields on Sat. The small  
size were 15cts and I would have needed two  
pairs for one dress. So I got a very large  
size for 25. & when my ship comes we will  
get an enormous pair for 30. I will see  
about getting samples for B. within a few days  
we have got down to regular work at the University  
now. The histories of lit. & old Fr. & Ger.  
are new things for me, but as the work con-  
sists chiefly in taking notes from lectures  
~~nothing~~ no sauce does not show up &  
the professors told me to come if I  
wanted any explanations.

**MB Williams to her mother and sister Eva ("Brownie"), 1899**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Written across the top of the letter]

They had a good guessing competition the other night. Advertisement well known like Pears' soap, Sophie [?] etc, cut out of magazines and just the name covered. It would be very easy to arrange

Thurs, P.M.

Dear Mother & Brownie

This must be a joint-shock letter for I haven't time to write two separate ones. I am up in my little room watching what threatens to be a big rain storm come up. My window faces the west and I have a very good view of the sky at sunset with a glimpse of the Parl. Buildings standing out against it. Have just had a little nap after lunch so-called tho it would have done nicely for dinner in a pinch. Tomato stock soup cold roast beef and fried potatoes

[pagebreak]

rolls and cranberry sauce. Mrs. Salter has got a cook now so that things are just booming. She was in bed Sat. Sun & Mon with what she called pleurisy but is up now with renewed spirits. I have got to like our table real well now. There is such a nice man here, a Mr. Marshall who makes me think of Charlie Billings a little only he is not gruff like C. He is a college graduate about 40 & is here representing a big pottery concern of the U.S. He tells us great yarns about his college days.

[pagebreak]

He is married and writes to his wife every day. Now that I have just got to like our table Mrs. Salter says I am to go on to the other one. There are three others coming to ours. A Mr. & Mrs. Langley [?] and their son. However the other table are nice too and I will take in the whole house. I went Monday for my parcel to Mrs. Lewis but she wasn't in and had not left it out for me, so I had to go again on Tuesday - a long walk from here but she was not in again. I got the parcel

[pagebreak]

but did not see Mrs. Lewis who was out. She left word that I was to call again. Monday night I went to a reception at Jarvis St. and had a very nice time. It was very friendly and informal. We had two solos by lady members of the choir, both very nice. One was the Creole Love Song, and the other girl who had a very pretty voice sang "I love him" a very amorous ditty which seemed to appeal to the male members at any rate. Every other line or so she would throw back her head and warble out that she loved him. She loved him and nothing so sweet

[pagebreak]

as the sound of his feet ere naught like the want of his kisses" I advise you to get that song B, if you ever have to sing before a lot of students and - don't care what they think of you.

Who do you think has just been here to call, Mrs. W<sup>m</sup> Lewis. [ \_\_\_?] of an angel - wasn't it nice of her to come and see me. She is going home on Sat. I had no idea she was going so soon.

I got the \$6.00 all right paid Mrs. Salter \$2.00 because she couldn't change the v. She said it was all right. She is as kind as she can be, tho something in the same plight as the old woman

[pagebreak]

who lived in a shoe. She has a small family of 25 boarders 3 maids & a laundress, husband & child to look after. Not much is it? I have discovered that the man I don't like, he is so rude, pays \$4.00 a week and only takes his meals here. Don't you think keeping boarders must pay? I am sorry you sent me so much when you are so hard up. My fees are due any time before the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, if they are not paid then a fine of \$1.00 per month is charged then there is a library fee for the use of the modern language library wh. is not really a fee but consists

[pagebreak]

merely in the deposit of \$2.00 wh. is returned to you at the end of the year provided you have not injured any books. There is a fee of 25 cts for the Y.W.C.A wh. I think I shall have to join. I am not going to join the Lit. [?] My clothes are all right Mother. I wore my sapphire waist the other night & Lettie said it looked very swell. I bound my blue skirt Sat. night you forgot to put the velvet in but I got a remnant for 10 cts & fixed it nicely. I am a little afraid that cloth is not going to wear as well as we expected. It shows signs of wearing off in time of course. You should see the lovely serge Aunt Rilla got 8 yds for 65 cts.- 40.00 at 50 cts value. I think I shall really haveto invest

[pagebreak]

in a bottle of shoe polish as my shoes will be respectable so much longer. Then I had to buy some soap. I got 10cts worth [pure \_\_\_?] enough to last a year because the soap in my room was taking the tops off my fingers. My gloves are the worst feature of my wardrobe, but I think I shall get some gasoline and clean them. I went to look as the shields on Sat. the small size were 15 cts and I would have needed two pair for one dress so I got a very large size for 25 & when my ship comes in will get an enormous pair for 30. I will call about getting samples for B. within a few days. We have got down to regular work at the university now. The histories of lit. & old Fr & Ger are new things for me, but as the work consists chiefly in taking notes from lecture my ignorance doesn't show up & the professors told me to come if I wanted any explanations.

I dare say he's not responsible this year, but of course he did not need a lantern to walk home by & he meant you to give it to mother. Then you might have walked behind. Browne appears to be very unrelenting to the poor 20 cents but I should not wonder if Wieris has not tasted of the quizer cookie by now. Don't be too cross. Gather ye rose-buds while ye may, ~~and~~ it's but enough to be gown up all the rest of the year. Listen to the words of one old in such things and hearken, only don't let ~~Wieris~~ have Davy. Take him yourself in presence.

7901

Department of the Interior  
Thursday, Aug 5.

Dear People.

In fear I should not get time to -morrow. I had better start this to-day. It always has to be done in odds and ends of minutes before and between hours or when I can consecrate by piecing a few small minutes from the Government. Your last letters were delicious. To think of you all together, up on the

dear red lake. You cant wish half as much  
that I could be there as I do myself. O-  
that I had - as - wings like a dove. but I  
have it and I am afraid I should not fly  
far if they were not bigger than that. But  
its no use wishing and when you simply cant have  
it, theres no use crying for the moon. You  
just have to make yourself as cheerful as poss-  
ble under the circumstances with your tennis

ball, although it is a poor apology for that orbid  
sphere. I am afraid Joe you were asleep  
in church. Dreaming is a very nice  
poetical sort of way to express it, but I am afraid  
myself it was a veritable snore with perhaps the  
ghost of a snore around the corner. I remember  
the time you went to sleep when we were break-  
ing up a coconut on the beach! The evidence  
is damning. Guilty, my lady, or not guilty? You  
are not to mind what Samivel says

By the way have you seen any of the divines this year? You need not tell me if you have that - I sh-  
erty is married, she after one Millan's conduct I  
can bear any thing. It must be going to rain  
for my hair is frizzled up like a peccaninee  
and I feel a strange disinclination to get to work  
which is however not so unusual. Our elevator was  
not running this morning and we had to walk all  
the way up to the top, the 5th story. Stepping  
heavenward does not agree with the calves of  
my — l ● ● (I guess those are only banty ones). I  
feel as if I had been practising the court bow  
or pedestrianizing on the Raids of Lake Huron.  
Nothing exciting in Ottawa just at present except a  
mea small fox outbreak. Nothing serious but just suf-  
ficient for the mayor to quarrel with the Health  
officer. The mayor here is like a game  
turkey-cock. Never happy unless he's fighting  
some one. Then a marriage in the Service

is causing some talk. Miss Jessie  
Christie (salary 1350.00 by the way)  
to Mr. Parmelee, Deputy Minister of  
T & C. aged 70. retires only one  
year. You know the Christies mother  
grandma is old friends. Does rather  
myself have her position than her  
husband but they just moved up.  
The others in the office. Have not  
been driving with exchange yet  
Hattie Harding staying with Aunt  
Ruth for a couple of weeks.

Here's four so good-bye dears  
2 kisses for Moe, one for her nose  
& the other for her chin & one  
between you and B.  
Your very loving  
The disconsolate  
write again on Sunday. Fussy.

Mother seems to have shown unexampled  
bravery in attacking single handed  
the 'young savages' and 'dishybill'. It's  
a good thing for them, mother, you're such a  
bad shot. However I have heard of  
girls who behaved - perhaps we had  
better not mention this. This is just  
the day for angel pancakes. I am  
afraid I am getting my hands all  
out of practice, and brown biscuits. I was  
very near dropping into poetry just there  
to the strain of "O who doth make the  
pancake light, O who doth make the taffy light  
O who doth eat them up at night, now  
I am far away. But ah that word  
Fare to my mind brings him back in  
the light of his radiant - etc - you know. W.P. King

**MB to Dear People, 15 Aug 1901**

[1901]

Department of the Interior

Thursday. Aug 15.

Dear People

For fear I should not get time to-morrow, I had better start this to-day. It always has to be done in odds and ends of minutes before and between hours or when I can conscientiously pilfer a few small minutes from the Government. Your last letters were delicious. TO think of you all together, up on the

[pagebreak]

dear old lake. You could wish half as much that I could be there as I do myself. O that I had as \_\_\_ wings like a dove. but I haven't and I am afraid I should not fly far if they weren't bigger than that. But it's no use wishing and when you simply can't have it, there's no use crying for the moon. You just have to make yourself as cheerful as possible under the circumstances with your tennis ball, although it is a poor apology for that orb'd sphere. I am afraid Joe you were asleep in church. Dreaming is a very nice poetical sort of way to express it, but I am afraid myself it was a veritable snooze with perhaps the ghost of a snore around the corner. I remember the time you went to sleep when we were breaking up a cocoanut on the beach! The evidence is damaging. Guilty, my lady, or not guilty? You are not to mind what Samivil [?] says

[pagebreak]

I dare say he's not responsible this year, but of course he did not need a coterie [?] to walk home by & he meant you to give it to mother. Then you might have walked behind. Brownie appears to be unrelenting to the poor 20 centers but I should not wonder if Wilfrid had ~~not~~ tasted of the ginger cookie by now. Don't be too cross. Gather ye rose-buds while ye may. It's bad enough to be grown up all the rest of the year. Listen to the words of one old in such things and hearken, only don't let Molly have Davy. Take him yourself in preference.

[pagebreak]

Mother seems to have shown unexampled [?] bravery in attacking single handed 21 young savages 'ong dishybill'. It's a good thing for them, mother, you're such a bad shot. However I have heard of girls who behaved – perhaps we had better not mention this. This is just the day for angel pancakes. I am afraid I am getting my hand all out of practise, and brown biscuits. I was very near dropping into poetry just there to the strain of 'O who doth make the pancake light. O who doth make the taffy bright O who doth eat them up at night, now I am far away. But ah that word Fair to my mind brings him back in the light of his radiant – etc – you know.

[pagebreak]

By the way have you seen any of the [?] this year? You need not tell me if you have that Doherty is married, tho' after McMillan's conduct I can bear anything. It must be going to rain for my hair is frizzled up like a piccaninies and I feel a strange disinclination to get to work which is however not so unusual. Our elevator was not running this morning and we had to walk all the way to the top, the 5<sup>th</sup> story. Slipping heavenward does not agree with the calves of my \_\_\_\_\_. (I guess those are only banty ones). I feel as if I had ben practicing the court bow or pedestrianizing on the sands of Lake Huron. Nothing exciting in Ottawa just at present except a mild small pox outbreak. Nothing serious

but just sufficient for the mayor to quarrel with the Health officer. The mayor here is like a game turkey-cock. Never happy unless he's fighting someone. Then a marriage in the Service

[pagebreak]

is causing some talk. Miss Jessie Christie (salary 1350.00 by the way) to Mr. Parmalee, Deputy Minister of T & C [Trade & Commerce] [?] relict only one year. You know the Christies Mother grandma's [?] old friends. Would rather myself have her position than her husband but hey just moved up the others in the office. Have not been driving with exchange yet Hallie Harding staying with Aunt Ruth for a couple of weeks.

Here's [?] so good-bye tears & kisses for Molly one for her nose & the other for her chin & one between you & B. Your very loving tho disconsolate

Fuzzy

Write again on Sunday.

Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1902

Dear Stone-birds

All yours just arrived and I feel moved to reply at once. I have just come back from lunch and as work is seldom begun till two I thought I would seize the opportunity and write a few lines at any rate. You don't know how surprised and pleased I was when I opened my little box, for you must know I do not expect anything this year from any of you. on acct of so many unavoidable expenses. signs etc. The gloves are lovely my favorite kind as I suppose you knew. Am going to keep them for very best. The little piece of lace is very pretty too. and however much I might want it something I would not have made for myself. I opened the box in the office and of course then I had to show its contents to everybody & they all think I am very lucky & must have some people who think quite a little bit of me. Nobody down here knows of the momentous fact that I celebrate my 24<sup>th</sup> b-day I did not want Mary to know because she is hard up. I as \$7.00 to meet in March. She makes a lot of money but her

expenses are very heavy. \$300 for her store and about \$50 a week  
to pay the girls, ~~then~~ the expense of keeping house so you see she  
needs to do a good deal. She talks of going to Dawson or Victoria  
or some place where she could make a good deal of money and not  
spend much, for a few years. till she made enough to be  
able to retire and live on her place. I don't suppose she'll do it  
but she likes to talk about it. It seems strange for anyone to be  
so absolutely alone in the world as she is. Chack Duff is the only  
one she has left. and by the way she is out the only one who is  
talking of going west. The Kennedys say they have made up their  
minds to go this summer. Uncle John is to go in the Spring to  
locate, and the others are to follow later. They think it will be  
to South Alberta, & do not seem to know whether they will  
have a ranch or farm. Probably the former. Mrs. Charlie Blair  
and Ron have been home visiting from out there and they  
have done so well and tell such glowing tales of the  
West that the others have caught the fever. Tho it seems a

fully risky thing to me. Two old men, one almost as good as  
useless. And three delicate airy girls, who can't even set  
a table alone. Uncle Alex and Aunt Sarah will have  
the hard part as usual. Uncle John just trusts to  
Alex and Providence and reads half the day long. I  
think myself Alex has a heavier load than Providence.  
Aunt Sarah said something about marrying the girls off  
and perhaps they will, I am afraid that in the ordinary  
course of events, it would be a much more difficult matter here.

Helen is a rather a nice girl and quite good-looking, but a  
little brusque in manner. She seems to be the strongest of the three  
after all. The other two haven't an idea more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch deep.  
But that's a nice way to be talking about my own cousins, isn't it.

Well so I'm at the height of my matrimonial  
chances am I, Stacky, & you insinuate I'd best be gathering  
my rose-buds <sup>perhaps orange blossoms would be better.</sup> while I may. Alas I'm afraid I've a very  
indifferent taste for rose-buds and don't care if there are any  
growing in my garden-patch or not. I've been doing some

calculating lately and I've about made up my mind to go to the Normal College a year from this fall. I can't save up enough to go this year. I guess by doing my very best I'd only have about \$100 by Sept. but by the next year I ought to have \$200 or more enough to pay every cent of my expenses if what I want. You see I'm still thinking of that European tour and I don't see how I could ever manage it in three weeks holidays. There's not much show here for anything but the slowest advance. You see the Hon. David's out of it now and perhaps all the liberals will be in a few years. I'll only be 25, then. (Sapish. I don't know a person felt so horribly juvenile at that apparently advanced age.) and that's just about ~~enough~~ to recommend itself to school boards etc. Where is Mabel Smith. Have you ever heard anything about her.

Wish I could be home to get the benefit of some of the bacteriology experiments, it will be fine I'm sure. You should read "The Tempest" to understand Caliban, & the interesting theories connected therewith.

We are to have a toboggan party to-morrow night. If it is fine weather, it ought to be moonlight. Just Harry & Dan & Gerard Brown & etc. Prud'homme to manipulate the toboggans. It's very exciting. If you please I hope you aren't going to send me anything more for my birthday or I won't know what to pay. I wonder how many more birth-days it will be before we are together again. Lovingly Fussy.

MB to Home-birds, Feb 1902

Transcription / Additional Information

Feb 18th 1902

Dear Home-birds

All yours just arrived and I feel moved to reply at once. I have just come back from lunch and as work is seldom begun till two I thought I would seize the opportunity and write a few lines at any rate. You don't know how surprised and pleased I was when I opened my little box, for you must know I did not expect anything from any of you, on account of so many unavoidable expenses, signs, etc. The gloves are lovely my favorite kind as I suppose you knew. I'm going to keep them for very best. The little piece of lace is very pretty too, and however much I might want it something I would not have made for myself. I opened the box in the office and of course then I had to show its contents to everybody & they all think I am very lucky & must have some people who think quite a bit of me. Nobody down here knows of the momentous fact that I celebrate my 24th b-day I didn't want Mary to know because she is hard up. Has \$700 to meet in March. She makes a lot of money but her

[pagebreak]

Expenses are very heavy. \$300 for the store and about \$50 a week to pay the girls, then the expense of keeping house so you see needs to do a good deal. She talks of going to Dawson or Victoria or some place where she could make a good deal of money and not spend much, for a few years, till she made enough to be able to retire and live on her place. I don't suppose she'll do it but she likes to talk about it! It seems strange for anyone to be so absolutely alone in the world as she is. MacDuff is the only one she has left and by the way she is not the only one who is talking of going west. The Kennedys say they have made up their mind to go this summer. Uncle John is to go in the Spring to locate, and the others are to follow later. They think it will be to South Alberta, & do not seem to know whether they will ranch or farm. Probably the former. Mrs. Charlie Blair and son have been home visiting from out there and they have done so well and tell such glowing tales of the West that the others have caught the fever. Tho it seems a

[pagebreak]

pretty risky thing to me. Two old men, one almost as good as useless, and three delicate airy girls, who can't even set a table alone. Uncle Alex and Aunt Sarah will have the hard part as usual. Uncle John just trusts to Alex and providence and reads half the day long. I think myself Alec has a heavier load than Providence. Aunt Sarah said something about marrying the girls off and perhaps they will, I am afraid that in the ordinary course of events, it would be a much more difficult matter here. Alison is rather a nice girl and quite good-looking, but a little brusque in manner. She seems to be the strongest of the three after all. The other two haven't an idea more than ½ an inch deep but that's a nice way to be talking about my own cousins, isn't it.

Well so I'm at the height of my matrimonial chances am I, Stalky [her brother Ernie's nickname], & you insinuate I'd best be gathering my rose-buds or perhaps orange blossoms would be better while I may. Also I'm afraid I've a very indifferent taste for rose-buds and don't care if there are any growing in my garden-patch or not. I've been doing some

[pagebreak]

Calculating lately and I've about made up my mind to go to the Normal College a year from this fall. I can't save up enough to go this year. I guess by doing my very best I'd only have about \$100 by Sept. but by the next year I ought to have \$200 or more enough to pay every cent of my expense if what I want. You see I'm still thinking of that European tour and I don't see how I could even manage it in three weeks holidays. There's not much show here for anything but the slowest advance. You see the Hon. David's out of it now and perhaps all the liberals will be in a few years. I'll only be 25, then, (saprish [?] I did not know a person felt so horribly juvenile at that apparently advanced age) and that's just about the right age to recommend itself to school boards etc. Where is Mabel Smith, have you ever heard anything about her. Wish I could be home to get the benefit of some of the bacteriology experiments, it will be fine I'm sure. You should read "The Tempest" and to understand Caliban, & the interesting theories connected therewith. We are to have a toboggan party to-morrow night, if it is fine weather, it ought to be moonlight. Just Harry & Dan & Gerald Brown & Mr. Prudhomme to manipulate the toboggans. It's very eggsciting. If you please I hope you aren't going to send me anything more for my birthday or I won't know wot to say. I wonder how many birthdays it will be before we are together again.

Lovingly Fuzzy [MB's family nickname]

The Chalet at Lake Louise



1688

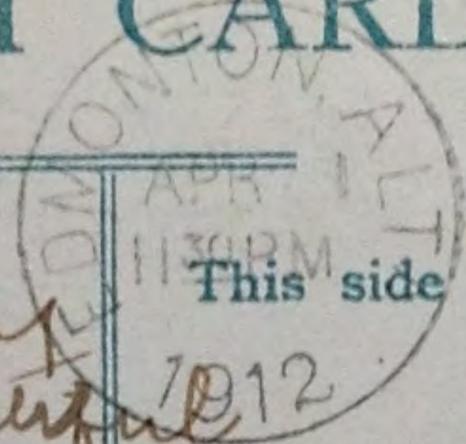
Edmonton 1<sup>st</sup> April

POST CARD

Dear Miss W.

This space for writing

Spent a delightful day at Laine recently. Beautiful even in its winter garb. Three so called Cottages are being erected on about the site of the tall trees in the left foreground. The new "seq. wall" or Riprapping is being extended to where the boulders in the left hand corner. The C.P.R. in all its improvements seems to endeavor to keep inviolate the primitive beauty of the place. Don't let Mr. Hartin work too hard. Sincerely J.H.B.



This side is for the Address.



Miss M. B. Williams

Dominion Parks Board

Parks Building

Ottawa

Byron Harmon, Photographer, Banff, Alta.

**201311-01 1 and 2**

Postcard "Chateau at Lake Louise"

Frank Williamson (Assistant Controller, Dominion Parks Branch) to MB Williams, Dominion Parks Branch, Birks Building, Ottawa, 1 April 1912

Dear Miss W.

Spent a delightful day at [Lake] Louise recently. Beautiful even in its Winter garb. Three so called Cottages are being erected on about the site of the tall trees in the left foreground. The new "sea-wall" or Riprapping is being extended to where the boulders in the left hand corner. The C.P.R. in all its improvements seems to endeavor to keep inviolate the primitive beauty of the place. Don't let Mr. Harkin work too hard. Sincerely,

F.H.W.

---

Felling fine + quite  
dear people.  
my  
to  
is

Sunday afternoon.

Ottawa  
Oct 11/28

Here I am back in  
old routine of life and all  
is as if it had not been. Except

for happy memories and renewed  
associations. Saturday morning.

I went to the office (Friday I  
just unpacked, dusted + slept)

and yesterday afternoon I came

up here to Mrs. Greene's +

am spending the week-end. We

tried to get Walter Oamrock

last night but in spite of

Heir #300 Radio we only heard  
him in bits. They say there  
are too many hoosters near  
here. I had a good sleep

of 10 hours last night & am  
feeling quite fine. We have  
just been over to "Wentz's"  
(Dr. Wentworth Green's) to dinner

He is the wealthy old bachelor  
uncle with the housekeeper.

She is delicious. With Ruth  
Cook study her for a comic

part. To begin with she didn't  
have dinner ready till after  
5 & we were nearly famished.

Joe had <sup>boiled</sup> lamb with caper sauce,

Cauliflower with asparagus sauce, <sup>new</sup>

Carrots, boiled Spanish onions

with parsley sauce, wine, cider

& ale, & two desserts with oatmeal

cookies & Madeira cake to top

off with. I began with caution

but in the end threw all

reservations to the wind  
& testea say thyroid to the  
utmost. Wenty is an old  
dear but so conservative - I  
was almost afraid to show  
my ankles. His two greatest  
interests are history & stocks  
or rather bonds. They are  
so safe. The house is very old  
fashioned - queer old engravings &  
the family done in oils, one or two

niche old bits of furniture but  
the rest just the queer medley  
that an old bachelor with no  
artistic guidance would buy.

They all seemed glad to  
see me back at the office.  
Mr. Hartin welcomed me  
with both hands & kept me  
for an hour talking. He  
wouldn't have done that if  
Mr. Campbell had been home

for he would have had his head  
in the door on some pretense  
He wants to be in on everything  
I suppose.

The flat was a bit dusty &  
the silver (i!) was absolutely  
peckled and the people  
above has gone away & let  
the furnace go out and 6  
radiators has burst & leaked  
through several ceilings.

but most luckily no real damage  
was done to my flat.

I suppose Ruth is feeling  
very free + irresponsible to-day.

Devlin's were having a

Sale yesterday + I thought I

would see if there was anything

exceptionally nice but there

really wasn't. I think

it will be better to wait

for the Spring Sales.

Mrs. Greene very well but  
Dr. Herridge doesn't look  
so well as when I left. He

has had two queer little attacks,

Pretty cold here but very crisp  
& sunny. Flat lonely & warm

Pauline's store going out of business.

Phoned Violet & they are all  
well. Am just writing a line  
so Dr. Herridge can post it  
when he goes out. Much love  
Ma.

**MB Williams to her family, Oct 1928**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

Sunday afternoon.

Ottawa

October 11, 1928

[Written vertically at the top of the page:]

Feeling fine & quite rested after my trip.

Dear People

Here I am back in to old routine of life and all is as if it had not been, except for happy memories and renewed associations. Saturday morning I went to the office (Friday I just unpacked, dusted & slept) and yesterday afternoon I came up here to Mrs. Irene's & am spending the week-end. We tried to get Walter Dawrosch [?] last night but in spite of

[pagebreak]

their \$300 Radio we only heard him in bits. They say there are too many boosters [?] near here. I had a good sleep of 10 hours last night & am feeling quite fine. We have just been over to "Wenty's" (Mr. Wentworth Greene's) to dinner. He is the wealthy old bachelor uncle with the housekeeper. She is delicious. Wish Ruth could study her for a comic

[pagebreak]

part. To begin with she didn't have dinner ready till after 2 & we were really famished. She had boiled lamb with caper sauce, cauliflower with asparagus sauce, new carrots, boiled spanish onions with parsley sauce, wine cider & ale, & two desserts with oatmeal cookies & Madeira cake to top off with. I began with caution but in the end threw all

[pagebreak]

reservation to the wind & tested my thyroid to its utmost. Wenty is an old dear but so conservative. I was almost afraid to show my ankles. His two greatest interests are history & stocks or rather bonds. They are so safe. The house is very old fashioned - queer old engravings & the family done in oils, one or two [pagebreak] nice old bits of furniture but the rest just the queer medley that an old bachelor with no artistic guidance would buy. They all seemed glad to see me back at the office. Mr. Harkin welcomed me with both hands & kept me for an hour talking. He wouldn't have done that if Mr. Campbell had been home

[pagebreak]

for he would have had his head in the door on some pretense. He wants to be in on everything I suppose. The flat was a bit dusty & the silver (!) was absolutely freckled and the people above had gone away & let the furnace go out and 6 radiators had burst & leaked through several ceilings.

[pagebreak]

But most luckily no real damage was done to my flat.

I suppose Ruth is feeling very free & irresponsible to-day. Devlin's were having a sale yesterday & I thought I would see if there was anything exceptionally nice but there really wasn't. I think it will be better to wait for the spring sales.

[pagebreak]

Mrs. Greene very well but Dr. Herridge doesn't look so well as when I left. He has had two queer little attacks. Pretty cold here but very crisp & sunny. Flat lovely & warm Poulin's store going out of business. Phoned Violet & they are all well. Am just writing a line so Dr. Herridge can post it when he goes out. Much love Mab.

Ever so  
many thanks  
for the bottle  
of daisy

Sunday  
the  
long  
Scarfi notes

Oct. 10  
Have any  
about 'Gum'  
Fawkes?

1930

A perfectly divine day with the leaves turning red  
& green very fast. Mrs. H. has gone to the

Rideau Lakes with Mrs. Brown but I had a  
bit of a cold so stayed at home. Otherwise

I should have enjoyed "rumpsteak". It has  
been a busy week. Sunday the christening

at Chalmers Church, and a christening tea  
later at Rockliff. Lord Bessborough and

the prime minister standing by to see the  
hon. Mr. Bennett Julian

Verne "tacked on" to the protesting mile

he raised his voice very loudly but Dr.  
Woodside rubbed his tummy hypnotically &  
he gave in. For his first party he had a  
wonderful cake made by the cook and  
all sorts of wonderful mugs & spoons, enough  
for all his grandchildren. Mrs. Hernandez drove

away up here on Sat. night to show the  
Grandmother the christening robe. It was  
made in Ital. & was as lovely as anything  
we saw in France or Italy. She was very  
happy about her baby but it makes one's heart  
shut up just a little to look at him

He is so small for five months & he  
has such a wistful pathetic expression.

Doesn't like any kind of food they offer him

It's just a fight to get it down. He seems  
to think working not eating is a

badly earned in life. His uncle Dick is

said to live on chocolates perhaps when  
he gets that far he will begin to thrive.

Thursday we went to the opening of Paul.

Mrs. (Mildred) Hemidge has insisted on getting

tickets for the dress gallery & reserved seats so

although it was pouring rain we went

Those hardy perennials - our black lace dresses -  
came off the hook for its 99<sup>th</sup> time except that  
I added a bow of blue velvet to mine.

It was pouring rain so we decided to go in  
style + took a 25<sup>ct</sup> taxi both ways.

We both agree that once in 20 years was  
often enough for such a performance though  
we had no crowding or waiting. Simply  
walked to our reserved seats.

Lady Benson's looked wonderfully lovely.  
Dress of white chiffon velvet. Train lined  
with silver + edges with a broad band  
of Kolinsky. It looked just right against the

red carpet & chairs which killed some of the  
pinks & purples. Mr. Bennett perspired in gold  
lace & white satin trousers. Cocher hat with the  
same grim determination with which he raises  
the tariff & cuts down the Civil Service. "My poor  
darling brother", Mildred said, on Monday when  
she was going away, "How will he get into  
that coat alone."

On Tues. our old friend Mrs. Indewell came  
down to the Hospital for some X-ray treatments  
& has been here all week. Cyril has been  
going & coming & Friday night stayed all

right. They do not think there is anything serious  
but another old friend, Miss Jessie Lee - is developing  
that wretched trouble where the bones dissolve.  
It is a horrid outlook. I am afraid much suffering  
involved.

We are still working at buspendley, Ruth.  
It takes a lot of reading - also got one  
of Bragdon's book. "Architecture + Democracy"  
written in 1918 before the Great American period  
began. He was a disciple of Louis Sullivan. as  
most of them were in the end. Has an interesting  
chapter on the possibilities of Color as a new  
art. We are seeing something of the kind on

the stage to day.

Speaking of the stage, we had a charming letter from Tony Guthrie yesterday, saying he has a new book coming out and that his play "The Second Coming" will be produced in 6 weeks. We discussed the possibility of going over to see it but decided that even if Tony did give us passes, it would come a little high.

Mrs. Herdige isn't really very well. She seems very tired. As if she were on the verge of a nervous break. We were to have driven to Inouhal this week but I persuaded her

not to. I think she's not up to it. She has  
has a lot of things to worry her lately. but  
we'll just have to see what more rest will do.

Has quite a <sup>minor</sup> tragedy with my green coat.  
Ruffs. Sent it to be cleaned + the "fur"  
collar dissolved in the bath. Seems to have been  
stuck on with glue to some sort of composition +  
the glue melted. So now I have no collar.  
+ am meditating the next move. Mrs. H. has  
some bits of Hudson seal which may do.

We are going to send a list of books  
soon that we want you to buy for us.

Am anxious to hear how the curtains look.  
Haven't got the \$8.<sup>00</sup> back yet but they say  
I will. Does mother enjoy the para? Love. The

## MB Williams to her family, Oct 1930

### Transcription / Additional Information

1930

Sunday Oct. 10.

[Written vertically across the top of the letter:]

Ever so many thanks for the book & daisy & the lovely scarf Mother. Have you any hints about Guy Fawkes?

A perfectly divine day with the leaves turning red & gold very fast. Mrs. H. has gone to the Rideau Lakes with Mrs. Brown but I had a bit of a cold so stayed at home. Otherwise I should have enjoyed "rambling." It has been a busy week. Sunday the christening at Chalmers Church, and a christening tea later at Rockcliffe. Lord Bessborough and the prime minister standing by to see the horrible cognomen "Wm Rich Bennet Julian Vere" tacked on to the protesting mite

[pagebreak]

He raised his voice very loudly but Dr. Woodside rubbed his tummy hypnotically & he gave in. For his first party he had a wonderful cake made by the cook and all sorts of wonderful mugs & spoons, enough for all his grandchildren. Mrs. Herridge drove away up here on Sat. night to show the Grandmother the christening robe. It was made in Mil. & was a lovely as anything we saw in France or Italy. She was very happy about her baby but it makes one's heart start up just a little to look at him.

[pagebreak]

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[pagebreak]

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We are going to send a list of books soon that we want you to buy for us. Am anxious to hear how the curtains look. Haven't got the \$8.00 back yet but they say I will. Does mother enjoy the park?

Love.

M

# CUNARD LINE

ON BOARD



R.M.S.

Franconia

wednesday noon

& all well.

Dear People.

We are now about half  
way over & feeling as fit

as can be. Whether it's the

bella donna or what, can't

say, but as yet we haven't

missed a meal. Of course

the sea is behaving like

a real lady. Only a big swell

on + quite type of white caps.

I. we been out on the top deck  
in a sheltered corner the whole

morning & was beautifully

ready for lunch. Mrs. Herdige

has been unusually well for her

but sleeps an undisturbed no. of

hours per day. However that

is much better than being

sick as she usually is.

we find we are to be longer  
than we expected. shall not  
reach plymouth till Mon. A.M.  
+ London Tues. night. so  
we have decided to get off at  
Plymouth and run down to Cornwall

- which is just next door - for  
a few days + then perhaps take  
a char-a-banc up to London.

Mrs. H. wants to get another picture  
from Johnny Park and I hope to  
get an article somewhere.

Saturday Night. Nearly across and  
all is well. pretty rough this morning  
and breakfast appeared at first to be  
almost beyond us. Mrs. H. gave up  
& lay back. Declared she couldn't  
but I clapped on a mustard leaf  
on her tum - tum and she did.

Well we had quite a lot of fun out  
of the trip - The Earl of Portsmouth is  
on board with the Countess - travelling  
without their titles, while a most  
amusing knight who has evidently  
been a Lord Mayor somewhere has  
been terribly pompous.

And now to bed - as Pepys says  
for the last time. Love. W. D.

**MB Williams to her family, 1931**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Cunard Line stationary]

[On board] Franconia

Wednesday noon

& All's Well

Dear People,

We are now about half way over & feeling as fit as can be. Whether it's the bella donna or what, can't say, but as yet we haven't missed a meal. Of course the sea is behaving like

[pagebreak]

a real lady only a big swell on and [ \_\_\_?] tips of white caps. I've been out on the top deck in a sheltered corner the whole morning & was beautifully ready for lunch. Mrs. Herridge has been unusually well for her but sleeps an inordinate no. of hours per day. However that is much better than being sick as she usually is.

[pagebreak]

We find we are to be longer than we expected. Shall not reach Plymouth till Mon. am & London Tues. night so we have decided to get off at Plymouth and run down to Cornwall - which is just next door - for a few days & then perhaps take a char-a-banc up to London. Mrs. H wants to get another picture from Johnny Park and I hope to get an article somewhere.

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And now to bed - as Pepys says for the last time. Love. M.B.

1931

14 St. John's Wood Court.

St. John's Wood. London.

Nov 16/31

N. W. 8.

Dear People.

This is just a line to tell you that we have now a permanent address, as above. We have taken a small furnished flat - "centrally heated" - as they say in this country, which means hot water coils - a rare thing. Most of them have only gas or electric fires. In the oldest houses there is a grate with a miserable moping fire of half a dozen small pieces of coal. This is quite comfy and we have also electric heaters

in case really severe weather occurs so that we  
feel we can control the situation. We are  
fairly central, just a ferry bus ride from  
Serpentine. You turn at that corner from Oxford  
St. & go northwest to St. John's Wood. It is much  
higher & dryer than Kensington or Chelsea wh.  
we had first thought of.

Have been only a week over a week in  
London & very rushed, looking for a  
house & seeing sights. Three great  
spectacles last week. Lord Mayor's  
Show which we saw in Comfort from the

Windows of the Palace Strand Hotel where  
we were staying - a wonderful place where  
you get room + breakfast, bath, boots + general  
service for 2.75 per day. No tips. The Low wagon

looked very important in his ancient-old  
Coach but the show was somewhat spoiled  
by a downpour of rain. However London crowds  
don't mind that + the streets were lined with  
a six-deep sheet of umbrellas for hours before.

The procession was about a mile long + was  
something after the order of our Labour Day  
affairs. Floats showing the progress of  
industry etc. - first bicycle, + motor car, old

horse omnibuses etc. Then the beef-eaters from the Tower.

Tues. we went to the Opening of Parl. Bice Henidge had written to Col. Varmiee, who is the real head of the High Commission Office, & he is simply turning the office on us to get us into things. There is of course a great demand for tickets but he managed at the last moment to get us two for the Royal Gallery. That is a long gallery opening out from behind the Throne through which the King & Queen pass. We saw the Peers & peeresses come in in gold lace & diamonds, & all the processional Ceremony. ~~Beefeaters, Herald~~ Imagine a long Gothic hall with rows of seats rising at each side (where we were) Royal blue Carpet rolled down for the occasion. The Crown & orb in position. Beef-eaters, heralds & Kings Chamberlains all drawn up at each side of the open way. At 10 min to 12 the Crown was solemnly borne into the

Anti-Chambers. Then the Prince of Wales entered & afterwards  
Prince George. Then we heard the crowds cheering outside  
& the bands playing announcing the arrival of the King  
& Queen. & at 12 exactly, on the first stroke of Big Ben,  
the heralds blew a blast on their trumpets, the great  
doors opened at the lower end of the hall & the Royal  
procession entered. The King was leading the Queen  
by the hand & they were both dressed exactly as

you see them in state portraits - Great cloaks of red  
velvet with ermine capes & trains carried by two pages.  
The Queen had a wonderful dress of cream satin embroidered  
in pearls & the most wonderful collar and breastplate of  
diamonds. Diamond crown & earrings. In fact - when she  
walked she sparkled like a cut crystal chandelier.  
The King wore his Crown, with the great ruby & Koh-i-noor  
diamond. It was rather becoming only it looked a  
little too large, as if it should have been taken in a little

A whole lot of dignitaries including Mr. Baldwin followed. We waited until they came out + then went into the House of Lords where we rubbed shoulders with a lot of duchesses etc. waiting to go home.

Next day we were even more fortunate for the Armistice celebration. Col. Vannier got us tickets - for Mr. Thomas' office immediately opposite the Cenotaph + two windows from where the Queen was. We could see everything marvellously + it was one of the most thrilling experiences I believe we shall ever have. You have no conception of what Eng. + the Empire mean till you see the British people on a day like this. We went at a quarter after 9 + the streets were black with people then - standing 15 deep on the sidewalks. The Cenotaph is in the middle of Whitehall + from early morning the street is closed for traffic from Westminster to Trafalgar Square. So that the whole thing is carried out without any confusion. It was a wonderful morning, warm + ~~clear~~ sunny + London is beautiful when the sun shines.

About 10 we went out on to the balconies + Lady Williams  
Dagler of Montreal happened to stand next to us + as she  
had seen it many times before she was able to tell us just  
what was going on. You can see from the picture just how  
it looked. At 10.50 the Prince came out of the  
Home Office + took his place. + the Cabinet. Ministers etc  
the bishop. Choir + about 10 bands were already in place.  
At 10.55 he stepped forward, bowed + laid his wreath  
at the foot of the Cenotaph. Then Mr. Macdonald, Mr.  
Baldwin, ~~Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Ferguson~~ + the representatives of  
the other Dominions laid theirs. + the Bishops of London  
said a prayer. At 11 the bells rang out all over the  
city. The flags dipped + then there was absolute silence  
for 2 min. The motor buses stopped + the people got out,  
took off their hats + waited. You can't imagine how  
huddling it was. Then the bishops prayed again + the  
Grenadier guards Band played almost in a whisper  
the first bars of God Save the King. You realize  
that that was what the whole thing meant.

It was tremendous. The tears simply ran down  
my face.

Thus, we went to Col. Vanmeter's to lunch  
& had a lovely time. Some one for  
three other engagements - this week so  
we shall soon know people.

Hope to write Glenis now.

No word from you yet but Blanche  
has just phoned to say there are  
letters here which I hope may  
be from you.

Best love to you all

Luella

**MB Williams to her family, 16 Nov 1931**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

1931

14 St. John's Wood Court.  
St. John's Wood. London.  
N.W.8.  
Nov 16/1931

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This is just a line to tell you that we have now a permanent address, as above. We have taken a small furnished flat - "centrally heated" as they say in this country, which means hot water coils, a rare thing. Most of them have only gas or electric fires. In the oldest houses there is a grate with a miserable moping fire of half a dozen small pieces of coal. This is quite comfy and we have also electric heaters

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Have been only a little over a week in London & very rushed, looking for a house & seeing sights. Three great spectacles last week. Lord Mayor's show which we saw in comfort from the

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windows of the Palace Strand Hotel where we were staying - a wonderful place where you get room & breakfast, bath, books & general service for \$2.25 per day. No tips. The Lord Mayor looked very important in his ancient gold coach but the show was somewhat spoiled by a downpour of rain. However London crowds don't mind that & the streets were lined with a six-deep thicket of umbrellas for hours before. The procession was about a mile long & was something after the order of our Labour Day affairs. Floats showing the progress of industry etc. first bicycle, & motor car old

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Tues we went to the opening of Parl. Bill Herridge had written to Col Vannier, who is the real head of the High Commissioners office & he is simply turning the office on end to get us into things. There is of course a great demand for tickets but he managed at the last moment to get us two for the Royal Gallery. That is a long gallery opening out from behind the Throne through which the King & Queen pass. We saw the peers & peeresses come in in gold lace & diamonds & all the processional ceremony. Imagine a long Gothic hall with tiers of seats rising at each side (where we were) Royal blue carpet rolled down for the occasion. The crown & orb in position, Beef-eaters, heralds & kings chamberlains all drawn up at each side of the open way. At 10 min to 12 the Crown was solemnly borne into the

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anti-chamber. Then the Prince of Wales entered & afterwards Prince George. Then we heard the crowds cheering outside & the bands playing announcing the arrival of the King & Queen & at 12 exactly, on the first stroke of Big Ben the heralds blew a blast on their bugles. The great doors opened at the lower end of the hall & the Royal procession entered. The King was leading the Queen by the hand & they were both dressed exactly as you see them in the state portraits. Great cloaks of red velvet with ermine capes & trains carried by two pages. The Queen had a wonderful dress of cream satin embroidered in pearls & the most wonderful collar and breast plate of diamonds. Diamond crown & earrings. In fact - when she walked she sparkled like a cut crystal chandelier. The King wore his crown, with the great ruby & Koh-i-noor diamond. It was rather becoming only it looked a little too large as if it should have been taken in a bit.

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Thurs. we went to Col Vanniers to lunch & had a lovely time. Going out for three other engagements this week so we shall soon know people.

Hope to write oftener now.

No word from you yet but Blanche has just phoned to say there are letters here which I hope may be from you.

Best love to you all

M.B.

Nov 19  
1931

14, St. John's Wood Court, St. John's Wood,  
London, N.W. 8. 19/11/31

Dear Stanley.

We have now a permanent home in London,  
a small furnished flat, just a penny bus ride from  
Oxford St. It's a comical Victorian place with family  
portraits (in oils) in the dining room and inlaid furniture  
in the living room. Three beautiful old pieces that you would  
love. The chunky-covered chairs look imposing but  
date back to the days before Springs so that they are  
not luxurious. But there is some nice old silver  
& some remarkable old china, Rockingham & Spode,  
in the enormous china cabinet. The place is "centrally  
heated" that means kept at about 60 to 65 by hot-

water and the English think it is almost stifling hot.

We, with our decadent Colonial taste, prefer it a little warmer very often & then we turn on the electric fireplaces, of which there are several. One of the best features is the kitchen.

Meals are prepared just as in a restaurant but sent down the lift & served in your own apartment. Breakfast

costs about 1s. or 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>6</sub> if you are very carnivorous,

luncheon (4 courses) 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>6</sub> & dinner 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>6</sub>. The cooking is

excellent & everything is sent down with warmed plates &

in covered silver dishes ready to put on the table. After the

meal is over you put the dishes back on the lift &

only have to wash up the knives, forks & spoons.

It's quite an ideal way. We usually take one

meal a day & they send us such large portions

that if we order 2 we have almost enough left for another meal. Now we order one meal but omit one course either meat or fish + double up on the other. There is always enough soup + dessert for 2. So you see it's a regular bargain counter. They serve delicious chicken, turkey, pheasant, sweethearts, etc. A little unimaginative about desserts as English cooks always are, but they come out strong on milk puddings. It's giving us quite an insight into English ways of living because we have to shop + deal with tradesmen + so meet all sorts of queer people. Yesterday the dirtiest small boy I have ever seen, with a very large focus upon his nose + when I opened it he announced himself as "Allshow". Seeing I was in a fog he repeated it - "Allshow". Bagley.

The first lesson we have been given is  
Then the maid in the hall came to the rescue. "Keshawp  
Bagley, Edgware Road". This still didn't seem very clear so  
the maid explained. "Vim, paraffin, soap or dipso." Then  
I tumbled to it that he was taking orders for cleaning goods.  
Evidently sold by one special shop. So we ordered some good  
old Sunlight- soap & gave the kiddie a penny which I  
hope he was to buy some Lifebuoy with. He was a  
poor advertisement of their wares though intellectually quite  
bright & shiny.

Our landlady is a cousin of Sir Maurice Anderson,  
the king's physician, or one of them. When she heard I had  
arthritis she said "Oh, but you must have that seen to at once,  
now I'll write to my ~~brother~~ cousin & ask him who would be the  
best man to consult." We supposed she would forget all about  
it but two days later appeared a note from Sir Maurice  
kindly recommending some Mr. Seth, a specialist in neuritis.  
Which he said his cousin said we had. Very English, both  
ways.  
We have been here less than two weeks but already

Specialist's  
with 3 + 4  
quinars.

~~Do you know a ~~boy~~ ~~boy~~ or man who  
has done a lot + met a number of people. We had tea  
on Mon. with Mrs. Raymond - Willis, a Canadian. I think  
she was one of the Cassells. Met a Mrs. Bethune, who is a  
niece of Lady Ross, Toronto, a Lady Kirkpatrick (husband  
Indian general) + Mrs. Kirchhoffer whom we knew in Ottawa.  
She is 86. + as bright as a dollar. At 83 she climbed  
to the top of St. Pauls with her grandson. right out on to the roof.  
up the final ladder + all. She said that all the way up there  
were signs: The Deane requests visitors not to write names  
etc.~~

But she felt her achievement deserved to be recorded  
so wrote. Clara Kirchhoffer <sup>aged 33</sup> and Bob ~~aged 13~~ who is just thirteen  
have climbed to the top and written their names  
But they hope they wont be seen.

In ~~fact~~ although they aren't afraid of food.  
They are entirely afraid of the Deane

Pretty bright wasn't it.

Mrs. Bethune has asked us to tea som. + to-day we go to  
the Lyceum Club, the most famous women's Club as the  
guest of Mary Macleod Home, the writer, + to-morrow to  
the American Women's Club as guests of an American woman  
You see how friendly + kind people are. Already we have

weather truly British. rain every day but not very heavy. a mile & Mrs. Hammett hasn't begun to look up her old friends.

London is certainly a wonderful place. New York is more exciting but you are ready to leave it in 4 or 5 days. London goes on & on. There is something new every day. He heard the Gresham lecture on Astronomy & are going to the Hibbert lectures next week. Heard a Stravinsky concert & opera & several plays. The list is inexhaustible. You must come some time prepared to stay & get into it. It is fun.

My hand seems slightly better but I have been rather worried about it. All the joints are affected, from the shoulder down, & are sometimes quite painful. But you see I can now write fairly well. I have hesitated to consult a Dr. because there are so many quacks & I thought you thought Time would probably cure it. I believe my liver isn't working very well & that may aggravate it. Have difficulty with fats & sugars.

**MB Williams to [unreadable], 19 Nov 1931**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

Nov 19 1931

14, St. John's Wood Court, St. John's Wood,  
London, N.W.8. 19/11/31

Dear Stalky [MB's brother Ernie]

We have now a permanent home in London, a small furnished flat, just a penny bus ride from Oxford St. It's a comical Victorian place with family portraits (in oils) in the dining room and inlaid furniture in the living room. Three beautiful old pieces that you would love. The chintz-covered chairs look imposing but date back to the days before springs so that they are not luxurious. But there is some nice old silver & some remarkable old china, Rockingham & Spode, in the enormous china cabinet. The place is "centrally heated" that means kept at about 60 to 65 by hot

[pagebreak]

water and the English think it is almost stiflingly hot. We, with our decadent colonial taste, prefer it a little warmer very often & then we turn on the electric fireplaces of which there are several. One of the best features is the kitchen. Meals are prepared just as in a restaurant but sent down the lift & served in your own apartment. Breakfast costs about 1s or 1 1/6 if you are very carnivorous, luncheon (4 courses) 2/6 & dinner 3/6. The cooking is excellent & everything is sent down with warmed plates & in covered silver dishes ready to put on to the table. After the meal is over you put the dishes back on the lift & only have to wash up the knives, forks & spoons. It's quite an ideal way. We usually take one meal a day & they send us such large portions

[pagebreak]

that if we order 2 we have almost enough left for another meal. Now we order one meal but omit one course either meat or fish & double up on the others. There is always enough soup & dessert for 2. So you see it's a regular bargain counter. They serve delicious chicken, turkey, pheasant, sweetbreads etc. A little unimaginative about desserts as English cooks always are, but they come out strong on milk puddings. It's giving us quite an insight into English ways of living because we have to shop & deal with tradesmen & so meet all sorts of queer people. Yesterday the dirtiest small boy I have ever seen, with a very large grocer's apron rang the bell & when I opened it he announced himself as "Allshow." Seeing I was in a fog he repeated it, " , Bagleys

[pagebreak]

[Written in the left margin, vertically]

The fruit lasted all the way across & we ended up with a party in Cornwall.

Then the maid in the hall came to the rescue "Keshamp" Bagleys. Edgewater Road." This still didn't seem very clear so the maid explained. "Vim, paraffin, soap & dipso." Then I tumbled to it that he was taking orders for cleaning goods. Evidently sold by one special shop so we ordered some good old sunlight soap & gave the kiddie a penny which I hope he uses to buy some Lifebuoy with. He was a poor advertisement of their wares though intellectually quite bright and shiny.

Our landlady is a cousin of Sir Maurice Anderson, the King's physician, or one of them. When she heard I had arthritis she said "Oh, but you must have that seen to at once. Now I'll write to my

cousin & ask him who would be the best man to consult." We supposed she would forget all about it but two days later appeared a note from Sir Maurice kindly recommending some Dr. Scott, a specialist in neuritis, which he said his cousin said we had. Very English, both ways.

We have been here less than two weeks but already

[pagebreak]

[Written on the top margin]

Do you know a good book on anything that I could buy. specialists cost 3 & 4 guineas

have done a lot & met a number of people. We had tea on Mon. with Mrs. Raymond-Willis, a Canadian. I think she was one of the Cassells. Met a Mrs. Bethune, who is a niece of Lady [Moss], Toronto. A Lady Kirkpatrick (husband Indian general) & Mrs. Kirchhoffer whom we knew in Ottawa. She is 86 & as bright as a dollar. At 83 she climbed to the top of St. Pauls with her grandson right out on to the roof, up the final ladder & all. She said that all the way up there were signs: The Dean requests visitors not to write names etc. But she felt her achievement deserved to be recorded so wrote.

Clara Kirchhoffer aged 33 [sic] and Bob who is just thirteen

have climbed to the top and written their names

but they hope they won't be seen.

For although they aren't afraid of God

They are awfully afraid of the Dean

Pretty bright wasn't it.

Mrs. Bethune has asked us to tea soon & to-day we go to the Lyceum Club, the most famous Women's Club as the guest of Mary Macleod Moore, the writer, & to-morrow to the American Women's Club as guests of an American woman. You see how friendly & kind people are. Already we have

[pagebreak]

[Written in left margin]

Weather truly British, rain every day but only about 50.<sup>o</sup> Fog yesterday. Quite an experience. Love Fuzzy.

a circle & Mrs. Herridge hasn't begun to look up her old friends.

London is certainly a wonderful place. New York is more exciting but you are ready to leave it in 4 or 5 days. London goes on & on. There is something new every day. We heard the Gresham lecture on Astronomy & are going to the Hibbert Lectures next week. Heard a Stravinsky concert & opera & several plays. The list is inexhaustible. You must come some time prepared to stay & get into it. It is fun.

My hand seems slightly better but I have been rather worried about it. All the joints are affected, from the shoulder down, & are sometimes quite painful. But you see I can now write fairly well. I have hesitated to consult a Dr. because there are so many quacks & I thought you thought time would probably cure it. I believe my liver isn't working very well & that may aggravate it. Have difficulty with fats & sugars.

Prince Albert National Park,  
Prince Albert,  
Sask.

Miss M. B. Williams  
of J. C. Campbell Esq.  
Canadian National Parks  
Ottawa

Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> 1932

Dear Miss Williams:

I hear from Mr. Campbell that you are back in Ottawa after your long trip to Europe, which I hope you enjoyed. I did not answer your letter from England, as I figured you would be moving around, and in a country of such large population you might never receive my letter. The kind interest you took in the welfare of the beaver certainly, I think, entitles you to a closer intimacy with them than you have heretofore had, & both Gertie & I hope that now you are back in Canada you will pay us all that long deferred and promised visit. I feel that there is something lost if you do not come & make a first

hand acquaintance with the Beaver People. We have so much to show you now that is truly wonderful that we feel that you, of all people, who can so readily understand and so beautifully express the beauty of that lies in nature, should come & see your little protégés.

As you no doubt know, there is a wee owlet, who is really worth coming far to see, at least so we imagine.

The beaver, of which there are several at this present time, have built a house inside the cabin & now also an additional dome shaped structure outside the front wall, which may be converted into living quarters later. I am anxious to find out the plans of the current young ones. They are very cute & tame & I hope they stay with us. This having been their undisturbed home for a year, and so much preparation for permanent residence having been made by them, may have its effect, although they undoubtedly will make their Spring journey down stream.

We are now frozen in & fixed for the winter, & soon as my outside work is completed I must commence sending in a few stores to Mr. Campbell. Things will be tied up for a month at least, owing to the big lakes not freezing over readily, but I should have a little stuff out by early December.

Hoping you find happiness in re-entering a circle from which you were so long away (I'll bet Mr. Campbell sorely missed your co-operation), & with best wishes from us both,

I am

Yours very sincerely.

Grey Owl.

Grey Owl to MB, Oct 1932

Transcription / Additional Information

Prince Albert National Park Prince Albert Sask. Oct. 29th 1932 Miss MB Williams c/o JC Campbell,  
Esqre Canadian National Parks Ottawa

Dear Miss Williams:

I hear from Mr. Campbell that you are back in Ottawa after your long trip to Europe, which I hope you enjoyed. I did not answer your letter from England, as I figured you would be moving around, and in a country of such large population you might never receive my letter. The kind interest you took in the welfare of the beaver certainly, I think, entitles you to a closer intimacy with them than you have heretofore had, & both Gertie & I hope that now you are back in Canada you will pay us all that long deferred and oft-promised visit. I feel that there is something lost if you do not come & make a first

[pagebreak]

hand acquaintance with the Beaver People. We have so much to show you now that is truly wonderful that we feel that you, of all people, who can so readily understand and so beautifully express the beauty of that lies in Nature, should come & see your little protégées.

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We are now frozen in & fixed for the Winter, & soon as my outside work is completed I must commence sending in a few stories to Mr. Campbell. Things will be tied up for a month at least, owing to the big lakes not freezing over readily, but I should have a little stuff out by early December.

Hoping you find happiness in re-entering a circle from which you were so long away (I'll bet Mr. Campbell sorely misses your co-operation), & with best wishes from us both,

I am Yours very sincerely,

Grey Owl



Thursday, 1932  
Mr. Christmas

Dear beloveds.

Your box is just going and  
this is just a time to say  
very Happy Christmas to you  
all. We have been very

busy working on this Empire  
broadcast for Christmas morning  
which Mrs. H. & I wrote but  
to-day we feel a good deal like  
the playwright on the night of a  
first production. For an original  
product has been trimmed & cut  
so often to suit so many people  
& times that we hardly know it.  
We are quite thrilled to be on  
the first historic programme however

though it doesn't mean any  
money this time.

I hope you like fifts - will  
have some attractions. They 10  
with much love.

He are both quite well +  
happy though Dolly had her  
bumper smashed this morning.  
Shall be at Perth on  
Sunday -

I am leaving the nest  
Friday for London. Will let  
you know what train.  
but don't save the Toykey.  
A kiss for each of you.

Maabel

2

**MB Williams to her family, Dec 1932**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Japanese scene in colour on top]

Thursday 1932

M. Christmas

Dear beloveds.

Your box is just going and this is just a time to say very Happy Christmas to you all. We have been very

[pagebreak]

busy working on this Empire broadcast for Christmas morning which Mrs. H. & I wrote but to-day we feel a good deal like the playwright on the night of a first production. For our original has been trimmed & cut so often to suit so many people & times that we hardly know it. We are quite thrilled to be on the first historic programme however

[pagebreak]

though it doesn't mean any money this time.

I hope your little gifts will have some attractions. They go with much love.

We are both quite well & happy though Dolly had her bumper smashed this morning. Shall be at Perth on Sunday.

[pagebreak]

I am leaving the next Friday for London. Will let you know what train but don't save the turkey.

A kiss for each of you.

Mabel

Gross Ottawa

Dear Family.

April 1933

The girls flowers came Sat. night.  
Perfectly lovely + still sweet. Pink rose  
maiden hair + lilacs of the V. + a pink  
bow. I loves them.

Feeling a little better each day  
but not up yet. Mrs. Herdise an  
angel to me. Nothing to worry about.

Best love. Mrs.

Love to get your letters.

Getting on slowly  
but very comfortable.

Good woman in  
kitchen + hope

soon to be selling

up. Love.

Mrs.

**MB Williams to her family, Apr 1933**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[From Ottawa]

April 1933

Dear Family

The girls flowers came Sat. night. Perfectly lovely & still sweet. Pink rose maiden hair & blues of the V. & a pink bow. I loved them.

Feeling a little better each day but not up yet. Mrs. Herridge an angel to me. Nothing to worry about.

Best love. M.

Love to get your letters getting on slowly but very comfortable. Good woman in kitchen & hope soon to be sitting up.

Love,

M

Thursday morning  
June 1/33

Dear Motherkins,

No word from ~~you~~ 334 this week but as to-day is the last day you can hear from me I thought I had better send you a line to reach you before Sunday.

There is no news from my small waist (except) that I am progressing famously & can now walk all around upstairs. Began to make ~~the~~ real headway about a week ago. The Dr gave me a shot of ant. toxin 10 or 12 days ago. At first it seemed to have no effect - rather increased my difficulties. Then all of a sudden the tooth cleared up, stopped being sore & leaking into my mouth, and I just went ahead like anything. He thinks I can go downstairs next week. & then the next thing will be Dolly & the good life once more.

I am afraid there will be some weeks work at the dentist the first thing. Wasn't it too bad - I had an appointment to have the belly tooth out the day after I got sick. There are some others that may have to come out too. So I can't plan anything about going away for a while. Besides Mrs. Herndeg has been so wonderfully good to me that I couldn't arrange to leave her alone unless she has other plans. If she decides to go<sup>to</sup> to Pittsburgh for a month as she has sometimes said she might I should feel free but unless she does I would only feel that I come run up to you for a week or ten days, at a time. You just can't imagine

how kind she has been in every way. Anyone else would  
have sent me off to the hospital. I am sure you understand how  
much I should like to spend the summer with you, but also the situation.  
She is very well herself fortunately. Banting agrees  
with her + she feels so energetic she can't keep still.  
The family have been keeping her busy for a month.

"Bill" nearly died. Dilatation of the tummy and hiccoughs.  
Then Mrs. Henridge went down with a heart collapse from  
the shock so that my Mrs. H. was very much in demand.  
Now the baby has arrived <sup>from Washington</sup> + he is a new interest. He  
really is a wonderful looking child. I think he takes  
after his uncle Dick. He is 13 mos old + just beginning  
to think of walking + talking. They are going to  
St. Andrews, N.B. for the summer while Mrs. Henridge  
is in England.

Hope you are having good days + more excursions to spots.  
When will Frances be through? Hardly seems possible does  
it. Quite cool here to-day so we have a fire in the  
fireplace. Do you light your gas one?

A kiss for everyone x x x

**MB Williams to her mother, Jun 1933**

Transcription / Additional Information

Thursday morning

June 1/33

Dear Motherkins,

No word from 334 this week but as to-day is the last day you can hear from me I thought I had better send you a line to reach you before Sunday.

There is no news from my small world except that I am progressing famously & can now walk all around upstairs. Began to make real headway about a week ago. The Dr. gave me a shot of anti toxin 10 or 12 days ago. At first it seemed to have no effect – rather increased ones difficulties. Then all of a sudden the tooth cleared up, stopped being sore & leaking into my mouth, and I just went ahead like anything. He thinks I can go downstairs next week & then the next thing will be Dolly and the good life once more.

I am afraid there will be some weeks work at the dentist the first thing. Wasn't it too bad I had an appointment to have the bally tooth out the day after I got sick. There are some others that may have to come out too. So I can't plan anything about going away for awhile. Besides Mrs. Herridge has been so wonderfully good to me that I couldn't arrange to leave her alone unless she has other plans. If she decides to go to Pittsburg for a month as she has sometimes said she might I should feel free but unless she does I would only feel that I come run up to you for a week or ten days, at a time, You just can't imagine

[pagebreak]

how kind she has been in every way. Anyone else would have sent me off to the hospital. I am sure you understand how much I should like to spend the summer with you, but also the situation.

She is very well herself fortunately. Banting agrees with her & she feels so energetic she can't keep still. The "family" have been keeping her busy for a month. "Bill" nearly died. Dilation of the tummy and hiccuoughs. Then Mrs. Herridge went down with a heart collapse from the shock so that my Mrs. H. was very much in demand. Now the baby has arrived from Washington & he is a new interest. He really is a wonderful looking child. I think he takes after his Uncle Dick. He is 13 mos. old & just beginning to think of walking & talking. They are going to St. Andrews NB for the summer while Mrs. Herridge is in England.

Hope you are having good days & more excursions to parks. When will Frances be through? Hardly seem possible does it. Quite cold here to day so we have a fire in the fireplace. Do you light your gas one?

A kiss for everyone X X X

Aug 23/33

Villa Lonaine. Tues.

Dear Nancee.

Your Friday letters came yesterday. Not too bad considering the journey.

I am glad to hear you are accompanying mother to the corner shop to

purchase ice cream cones. I think

she should go every day but never

by the back road and, if possible,

never alone. Now that weddings are

in the air there is no telling what

may happen.

we are living a quiet life most  
days but yesterday Mrs. H. drove me  
over to call on Charlotte Whitton and  
Margaret Grier who have a cottage on  
McGregor Lake. Such a road! Dolly  
nearly has heart failure. 10 miles, part  
of it along the edge of a lake & not  
wide enough to pass, drop on one side  
& ditch on the other with great rocks

in the middle. We got lost and had to  
win and Dolly staller crosswise in the  
road and there we were holding her with  
stones. However a nice man came along  
& rescued us. They always do, and we  
had the most wonderful hot biscuits & tea

& macaroons so that Dolly didn't mind  
coming home so much. To-day the sisters  
took us for a picnic on one of the islands.

Chicken stew with potatoes, (hot in a little  
black iron pot) tomatoes, cucumbers, olives  
peaches, bananas, cake & fudge. No

fast days here.

We went for a row to the end of the lake afterwards. The wildest place. We hoped we would see a bear but there were none visible.

I am enclosing the notice of Tom Fairbank's death. I know nothing about its particulars but think he has been ailing a long while.

Must go & pick up a few pine knots for our fire. We go to bed with the birds.

Do you have your cousin come but you do as you best. Are you moving home next week?

Best love. Auntie.

**MB Williams to her niece Frances, 23 Aug 1933**

Transcription / Additional Information

Aug 23/33

Villa Lorraine, Tues.

Dear Frances.

Your Friday letters came yesterday. Not too bad considering the journey. I am glad to hear you are accompanying mother to the corner shop to purchase ice cream cones. I think she should go every day but never by the back road and if possible never alone. Now that weddings are in the air there is no telling what may happen.

[pagebreak]

We are living a quiet life most days but yesterday Mrs. H. drove me over to call on Charlotte Whitton and Margaret Grier who have a cottage on McGregor Lake. Such a road! Dolly nearly had heart failure. 10 miles. Part of it along the edge of a lake & not wide enough to pass. Drop on one side & ditch on the other with great rocks

[pagebreak]

in the middle. We got lost and had to turn and Dolly stalled crosswise in the road and there we were holding her with stones. However a nice man came along & rescued us. They always do and we had the most wonderful hot biscuits & tea & macaroons so that Dolly didn't mind coming home so much. To-day the sisters took us for a picnic on one of the islands. Chicken stew with potatoes, (hot in a little black iron pot) tomatoes, cucumbers, olives peaches, bananas, cake & fudge. No

[pagebreak]

fast days here.

We went for a row to the end of the lake afterwards. The wildest place. We hoped we would see a bear but there were none visible.

I am enclosing the notice of Tom Fairbain's death. Know nothing about the particulars but think he has been ailing a long while.

Must go & pick up a few pine knots for our fire. We go to bed with the birds.

Too bad your chum couldn't come but you did your best. Are you moving home next week?

Best love. Tante.

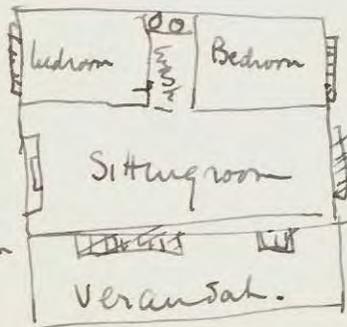
aug 25/33

Villa Lorraine, S. pierre de  
Wakefield. R. R. No. 1

aug 25/33

"Villa Lorraine" is the name of the big house  
this is "Villa Maritā" if you please, called after  
the Rev. Mother Superior, (who takes Marie Sylvia  
for a pen name and Mary B. Heridge). Its a  
dear little place, about half the size of yours.

Just a nice sitting room (with fireplace) and  
two bedrooms + a screened verandah facing  
the lake.



Here is a  
a dressing room

Between the two bedrooms  
little hall which we use as  
Have on washstands there.

We have chintz curtains at the casement windows

two hooked rugs and a beautiful hearthrug from  
woolworths in front of the fireplace. To-day the  
Carpenter is here making furniture. He has  
made quite a nice gateleg table + two small  
ones + will make some stools. Then we have  
two deck chairs + 2 willow chairs + 2 lovely  
beds. Mattresses with coiled springs inside. Very  
good.

The sisters are very amusing. About half  
of them French + half English. Up here  
there are from 3 to 7. They go + come.  
Sister Damien is the Cook and she is a  
very good one. I see myself swelling visibly

I have been taking things very quietly.  
Just loafing but my restless partner is always  
up to something. She is off to Perth to-day.  
Our old friend Mrs. Jordanick is much worse.

Sat. About 7 of the Press Club girls came up  
& we had a very jolly party. Chicken & mushrooms  
& peaches & cake - with a bottle of wine to  
drink to the new cottage. The days are lovely  
clear & warm but at night there is already a  
touch of autumn & we are glad to start  
the fireplace. They say it has been very hot  
in town but I haven't seen the papers so don't  
know. I am sleeping splendidly & I draw a

veil over the way I am eating. Frances would  
be shocked. There is a small refreshment stand  
about as far away as yams where they sell ice  
cream cones! alas!

We have a gill from New York who is  
our fisherman + she brings in the loveliest  
black bass. I wish you could taste it

Frances. Last night she dressed up in the man's clothes  
+ gave imitations of the diff sisters. Genuinely funny  
sounds as if you were having quite a  
busy life. Keep it up.

I think I will have my tooth put in in  
England + not take the time here. We shall  
have less than 2 weeks when we get back.

So sorry about Billy Waters. + will you tell  
Don. Morrison I was sorry not to say goodbye  
Love to you both. he

**MB Williams to her family, 25 Aug 1933**

Transcription / Additional Information

Villa Lorraine, S. Pierre de  
Wakefield, R. R. No. 1

Aug 25/33

"Villa Lorraine" is the name of the big house this is "Villa Marita" if you please, called after the Rev. Mother Superior, (who takes Marie Sylvia for a pen name and Mary B. Herridge). It's a dear little place, about half the size of yours. Just a nice sitting room (with fireplace) and two bedrooms & a screened verandah facing the lake. [[diagram]] Between the two bedrooms there is a little hall which we use as a dressing room. Have our washstand there. We have chintz curtains at the casement windows

[pagebreak]

two hooked rugs and a beautiful hearthrug from Woolworths in front of the fireplace. To-day the carpenter is here making furniture. He has made quite a nice gateleg table & two small ones & will make some stools. Then we have two deck chairs & 2 willow chairs & 2 lovely beds. Mattresses with coiled springs inside. Very good.

The sisters are very amusing. About half of them French & half English. Up here there are from 3 to 7. They go & come. Sister Damien is the cook and she is a very good one. I see myself swelling visibly

[pagebreak]

I have been taking things very quietly. Just hoping but my restless pardner is always up to something. She is off to Perth do-day. Our old friend Mrs. Inderwick is much worse.

Sat. about 7 of the Press Club girls came up & we had a very jolly party. Chicken & mushrooms & peaches & cake with a bottle of wine to drink to the new cottage. The days are lovely clear & warm but at night there is already a touch of autumn & we are glad to start the fireplace. They say it has been very hot in town but I haven't seen the papers so don't know. I am sleeping splendidly & I draw a

[pagebreak]

veil over the way I am eating. Frances would be shocked. There is a small refreshment stand almost as far away as yours where they sell ice cream cones! Alas!

We have a girl from New York who is our fisherman & she brings in the loveliest black bass. I wish you could taste it Frances. Last night she dressed up in the nun's clothes and gave imitations of the diff sisters. Awfully funny.

Sounds as if you were having quite a busy life. Keep it up.

I think I will have my tooth put in in England & not take the time here. We shall have less than 2 weeks when we get back.

So sorry about Bill Watters & will you tell Mrs. [Moniston] I was sorry not to say goodbye.

Love to you both, M



Sept. 33

R.M.S. Empress of Britain  
Wednesday afternoon.

Dear 334.

Here we are only a few hours now from land and everyone packing baggage labels & trunks as they always do on the last day. This is a wonderful way to come. It seems as if we had hardly got unpacked and settled down when we have to get ready to get off. No time to get bored. We think we will never come any other way.

Both should the voyage splendidly except

that Mrs. H. took a heavy cold on leaving  
so thought it wise to stay in bed - the place  
she likes best on board ship anyway. But  
we had a lovely stewardess who has  
brought us the best food the ship offered  
& we never failed to do justice to it.  
Sea was a bit rolly most of the time.  
Last night there was a concert in the  
big first class lounge by the Scots  
Guards & I thought I would dissipate  
& wear the evening gowns. The night  
was quite a bit rough & in the middle  
things began to slide. First a music  
stand slid across the platform then  
the big Oriental rug in the centre of



R.M.S. ....

The room on which a great many were sitting on female chairs, began to do a sidestep & the first thing we knew the whole thing went & every body piled up in a heap at the other side. The papers were in the middle of a Stratigraphy but one of them did a sudden reel instead. There was great laughing when people realized what was the matter & as no one was hurt & only a couple of chairs broken. things

went on as before.

But it was funny to see the pair  
kitties trying to do a dance. When  
they wined put down one leg the floor was  
too near, like climbing up hill, & when  
they put down the other. It wasn't  
there at all.

Thurs. noon:

Just crossing now from Cherbourg  
to Southampton on the last round.  
Saw land at 2 this morning. I  
happened to wake & when I looked  
out of the porthole there was the 1<sup>st</sup>  
lighthouse on The Bishopps, winking  
at me in a very friendly way.  
We have dropped all our parley-



R.M.S. ....

bons passengers & are now headed  
for the little islands. Trunks & bags  
are labelled & gone, passports &  
landing cards stamped & all we have  
to do is to walk off the ship into  
the arms of the Customs officers. We  
have nothing contraband except some  
Whiskey which is labelled "Lactopessin"  
& which Mrs. H. will carry in her  
private bag. Still neither the  
mustards only came into play once -

& did the trick so well that we  
sat up & enjoyed lunch soon  
after. Had only one excuse for a  
glass of beer - but took it.

Ernie's roses lasted all the way  
& were lovely.

Met a nice young woman who  
is on the Secretariat of the League  
of Nations, a Toronto graduate.

Who had a card of introduction  
to us. Also a dear pair of  
newlyweds from N. S.

Very strong smell of fish -  
I think it must be the Channel <sup>Love</sup>  
Smell. This is the best from London. In.

**MB Williams to (her family at) "334," Sep 1933**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Canadian Pacific Steamship Lines letterhead]

Sept. 33

R.M.S. Empress of Britain.

Wednesday afternoon.

Dear 334,

Here we are only a few hours now from land and everyone lacking baggage labels & trains as they always do on the last day. This is a wonderful way to come. It seems as if we had hardly got unpacked and settled down when we have to get ready to get off. No time to get bored. We think we will never come any other way. Both stood the voyage splendidly except

[pagebreak]

that Mrs. H. took a heavy cold on leaving so thought it wise to stay in bed - the place she likes best on board ship anyway. But we had a lovely stewardess who has brought us the best food the ship afforded & we've never failed to do justice to it. Sea was a bit rolly most of the time. Last night there was a concert in the big first class lounge by the Scots Guards & I thought I would dissipate & view the evening gowns. The night was quite a bit rough & in the middle things began to slide. First a music stand slid across the platform then the big Oriental rug in the centre of

[pagebreak]

the room on which a great many were sitting on small chairs began to do a sidestep & the first thing we knew the whole thing went & every body piled up in a big heap at the other side. The pipers were in the middle of a Strathspey but one of them did a sudden reel instead. There was great laughing when people realized what was the matter & as no one was hurt & only a couple of chairs broken, things

[pagebreak]

went on as before.

But it was funny to see the pair kilties trying to do a dance. When they would put down one leg the floor was too near, like climbing up hill, & when they put down the other it wasn't there at all.

Thurs. noon

Just crossing now from Cherbourg to Southampton on the last round. Saw land at 2 this morning. I happened to wake & when I looked out of the porthole there was the 1<sup>st</sup> lighthouse on The Bishops, winking at me in a very friendly way. We have dropped all our parlez-

[pagebreak]

vous passengers & are now headed for the little island. Trunks & bags are labelled & gone, passports & landing cards stamped & all we have to do is walk off the ship into the arms of the Customs Officers. We have nothing contraband except some whiskey which is labelled "lactopepsin" & which Mrs. H. will carry in her private bag. Tell mother the mustards only came into play once

[pagebreak]

& did the trick so well that we sat up & enjoyed lunch soon after. Had only one excuse for a glass of beer - but took it. Ernie's roses lasted all the way & were lovely.

Met a nice young woman who is on the Secretariat of the League of Nations, a Toronto graduate who had a card of introduction to us. Also a dear pair of newlyweds from N.S.

Very strong smell of fish! Think it must be the Channel [smell ..... from London]

[Last line cut off by scanner.]

Love,

M.

Sept 18  
Prov. Quebec

Near the Saguenay.

Dear Motherkins.

Your telegram was handed in  
just as we weighed anchor. The cheering  
reference to the mustard plasters  
gave our good-bye just that happy "domestic"  
touch. E. Sent a box of florins roses.  
Just awfully sweet of you to make the  
going away so pleasant but I always  
do think it was a nice family.

We had 6 boxes of flowers, none as  
beautiful as his - 3 telegrams + an  
heap of letters so felt quite like

Hollywood Stars. Mrs. Henning  
has a "bob" and "perm" just before  
starting + immediately lost 10 lbs.  
She really looks so attractive that  
as a chaperon, I really feel  
quite nervous.

---

Gladys Henning, one of our friends, +  
her mother, invited from Sorel + had  
lunch with us + we went over the  
ship - or some of it - together. There  
are several miles of decks + acres  
+ acres of lounges. Cardrooms, swimming  
pool, ball-room, writing room etc.

We are very comfy in our Cabin and have  
such an attentive Stewardess. Makes  
me think of the one we had on  
the Hesperian.

Beginning to feel the chill of  
the Saguenay + have shut off  
the ventilators. Fresh air drawn  
in all through the ship, but just  
a little too fresh.

Lunch promises well. Everything  
quite as nice as first class on  
the Comand - beginning to change  
our views re the C. P. R.

The hot water bottles are hanging on  
the hooks ready for action, + we have  
a few family photos out so it looks  
+ feels like home. Wish you could smell  
the salt air. We can't be far from  
Beth's now. Fallen Point at 9  
o'clock, they say.

Be sure you get that woman  
for the kitchen. + have a  
good, good time while you are  
young.

X X X

he.

**MB Williams to her mother, 18 Sep 1933**

Transcription / Additional Information

Sept.18

Prov. Quebec  
Near the Saguenay

Dear Motherkins.

Your telegram was handed in just as we weighed anchor. The cheering reference to the mustard plasters gave our good-bye just that happy "domestic" touch. E. sent a box of glorious roses. Just awfully sweet of you to make the going away so pleasant but I always did think it was a nice family.

We had 6 boxes of flowers, none as beautiful as his - 3 telegrams & a heap of letters so felt quite like

[pagebreak]

Hollywood stars. Mrs. Herridge had a "bob" and "perm" just before starting & immediately lost 10 years. She really looks so attractive that as a chaperone I really feel quite nervous.

Gladys Kuhring, one of our friends, & her mother motored from Sorel & had lunch with us & we went over the ship - or some of it - together. There are several miles of decks & acres & acres of lounges, cardrooms, swimming pool, ball room, writing room etc.

[pagebreak]

We are very comfy in our cabin and have such an attentive stewardess. Makes me think of the one we had on the Hesperian.

Beginning to feel the chill of the Saguenay & have shut off the ventilations. Fresh air driven in all through the ship, but just a little too fresh.

Luncheon promised well. Everything quite as nice as first class on the Cunard - beginning to change our views re the C.P.R.

[pagebreak]

The hot water bottles are hanging on the hooks ready for action & we have a few family photos out so it looks & feels like home. Wish you could smell the salt air. We can't be far from Metis now. Father Point at 9 o'clock, they say.

Be sure you get that woman for the kitchen & have a good, good time while you are young

X X X

M

2 Golden Court. } Golden Green. London.  
Brookstock Rd } N. W. 11. Oct. 18.

Dear Everybody.

The "Empress" is due to-night and I expect there will be letters from you to-morrow but I find that mine have to be posted to-night or early to-morrow to be sure of catching her on her return trip. The mail closes at the City P.O. to-morrow at 5 but as we are a good way out we have to allow an extra half-day. I am afraid she won't be making many more trips. Then we shall have to watch for the fast N. Y. boats. The Canadian lines are so slow.

Been having a very quiet week since our return from Norwich. Chiefly concerned with clothes. I bought one my old green coat (3 yrs) + am having it taken in a little + touched up. It will do very well to fill in. Blanche knows a woman who is a wholesale milliner. I think they rented rooms from her when they first came over - and she took us to several wholesales. I want to get a warm dress that will do to go out to lunch in. We went to one very swanky place where they

sell sports models from France and Switzerland. I saw  
one I liked in raisin color but as it was \$30<sup>00</sup> & didn't  
quite fit, I resisted. Blanche is still looking but I  
gave up. They have promised to report any "finds" &  
save me the faq.

Everyone here talking about the Disarmament  
situation and very interesting talks ones the Radio.  
There is a growing feeling that Germany is not to  
be trusted. That she is really preparing for war  
and glorifying war by propaganda all the time.  
France is undoubtedly uneasy and it may be  
with good cause. I expect she has led the  
British ministers to think it would be folly to  
give in to Germany's demands - because everyone  
says that until lately British sympathy with Germany  
had been growing and there was a strong feeling  
that she should be given more equality. Hitler,  
however, talks like a madman - the same  
kind of madness that led to war before,  
It's like giving a lunatic a gun to play with.

Yesterday we got ready to receive the marchioness of  
Aberdeen who wrote that she would be in town for the  
day & would like to see Mrs. H. if she could find time.  
We didn't know whether that meant here or not -  
but polished up a bit just in case. As it turned out  
she hadn't time and asked Mrs. H. to go to see  
her at her hotel in the evening. Mrs. H. said there  
was just a procession of people all day & that  
the old dear was nearly all in though bright &  
kind as ever. She was taking the midnight  
train for Scotland. Lady Pentland, her daugh-  
ter - who was with Lady Harpoc in Canada -  
asked us to tea for Saturday but Mrs. H. had  
another engagement so she said she would  
set another day. I think she is a very  
fine woman and she seems to know a lot  
of intellectual people & nice people regardless  
of rank. Don't think she has a great  
deal of money. She lives in Hampstead - quite near.

Wuffie and I are keeping house & he lies at my feet while I write. Has been hunting "walks" for some time but I told him we shoned soon be going to the P.O. Ring at the door bell - proved to be the dock man who was selling sausages. Seemed a strange combination. I inquired if it was a new one & he said no every week they had what they called a special "push-up" of some article & this week it were Sausages. Seems they always have 'em. However, I didn't respond to the push - not knowing what the cook's plans might be. The two unrepresibles off again to the

### Shops.

Tortois Annon Lonely weather, Sun shining & quite warm. Roses & Michaelmas daisies & mums & dabbias in the gardens. Saw a house yesterday with the door almost covered with white roses. Leaves beginning to turn brown & fall off though, which shows winter is near. No Crumpets yet. They are the

### Sure Sign.

Hope Ruth's suit turned out a success. Tweeds everywhere here. Fr.'s coat would be quite in as for collars are not so much the vogue. How does the cooking get on?

**MB Williams to her family, Oct 1933**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

2 Golder's Court.  
Woodstock Rd  
Golder's Green. N.W.II. London.

Oct. 18.

Dear Everybody,

The "Empress" is due to-night and I expect there will be letters from you to-morrow but I find that mine have to be posted to night or early to morrow to be sure of catching her or her return trip. The mail closes at the City P.O. to-morrow at 5 but as we are a good way out we have to allow an extra half-day. I am afraid she won't be making many more trips. Then we shall have to watch for the fast N.Y. boats, the Canadian lines are so slow.

Been having a very quiet week since our return from Norwich. Chiefly concerned with clothes. I brought over my old green coat (3 yrs) & am having it taken in a little & touched up. It will do very well to fill in. Blanche knows a woman who is a wholesale milliner. I think they rented rooms from her when they first came over and she took us to several wholesales. I want to get a warm dress that will do to go out to lunch in. We went to one very swanky place where they

[pagebreak]

sell sports models from France and Switzerland. Saw one I liked in raisin colour but as it was \$30.00 & didn't quite fit, I resisted. Blanche is still looking but I gave up. They have promised to report any "finds" & save me the fag.

Everyone here talking about the Disarmament situation and very interesting talks over the Radio. There is a growing feeling that Germany is not to be trusted. That she is really preparing for war and glorifying war by propaganda all the time. France is undoubtedly uneasy and it may be with good cause. I expect she has led the British ministers to think it would be folly to give in to Germany's demands - because everyone says that until lately British sympathy with Germany had been growing and there was a strong feeling that she should be given more equality. Hitler, however, talks like a madman - the same kind of madness that led to war before. It's like giving a lunatic a gun to play with.

[pagebreak]

Yesterday we got ready to receive the Marchioness of Aberdeen who wrote that she would be in town for the day & would like to see Mrs. H. if she could find time. We didn't know whether that meant here or not but polished up a bit just in case. As it turned out she hadn't time and asked Mrs. H. to go to see her at her hotel in the evening. Mrs. H. said there was just a procession of people all day & that the old dear was nearly all in though bright & kind as ever. She was taking the midnight train for Scotland. Lady Pentland, her daughter - who was little Lady Marjorie in Canada - asked us to tea for Saturday but Mrs. H. had another engagement so she said she would set another day. I think she is a very fine woman and she seems to know a lot of intellectual people & nice people regardless of rank. Don't think she has a great deal of money. She lives in Hampstead quite near.

[pagebreak]

Wuffie and I are keeping house & he lies at my feet while I write. Has been hinting "walks" for some time but I told him we should soon be going to the P.O. Ring at the door bell! Proved to be the milkman who was selling sausages. Seemed a strange combination. I inquired if it was a new one & he said no. Every week they had what they called a special "push-up" of some article & this week it were sausages. Seems they always have'em. However, I didn't respond to the push - not knowing what the cook's plans might be. The two irrepressibles off again to the Shops.

Lovely weather, sun shining & quite warm. Roses & Michaelmas daisies & mums & dahlias in the gardens. Saw a house yesterday with the door almost covered with white roses. Leaves beginning to turn brown & fall off though, which shows winter is near. No crumpets - yet. They are the sure sign.

Hope Ruth's suit turned out a success. Tweeds everywhere here. Fr.'s coat would be quite in as fur collars are not so much the vogue. How does the cooking get on?

2 Golders etc. Nov. 29

My Dear family.

Just got your jolly letters (Ruth's & Mother's) written on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Only 9 days pretty good, eh what? Think it must be Mother's frivolous spirit that made the letter so light, it just blew me. She is just getting to be the liveliest member of the family, and as for this match-making, I can only wish she had been as enterprising about 40 years ago and then her eldest daughter would not have been withering on the spinster stem. However, better late than never. But look here, before any really serious decision is reached

I should like to see a photograph of the  
young man + a specimen of his handwriting  
(if possible on a cheque) + an impression of his  
palm. A private view of his bank book by  
mother might also be a good thing but no  
doubt she will attend to that without waiting  
for the suggestion. Please describe much more  
fully in next letter. This is exciting. I  
think I shall have to go to the Threves  
Market + begin collecting spoons.

You do sound horribly wintery + the  
letters arriving in Ottawa are a positive  
wail. Snow by the feet + 'orribly cold!!'  
Are we sorry we are here? I forbear  
to harass your feelings by mentioning

that I am writing now with two windows  
open - It is true the gas fire is burning  
but chrysanthemums + even roses are blooming  
in the garden next door. Yet they say this  
is wintry weather + about as cold as they  
get it. It dropped to  $32^{\circ}$  (above) the other  
night + everyone talks about it. Still I  
admit I have bought a woollie shirt -

I know mother will approve of that - + I  
never seem to have too many clothes on. If  
it is windy or foggy, you could wear three blankets  
+ still "feel it". This year, however, seems to be  
a very good year. Lots of sunshine + very little  
rain, so we are just lucky. Last year was  
lucky at home -

My life is uneventful. My companions go down  
town to French lessons & shoppings but after one ~~at~~  
attempt at the latter in which I did not distinguish  
myself for either speed or endurance. I was ordered  
to "stay put". Nobody will take me so I have to  
remain peacefully at home and I think your  
Christmas here is going to be a very thin one.  
The crowds & rush really are terrible & I think  
I shall wait till later on to find you what  
I want. By the way the Jan. sales will be  
on in a month. Does anybody want material  
for a dress from Liberty's - silk, satin, calico  
velvet, <sup>wool</sup> linen & what colour & how many yards.  
Silk probably about 5 shillings a yard, cotton  
about 2 shillings - plain or printed. (Hans  
blocked), Wuffie says the fire is too hot &  
he has come over to lie under my couch.

He gave us a hard fight the other night. We had roast  
pheasants for dinner (awfully good) & Dora, the maid  
having been specially ordered not to, gave Wuff a bit.  
Now pheasants have the most diabolical little bones, as  
sharp as glass & as hard, & Wuff got one in his throat.  
He coughed a bit before bed time but not seriously but in the  
middle of the night we awakened to hear him gagging &  
choking. His "grandmother" & I <sup>(antre label)</sup> brought him into our  
room & he would have choked himself black in the  
face if he had not been black all ready. Then just  
as we were deciding to wake the family & have  
him taken to a vet, he had a coughing spell  
& seemed easier & we sank back on our pillows -  
feeling like parents with a child with the croup.  
Soon it became clear he had either coughed it up  
or swallowed it & ~~the~~ the latter. The question  
was, would it stick into his lungs &

make a hole. A dog "Dora knew" has swallowed  
a rabbit bone + bleat to death. "Horned thought". You  
can imagine all the loving + petting with soft +  
he thoroughly enjoyed it. However nothing happened so we  
think he probably coughed it up. Like a sensible  
dog. Just now he is burying his hair brush under  
the rug + pretending it's a rat.

Letter from Cyril Jordenwick saying he is sailing  
this week. His book is in the hands of Mr G. pub.

Long letter from B. saying her is coming over. She  
sounds very bright + well but says the family  
is broke as usual. I am sending her a  
cheque + some little things for the girls.

Will write to Rufus next time. Love to Bobbie.

Tony's Amore.

Tante

Nice letter from G.

**MB Williams to her family, Nov 1933**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

2 Golders etc. Nov. 29

My Dear family,

Just got your jolly letters (Ruth's & Mothers) written on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Only 9 days pretty good, Eh what? Think it must be Mother's frivolous spirit that made the letter so light, it just blew over. She is just getting to be the liveliest member of the family and as for this match-making. I can only wish she had been as enterprising about 40 years ago and then her eldest daughter would not have been withering on the spinster stem. However, better late than never. But look here, before any really serious decision is reached

[pagebreak]

I should like to see a photograph of the young man & a specimen of his handwriting (if possible on a cheque) & an impression of his palm. A private view of his bank book by Mother might also be a good thing but no doubt she will attend to that without waiting for the suggestion. Please describe much more fully in next letter. This is exciting. I think I shall have to go to the Thieves Market & begin collecting spoons.

You do sound horribly wintry & the letters arriving from Ottawa are a positive wail. Snow by the feet & 'orribly cold!! Are we sorry we are here? I forbear to harrow your feelings by mentioning

[pagebreak]

that I am writing now with two windows open - It is true the gas fire is burning but chrysanthemums & even roses are blooming in the garden next door. Yet they say this is wintry weather & about as cold as they get it. It dropped to 32° (above) the other night & everyone talked about it. Still I admit I have bought a woollie shirt. I know Mother will approve of that - & I never seem to have too many clothes on. If it is windy or foggy, you could wear three blankets & still "feel it." Lots of sunshine & very little rain, so we are just lucky. Last year was lovely at home.

[pagebreak]

My life is uneventful. My companions go down town to French lessons & shoppings but after one attempt at the latter in which I did not distinguish myself for either speed or endurance, I was ordered to "stay put." Nobody will take me so I have to remain peacefully at home and I think your Christmas box is going to be a very thin one. The crowds & rush really are terrible & I think I shall wait till later on to find you what I want. By the way the Jan. sales will be on in a month. Does anybody want material for a dress from Liberty's - silk, satin, calico velvet wool, linen & what colour & how many yards. Silk probably about 5 shillings a yard, cotton about 2 shillings - plain or printed. (Hand blocked) Wuffie says the fire is too hot he has come over to lie under my couch.

[pagebreak]

He gave us a bad fright the other night. We had roast pheasants for dinner (awfully good) & Dora, the maid having been specially ordered not to, gave Wuff a bit. Now pheasants have the most diabolical little bones as sharp as glass & as hard & Wuff got one in his throat. He coughed a bit before bed time but not seriously but in the middle of the night we wakened to hear him gagging & choking. His "grandmother" & I (Auntie Mabel) brought him into our room & he would have choked himself black

in the face of he hadn't been black all ready, then just as we were deciding to wake the family & have him taken to a vet, he had a coughing spell & seemed easier & we sank back in our pillows feeling like parents with a child with the croup. Soon it became clear he had either coughed it up or swallowed it & if the latter, the question was, would it stick into his lungs &

[pagebreak]

make a hole. A dog Dora knew "had swallowed a rabbit bone & bled to death." Horrid thought! You can imagine all the loving & petting Wuff got & he thoroughly enjoyed it. However nothing happened for we think he probably coughed it up like a sensible dog. Just now he is burying his hair brush under the rug & pretending it's a rat.

Letter from Cyril Inderwick saying he is sailing this week. His book is in the hands of N.Y. pub. Long letter from B. saying [hus] is coming over. She sounds very bright & well but says the family is broke as usual. I am sending her a cheque & some little things for the girls.

Will write to Rufus next time. Love to Bobbie

Toujours amour

Tante

Nice letter from E.

Ottawa  
Tue. night.

Dear mother.

Out at Miss Lees &  
having a nice rest.

Spent the morning in bed.

Yesterday was a lecture day.

Finished packing in the

morning. Went to bank. Office

& stopped. In ~~evening~~ after-  
noon Alison had a tea & I saw  
all the relatives. Maggie &  
Lois. Aunt Tollie & the girls.  
The Johnsons. Mabel Stalker.  
Carrie Greenfell. etc. about 20.  
Then at 6.30 went to press  
Club party and saw all  
the girls. Got a quiet

reception for them.

After that Howard thought  
he was here & I found  
Aunt Miss Lees waiting  
up for me. She made

me take breakfast in  
her & this afternoon

Aunt Tollie & Christine

came up for tea. Christine

is getting to be the beauty  
of the family.

Everyone asking about you.

Lois' husband drank &

she had to leave him. She

is trying for a job. Very

nice girl. Maggie looks

old & tired. Sort of gone

to pieces.

Hope the old back is behaving -  
love wonder

**MB Williams to her mother, 1934**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

Ottawa

Tues. night

Dear Mother

Out at Miss Lees & having a nice rest. Spent the morning in bed. Yesterday was a hectic day. Finished packing in the morning, went to bank, office

[pagebreak]

& shopped. In afternoon Alison had a tea & I saw all the relatives. Maggie & Lois, Aunt Tollie & the girls, the Johnsons, Mabel Stalkes, Carrie Grenfell etc. about 20. Then at 6.30 went to press club party and saw all the girls. Got a great

[pagebreak]

reception from them.

After that Howard brought me out here & I found dear Miss Lees waiting up for me. She made me take breakfast in bed & this afternoon Aunt Tollie & Christine came up for tea. Christine

[pagebreak]

is getting to be the beauty of the family.

Everyone asking about you. Lois' husband drank & she had to leave him. She is trying for a job, very nice girl. Maggie looks old & tired. Soft of gone to pieces.

Hope the old back is behaving.

Love Mabel

Jan/34

Dear Rufus -

Under separate cover am sending  
you some silk for a "pock". Hope  
you like it. We all thought it very  
"chick". And you will see what a beau-  
tiful quality it is. Originally  
about 3<sup>00</sup> per yard, even here, but  
reduced to a little over \$1<sup>00</sup> for  
the January sales. I think it would  
hold its self to almost any kind of  
treatment, either fussey or tailor made  
Tunic dresses are very "good"  
here just now + as you are

always good yourself, especially to  
look at ans to be with, that  
might be an appropriate style.

Can't quite make up my mind  
about the Q. M.'s dress. wonder

it be a good idea for her to

wear that blue printed silk

lunch Q. gave her, night or day,

till worn out. She wears thin

things so little even in the

summer that I was wondering how

a light weight wool would be.

Knitted things, shawls to say, are

dearer here than at home. If I  
remembers her limited suit was be-  
gining to look a bit passé.  
(masc. or fem?). I'll wait  
& consider her problem more fully.

Sent you mother's novel on to an  
Eng. agent. The first man turned  
it down. I'm afraid it hasn't  
much chance on the English  
market. For one thing it's too  
Canadian. English people simply  
couldn't understand how a nice girl  
comes wander about "taking up" with  
leket agents & such. I mean the  
social environment would be so different

They comes hardly grasp it without  
Explanation. Then the English is a  
bit weak. They are accustomed  
to a more literary English. If  
she has a striking tale she  
might get it over. I think, though  
it might go in Canada. It has a  
quest that is your mother's special  
gift.

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra here  
this week. makes the Eng. "souds"  
like a village organ-grate. Queer  
how few Eng. can play or sing, but  
they can make poetry. I'll try for  
the books you mention.

I am feeling better already +  
hope, though perhaps toothless, to be really  
Amazonian in a short time. Best love  
Tance

**MB Williams to her niece Ruth ("Rufus"), Jan 1934**

Transcription / Additional Information

Jan/34

Dear Rufus.

Under separate cover am sending you some silk for a "frock." Hope you like it. We all thought it very "chick" and you will see what a beautiful quality it is. Originally about 3.00 per yard even here, but reduced to a little over \$1.00 for the January sales. I think it would lend itself to almost any kind of treatment either fussy or tailor made. Tunic dresses are very "good" here just now & as you are

[pagebreak]

always good yourself, especially to look at and to be with, that might be an appropriate style. Can't quite make up my mind about the G.M.'s dress. Wouldn't it be a good idea for her to wear that blue printed silk Uncle E. gave her, night & day till worn out. She wears thin things so little even in the summer that I was wondering how a light weight wool would be. Knitted things, strange to say, are

[pagebreak]

dearer here than at home. If I remember her knitted suit was beginning to look a bit passéé (masc. or fem?). I'll wait & consider her problem more fully.

Sent your mother's novel on to an Eng. Agent. The first man turned it down. I'm afraid it hasn't much chance on the English market. For one thing it's too "Canadian." English people simply cannot understand how a nice girl could wander about taking up with ticket agents & such. I mean the social environment would be so different

[pagebreak]

they could hardly grasp it without explanation. Then the English is a bit weak. They are accustomed to a more literary English. If she had a striking tale she might get it over. I think, though it might go in Canada. It has a gusto that is your mother's special gift.

Berlin Philharmonic orchestra here this week. Makes the Eng. orchestra sound like a village organization. Queer how few Eng. can play or sing, but they can make poetry. I'll try for the books you mention.

I am feeling better already & hope, though perhaps toothless, to be really Amazonian in a short time.

Best love,

Tante



Feb. 6. /34.

Dear Rufus.

Regreen spring day. Sun shining  
check-a-doo singing + the old gardener  
out digging in the garden to coax things  
along. We seem to have had your  
sunshine this year but Eng. sunshine has  
a special quality all its own. Very soft-  
+ mellow - makes colours look perfectly  
lovely. I saw an old blue awning one  
day that turned the heavenliest turquoise in  
sunshine. The skies are lovely too, such

piles of juicy-looking clouds. makes you  
want to paint just to look at them, & lower  
the vistas down the streets with a sort of blue  
haze between the buildings & behind the trees.  
& of course when it rains & the lights come out  
it's just "too juicy". The other day we had a  
hoar frost (terribly cold! 28° F) & every little leaf  
in the hedges has a pearl of white frost round its  
edge - all the twigs looked as if they had been dipped  
in powdered sugar - only so alive. I almost heard  
them talking.

Haven't been reading much - the extraction  
of my offending molars being its first item  
of business. Three darlings now lie side by side  
in alcohol, revealing a hidden depravity that

has shocked even my dentist - who is not easily shocked. He is quite interesting. an M.D. as well as a D.L.S. with a whole string of lectures. His father was a Harley St. physician & he went through for medicine & surgery. Spent 4 years in the Navy during the war & has been pretty well round the globe. So that he has

seen Life." But he knows his business. I am sure, and he has excellent arm muscles and the way he reasons with my sternly resistant Gibraltar, is, as they say here, "a fair treat". Only & more & then I expect to start a new life and to make up for all the enforced self-denials of the past 10 months.

I didn't see Mädchen in Uniform but I

Have seen the actress in another play & like  
her very much. Her new play (film) is here  
now "Anna + Elisabeth". Story of a girl faith  
healer. They say she does it awfully well.  
Watch out for Elizabeth Bergner in "Katharina  
the Great". She interests me very much.

Long Guthrie has had two new successes  
in "The Tempest" & Tride's "Importance of  
Being Ernest". I hope to see the latter. London  
is just so full of good things it is impossible  
to see them all. As soon as I am better  
we intend to start on a Shakespeare dis-  
tation. She goes regularly to the Shakespeare  
fellowship, which doesn't believe in

Wm of Shafford, as I told you. Dr. Percy  
Allen, author of \_\_\_\_\_, is the leader  
& Mrs. H. has met some very interesting people -  
Maryjoy Bowen, the novelist & a Miss Evelyn,  
a descendant of the famous diarist. She "  
is coming to tea soon. So you wonder I want  
to get better. But already I feel lighter &  
brighter than for weeks. Poor Mrs. H. has a very  
bad cold this week. On her chest, with Dr. in  
attendance. But she is much better to-day.  
Blanche has been very sweet to us both & such  
a good nurse, in spite of her C. S.

You asked me about what one of the girls  
said as to modern life being bad for women  
life. What did I think about it? It's almost

too big a question for a letter. But I came  
across a book of Powys's, the other day.  
"The Fruits of Solitude" which I thought might  
mean something to you. You know Jung's  
division of people into Extraverts & Introverts  
or more simply - the people that things happen  
to and the people that things happen in. Life  
nowadays tends to produce Extraverts. Things  
happen outside us. It's usually only when we  
are alone that they happen in us. Yet every  
one who compares the two experiences knows  
that there is a much greater sense of reality to  
inner experience than to outer. A feeling of being  
more alive - of greater happiness. In  
most ages this has been mixed up with religion.  
I think naturally so - Powys tries to

re-state it without any religious terms.  
Undoubtedly it is a capacity that can be  
cultivated - or killed. Like an art sense.  
No doubt you have his book. See what you  
think.

Hope you liked your pack. If you can  
save enough pieces for a hat, think  
that would be very chic. Black gloves  
& bag. New hats here either halos or  
"sailors". Silk sailor very smart. Shall  
keep my eyes open for the matter. What  
sort of occasion does she need things for.

Long letter from Alison chiefly about  
family. Says Ethel Fairbairn fell

and broke her hip. I thought you or G.  
might write to her.

Your Sunday light-meals sound  
rather wonderful. but low caloric!

Tonjour bon amour

Tante.

**MB Williams to her niece Ruth ("Rufus"), Feb 1934**

Transcription / Additional Information

Feb. 6/34.

Dear Rufus,

Regular spring day. Sun shining chick-a-dees singing & the old gardener out digging in the garden to coax things along. We seem to have had your sunshine this year but Eng. sunshine has a special quality all its own. Very soft & mellow – makes colours look perfectly lovely. I saw an old blue awning one day that turned the heavenliest turquoise in sunshine. The skies are lovely too, such

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piles of juicy-looking clouds. Makes you want to paint just to look at them. I love the vistas down the streets with a sort of blue haze between the buildings & behind the trees & of course when it rains & the lights come out it's just "too juicy." The other day we had a hoar frost (terribly cold! 28°F) & every little leaf in the hedges had a frill of white frost round its edge & all the twigs looked as if they had been dipped in powdered sugar & only so alive. I almost heard them talking.

Haven't been reading much - the extraction of my offending molars being the first item of business. Three darlings now lie side by side in alcohol, revealing a hidden depravity that

[pagebreak]

has shocked even my dentist, who is not easily shocked. He is quite interesting, an M.D. as well as a D.L.S. with a whole string of letters. His father was a Harley St. physician & he went through for medicine & surgery - spent 4 years in the navy during the war & has been pretty well round the globe. So that he has "seen life." But he knows his business, I am sure, and he has excellent arm muscles and the way he reasons with my sternly resistant Gibraltar's, is, as they say here, "a fair treat." Only 4 more & then I expect to start a new life and to make up for all the enforced self-denials of the past 10 months.

I didn't see Mädchen in Uniform but I

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have seen the actress in another play & like her very much. Her new play (film) is here now "Anna & Elisabeth." Story of a girl faith healer. They say she does it awfully well. Watch out for Elizabeth Bergner in "Katharine the Great." She interests me very much.

Tony Guthrie has had two new successes in "The Tempest" & Wilde's "Importance of Being Ernest." I hope to see the latter. London is just so full of good things it is impossible to see them all. As soon as I am better we intend to start on a Shakespere dissipation. She goes regularly to the Shakespere fellowship, which doesn't believe in

[pagebreak]

Wm. of Stratford as I told you. M. Percy Allen, author of [[blank space]] is the leader & Mrs. H. has met some very interesting people. Marjory Bowen, the novelist & a Miss Evelyn, a descendant of the famous diarist. She [[Evelyn]] is coming to tea soon. Do you wonder I want to get better. But already I feel lighter & brighter than for weeks. Poor Mrs. H. has a very bad cold this week on her chest with

Dr. in attendance. But she is much better to-day. Blanche has been very sweet to us both & such a good nurse in spite of her C.S.

You asked me about what one of the girls said as to modern life being bad for [women] life. What did I think about it? It's almost

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too big a question for a letter. But I came across a book of [Powys' ?] the other day "The Fruits of Solitude" [Is she referring to "The Philosophies of Solitude" by John Cowper Powys?] which I thought might mean something to you. You know Jung's division of people into Extraverts & Introverts or more simply - the people that things happen to and the people that things happen in. Life nowadays tends to produce Extraverts - things happen outside us. It's usually only when we are alone that they happen in us. Yet every one who compares the two experiences knows that there is a much greater sense of reality to inner experience than to outer. A feeling of being more alive-of greater happiness. In most ages this has been mixed up with religion - think naturally so [Powys?] tries to

[pagebreak]

Re state it without any religious terms. Undoubtedly it is a capacity that can be cultivated - or killed. Like an art sense. No doubt you have his book. See what you think.

Hope you liked your frock. If you can save enough pieces for a hat, think that would be very chic. Black gloves & bag. New hats here either halos or "sailors". Silk sailor very smart. Shall keep my eyes open for the mater. What sort of occasion does she need things for.

Long letter from Alison chiefly about family. Says Ethe Fairburn fell

[pagebreak]

and broke her hip. Thought you or G. might write to her.

Your Sunday light-meals sound rather wonderful. but low calorie!

Toujours bon amour

Tante

# ADELPHI HOTEL, ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA.



Monday May 14. '34

Dearest Rufus,

This is the last week of our stay at the Seaside. We go back on Sat. to London. The time has gone very quickly and I never have liked to stay longer but it is a little more expensive and as the poor old bank account is rather flat since paying the Drs. I think it better not to stay. The sea air has done me a world of good and Mrs. Mendes says I look almost 'normal' again. It will be just about a month after I get to London before I sail. I haven't any clothes and my whole wardrobe consists of rather sea-looking left ones but I know that post-feminately doesn't call for much so shan't worry, so long as I am presentable for the voyage. We certainly didn't have to bother about style here. The provinces

don't seem to know the meaning of the word.  
If you ever see the charming 1920 models  
in the windows labelled "very chic" "latest  
style" etc. you would be too amused. I wish I  
had your drawing pencil to do some of the  
figures that promenade along the front. punch  
new noses want for subjobs. But they are  
very nice people. Much politier and kinder  
than in London and they seem to take life  
easily + kindly.

We have been having a week of real  
summer. Discarding coats + furs. It's  
like the first week of June at home. The  
promises are all gone but the bluebells are  
at their height. They are not like our -  
single flowers on a single stalk, though  
the blossom is the same shape + colour. They  
grow about 10 bells to a stalk which is  
from 5 to 8" high. A patch of them in the woods

# ADELPHI HOTEL, ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA.



to like a blue mist. makes you  
catch your breath. And there are such millions  
of them though I do see dozens of people carrying  
enormous bunches (mostly wilted) every day.  
I hope they won't exterminate them. But I  
see by "The Times" that they are starting  
a wild flower preservation Society & are  
putting through a law. Do you know A.P.H. &  
"There ought to be a law!" I haven't  
come across any of the books you mention.  
You'll have to save them up for me for  
the summer.

I think I told you we had Charlotte  
Whiston down for a day, fresh from an  
exciting tele-a-tele with H.R.H. 15  
Pr. of Wales. I don't know whether

this will start a new news story - "p. of W.  
to many a Canadian" - or not Charlotte  
would be equal to taking on a crown +  
throne + coronet put a lot of quizzes into court  
dinner tables.

Last week Mrs. H. went up to London for  
three days + Blanche came down for a  
little rest. She had a lovely time - a  
regular dissipation at the Baths. Took  
a different kind every day, a Sea-weed,  
a foam + an Oatmeal + lost 4 lbs.

Mrs. H. takes them, too, twice a week.  
She loves some but they don't advise  
them just yet. They pack you in seaweed  
for 15 minutes, then in hot towels till  
you perspire thoroughly + then massage  
you + cool you off. Very rejuvenating  
judging by my companions.

# ADELPHI HOTEL, ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA.



The local dramatic company put on "A place in the Sun" & "Lavender Ladies" since I wrote. Both very bright & modern. "Outspoken" is I believe the best. There didn't seem to be much that we weren't told, but its astonishing how audiences take it now-a-days. These all end happily with the verdict on the side of the angels. So all is well. We sit in our SASPERMY seats & drink hot coffee for threepence before the last act & thoroughly enjoy ourselves. If we ever get a million dollars we'll give London a municipal theatre with a coffee shop attached.

Hope your play came off well. If you  
could spend three months over here you  
could take a course at one of the  
Dramatic Schools. It would give you  
quite an insight into production. One  
poetical friend - Miss Guelge - is  
now playing with the Embassy players -

they have a very good school. Look  
you had a bigger voice & you might  
think of it, seriously - but perhaps its better  
not to be serious about it - just enough for  
fun.

My little inside clock says lunch time.  
So must close. It won't be long now  
till I am sitting beside Lake Erie instead  
of the Atlantic. Looking west to Beachy "East-  
+ Heart" to Dover. Love, *Tante*

**MB Williams to her niece Ruth ("Rufus"), May 1934**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Letterhead from Adelphi Hotel, St. Leonards-on-Sea]

Monday May 14, '34

Dearest Rufus,

This is the last week of our stay at the seaside. We go back on Sat. to London. The time has gone very quickly and I would have liked to stay longer but it's a little more expensive and as the poor old bank account is rather flat since paying the Drs. I think it better not to stay. The sea air has done me a world of good and Mrs. Herridge says I look almost "natural" again. It will be just about a month after I get to London before I sail. I haven't any clothes and my whole wardrobe consists of rather sad looking left overs but I know that port formality doesn't call for much so shan't worry, so long as I am presentable for the voyage. We certainly didn't have to bother about style here. The provinces

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don't seem to know the meaning of the word. If you could see the charming 1928 models in the windows labelled "very chic" "latest style," etc. you would be too amused. I wish I had your drawing pencil to do some of the figures that preamble along the front. Punch need never want for subjects. But they are very nice people. Much politer and kinder than in London and they seem to take life easily & kindly.

We have been having a week of real summer. Discarding coats & furs. Its like the first week of June at home. The primroses are all gone but the bluebells are at their height. They are not like ours - single flowers on a fragile stalk, though the blossom is the same shape & colour. They grow about 10 bells to a stalk which is from 5 to 8" high. A patch of them in the wood

[pagebreak]

is like a blue mist. Makes you catch your breath. And there are such millions of them though I do see dozens of people carrying enormous bunches (mostly wilted) every day. I hope they won't exterminate them. But I see by "The Times" that they are starting a wild flower preservation society & are putting through a law. Do you know A.P. H's "There ought to be a law!" I haven't come across any of the books you mention. You'll have to save them up for me for the summer.

I think I told you we had Charlotte Whitton down for a day, fresh from an exciting tête-a-tête with H.R.H. the Pr. of Wales. I don't know whether

[pagebreak]

This will start a new news story - "P of W. to marry a Canadian" - or not. Charlotte would be equal to taking on a crown & throne & could put a lot of ginger into court dinner tables.

Last week Mrs. H. went up to London for three days & Blanche came down for a little rest. She had a lovely time - a regular dissipation at the Baths. Took a different kind every day, a sea-weed, a Foam & an Oatmeal & lost 4 lbs. Mrs. H. takes them, too, twice a week. I'd love some but they don't advise them just yet. They pack you in sea weed for 15 minutes, then in hot towels till you perspire thoroughly & then massage you & cool you off. Very rejuvenating judging by my companions.

[pagebreak]

The local dramatic company put on "A Place in the Sun" & "Lavender Ladies" since I wrote. Both very bright & modern & "outspoken," is I believe the word. There didn't seem to be much that we weren't told, but it's astonishing how audiences take it now-a-days. These all end happily with the verdict on the side of the angels. So all is well. We sit in our [sanpenny?] seats & drink hot coffee for three pence before the last act & thoroughly enjoy ourselves. If we ever get a million dollars we'll give London a municipal theatre with a coffee shop attached.

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Hope your play comes off well. If you could spend three months over here you could take a course at one of the Dramatic Schools. It should give you quite an insight into production. Our poetical friend - Miss Evelyn - is now playing with the Embassy players. They have a very good school. Wish you had a bigger voice & you might think of it, seriously - but perhaps its better not to be serious about it - just enough for fun.

My little inside clock says lunch time, so must close. It won't be long now till I am sitting beside Lake Erie instead of the Atlantic looking west to Beachy "East & Heart" to Dover. Lovingly Tante

London NW2  
May 6/35 England

Dear Mother,

Have just been listening to  
the Kings speech & unacquainted I  
could see you listening to your own  
wireless. London has been terribly  
excited for days. We know of it  
chiefly through the wireless & news  
papers though even out here the  
sheets are very gay & there is

an arch at the top of our street.  
It's been the most perfect day, like  
an early June day at home - really  
King's weather. Just been listening  
to Rudy and Kipling who evidently  
think we should stop talking  
of peace & get ready for war.  
Europe still seems to have hydrophobia.  
but it would be too dreadful to  
think of another war -

I am getting stronger every day.  
Go up on the roof & sit in the  
sun now. Almost as good as a  
country house. We can see for miles -  
over city roofs.

Suppose you are watching for  
P.'s return now. What a lot he will  
have to tell you. It will take  
all summer. I ~~hope~~ you have been  
"going out" with another young man  
Just like you but I hope you have

the best of your opportunities. Those  
brown eyes of yours are still danger-  
ous.

The jubilee programme is still  
going on but I'm off to bed.

~~Sending some papers~~

Best love.

W.

Will prefer to bring Kate & the  
the few of the women's movement  
on some college party. She might want  
to stay a few days at Gresham Hall

**MB Williams to her mother, 6 May 1935**

Transcription / Additional Information

London NW2

England

May 6/35

Dear Mother,

Have just been listening to the Kings speech & imagined I could see you listening to your own wireless. London has been terribly excited for days. We know of it chiefly through the wireless & news papers. Though even out here the streets are very gay & there is

[pagebreak]

an arch at the top of our street. It's been the most perfect day like an early June day at home-really King's weather. Just been listening to Rudyard Kipling who evidently thinks we should stop talking of peace & get ready for war. Europe still seems to have hydrophobia, but it would be dreadful to think of another war.

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I am getting stronger every day. Go up on the roof & sit in the sun now. Almost as good as a country house. We can see for miles - over city roofs.

Suppose you are watching for E's return now. What a lot he will have to tell you. It will take all summer. I hear you have been "going out" with another young man just like you but I hope you make

[pagebreak]

the most of your opportunities. Those brown eyes of yours are still dangerous.

The Jubilee programme is still going on but I'm off to bed. Sending some papers.

Best love,

M.

[Upside down:]

Tell Rufus to bring letters of introduction from the pres. of the Women's Univ. Club or any college prof. She might want to stay a few days at Crosby Hall.

To M. B. from R. B. Buskley

2020 Barclay St  
Vancouver May 18/35

SUN!

Darling: B

Your darling letter dated (May 29) in your own hand and mailed May 1 and reaching me May 18 just to hand and must reply at once, tho I sent one off 3 days ago, "Miracles do not happen" said M. Arnold - no Huxley - J. K. - with that finality of dogmatism etc NOW we know that they do and if this miracle CAN happen Well, why not califourchon again and again? Tell me that.

And you say you have NO NEWS except that you are getting stronger and going about, as though that wasn't the most exciting news that could come to me at 2020 and let flow that JOY of chatter you hear in these lines and bottled up for months lest it be quite a discordant note - laughter and gayety when you were weak and may be suffering too much to hear it with pleasure.

And now your little blue note "legitimizes" it and I know that you can take pleasure in it and small as it is I FEEL through it a quiet peace and joy that you know someone is loving you with that mystic and heavenly love that belongs to man and woman, and all bathed and perfumed with heavenly memories like cirrus clouds across the deep blue sky, not threatening rain but just playing at beauty for the sheer love of eternal memories.

And this I keep repeating that it may mix with your present sad thoughts that it is gone for ever and your uph. trying to be cheerful and your wanting your friends and missing them and so that there may grow steadily and even against apparent evidence the belief and depermination that you will grow really strong again, and live over again, with new wisdom and felicity, all those lovely times we have known together. "To feed my mind that dies for want of her" is one of the lovely recollections of soft sweet poetry and I want you to think of LOVE like that - "dies for want of her". For think, darling, we know where we made mistakes and wasted the years, it may be, in empty misimpressions, and so the future may be more finely attuned to love's sweet song than we ever knew - bothered as we were with people, who did not know how lovely was our desire and its fulfilment.

**AB Buckley to MB Williams, 18 May 1935**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Handwritten] To M.B. from A. B. Buckley

[Remainder typed]

2020 Barclay St.

Vancouver May 18/35

Darling: B

Your darling letter dated (May 29/June 1) in your own hand and mailed May 1 and reaching me May 18 just to hand and must reply at once, tho I sent one off 3 days ago, "Miracles do not happen" said M. Arnold - no Huxley - with that finality of dogmatism etc NOW we know that they do and if this miracle CAN happen. Well, why not califourchon again and again? Tell me that.

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And this I keep repeating that it may mix with your present sad thoughts that it is gone for ever and your uphill trying to be cheerful and your wanting your friends and missing them and so that there may grow steadily and even against apparent evidence the belief and determination that you will grow really strong again, and live over again, with new wisdom and felicity, all those lovely times we have known together. "To feed my mind that dies for want of her" is one of the lovely recollections of soft sweet poetry and I want you to think of LOVE like that - "dies for want of her." For think, darling, we know where we made mistakes and wasted the years, it may be, in empty misimpressions, and so the future may be more finely attuned to love's sweet song than we ever knew - bothered as we were with people, who did not know how lovely was our our desire and its fulfilment.

To Mr. B. H. H. Grey Owl, 5 West to  
England

J. B. HARKIN,  
COMMISSIONER

JCC/EW



NATIONAL PARKS  
MIGRATORY BIRDS CONVENTION ACT  
HISTORIC SITES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA

OTTAWA 2nd December, 1935.

IN YOUR REPLY REFER TO FILE.....

My dear M.B.,

To say I am disgusted with the Lovat Dickson outfit is expressing it mildly. You are not the only one that they have kept away from Grey Owl. Harper Cory who has done so much for us in the interests of conservation and the National Parks as well, of course benefitting himself quite a little, endeavoured to see him but they have made it very plain to him, in fact, said Grey Owl did not want to see him which is something I do not believe as my experience with Grey Owl is that he is not small minded where other writers are concerned. I am forced to admit now that the big mistake was that I did not go with him which was the original intention of the Macmillan Company here who are really, I believe, part of the Lovat Dickson outfit.

I have only had one letter and a couple of cables from Grey Owl since he went over but before leaving London about three weeks ago he asked Lovat Dickson to write me a letter and tell me how he was getting along which Dickson did. I may have got under Dickson's skin a little as I have told him very plainly once or twice what I thought should be done. It really is a case of highly specialized commercialism, endeavouring to get all the benefits possible under the guise of conservation and helping Canada but this side of the story doesn't register with me for a minute. I do not believe for an instant that Grey Owl has any idea of the game they are playing and I could understand it in the first place but now that he has found his feet, that is, judging from this distance, why he should not be allowed to see anybody who has been of benefit to our work.

Grey Owl and myself have been talking over a feature film for the last two years and he has certain views on the matter and so have I but my anxiety at the moment is to get him back to Canada and do all our negotiating and work in this connection in the first instance here. I had to check Lovat Dickson up in the contract that they had Grey Owl sign in which they refer to motion pictures. I informed them they had no right to this end of the work. They said they agreed with me and what was meant was taking of news-shots. They agreed not to interfere at all with any other type of motion picture. This, of course, Grey Owl agreed to so I believe we are safe for the time being at any rate from any interference by anybody in Britain as I do not think Grey Owl will go back on his word. I am telling you everything I can in this letter for your own information, as to just how the situation

stands as far as I can see.

I would be very glad to have you have Mr. Guthrie look me up when he comes to Canada and I could have a chat with him. If you only knew the time I have had in the last three years trying to protect Grey Owl not only for his own good in connection with motion pictures but also in squaring everybody when he would let his foot slip, which I regret to say happened more frequently than I liked. They cannot get Grey Owl into any picture unless we say so and I do believe he is loyal enough to the National Parks not to permit any such undertaking unless I agree. Lovat Dickson have just pulled a fast one on me by cabling through the High Commissioner's office for seven new reels claiming that the ones we sent them, which were new in October, are showing signs of wear. This on the face of it is absolutely ridiculous but I am going to ship them the seven new ones they asked for on the condition that they return the seven which they say are showing signs of wear. You know from your experience that one month's constant showing if the films are properly taken care of never do show very much signs of wear in that time. I use new film on my trips showing anywhere from one hundred to one hundred and thirty times and they are still in good enough condition to go into circulation.

We are shipping into the United States this winter upwards of 1500 films which means quite a lot of publicity in that country.

I am going to wait for the next English mail and see if there is a letter from Grey Owl. It should be here tomorrow or the next day and I will then write him and ask him to look you up. Then, possibly, we will get to the truth of the matter. Everything in this letter of course is for your private information.

There is very little new going on here and we really do not know where we are at. There will probably be some reorganization which may or may not affect us.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Herridge and best wishes to yourself from the staff and accept my warmest breathings, as ever,

Yours sincerely,

  
Director of Publicity.

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e

JC Campbell to MB Williams, Dec 1935

Transcription / Additional Information

[Letterhead]

Department of the Interior  
National Parks of Canada  
Ottawa

2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1935.

[Handwritten across the top] To M.B.W. re Grew Owl's visit to England

My dear M.B.,

To say I am disgusted with the Lovat Dickson outfit is expressing it mildly. You are not the only one that they have kept away from Grey Owl. Harper Cory who has done so much for us in the interests of conservation and the National Parks as well, of course benefitting himself quite a little, endeavoured to see him but they have made it very plain to him, in fact, said Grey Owl did not want to see him which is something I do not believe as my experience with Grey Owl is that he is not small minded where other writers are concerned. I am forced to admit now that the big mistake was that I did not go with him which was the original intention of the Macmillan Company here who are really, I believe, part of the Lovat Dickson outfit.

I have only had one letter and a couple of cables from Grey Owl since he went over but before leaving London about three weeks ago he asked Lovat Dickson to write me a letter and tell me how he was getting along which Dickson did. I may have got under Dickson's skin a little as I have told him very plainly once or twice what I thought should be done. It really is a case of highly specialized commercialism, endeavouring to get all the benefits possible under the guise of conservation and helping Canada but this side of the story doesn't register with me for a minute. I do not believe for an instant that Grey Owl has any idea of the game they are playing and I could understand it in the first place but now that he has found his feet, that is, judging from this distance, why he should not be allowed to see anybody who has been of benefit to our work.

Grey Owl and myself have been talking over a feature film for the last two years and he has certain views on the matter and so have I but my anxiety at the moment is to get him back to Canada and do all our negotiating and work in this connection in the first instance here. I had to check Lovat Dickson up in the contract that they had Grey Owl sign in which they refer to motion pictures. I informed them they had no right to this end of the work. They said they agreed with me and what was meant was taking of news-shots. They agreed not to interfere at all with any other type of motion picture. This, of course, Grey Owl agreed to so I believe we are safe for the time being at any rate from any interference by anybody in Britain as I do not think Grey Owl will go back on his word. I am telling you everything I can in this letter for your own information as to just how the situation

[pagebreak]

stands as far as I can see.

I would be very glad to have you have Mr. Guthrie look me up when he comes to Canada and I could have a chat with him. If you only knew the time I have had in the last three years trying to protect Grey Owl not only for his own good in connection with motion pictures but also in squaring everybody when he would let his foot slip, which I regret to say happened more frequently than I

liked. They cannot get Grey Owl into any picture unless we say so and I do believe he is loyal enough to the National Parks not to permit any such undertaking unless I agree. Lovat Dickson have just pulled a fast one on me by cabling through the High Commissioner's office for seven new reels claiming that the ones we sent them, which were new in October, are showing signs of wear. This on the face of it is absolutely ridiculous but I am going to ship them the seven new ones they asked for on the condition that they return the seven which they say are showing signs of wear. You know from your experience that one month's constant showing if the films are properly taken care of never do show very much sign of wear in that time. I use new film on my trips showing anywhere from one hundred to one hundred and thirty times and they are still in good enough condition to go into circulation.

We are shipping into the United States this winter upwards of 1500 films which means quite a lot of publicity in that country.

I am going to wait for the next English mail and see if there is a letter from Grey Owl. It should be here tomorrow or the next day and I will then write him and ask him to look you up. Then, possibly, we will get to the truth of the matter. Everything in this letter of course is for your private information.

There is very little new going on here and we really do not know where we are at. There will probably be some reorganization which may or may not affect us.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Herridge and best wishes to yourself from the staff and accept my warmest breathings, as ever,

Yours sincerely,

J.C.

Director of Publicity.



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA

OTTAWA 4th January, 1936.

IN YOUR REPLY REFER TO FILE.....

My dear M.B.,

I had a letter from Grey Owl recently in which he was asking for an extension of time as he does not want to leave England until about the middle of March. He expects, I understand, to complete his lecture tour by the end of February and would like to have a couple of weeks to visit some worth while people, which I trust includes you. I told him I was anxious for him to get in touch with you as he has some ideas regarding a feature picture along the lines that he and I have been talking for the last two years.

Encl.

I think that Lovat Dickson people are quite slick enough to see that he is not disillusioned as they have him on a contract to write three more books and it would not do them any good to irritate him or disillusion him too much. If he does not get in touch with you in the next two or three weeks I would suggest your dropping him a line when you know he is in London reminding him that it is my wish that he should arrange a meeting with you. Of course the feature will be a tremendous job and needs a lot of money. There has got to be a human story running all through it as I am positive that a wilderness picture such as he has in mind would not be a best seller. He is obsessed with one idea and that is that he a great backwoodsman. He tells me in his letters that he does not want to be known as an author as he thinks that is synonymous with being a crooner or gigolo ~~par-fumier~~. I mention this again so that you will get a proper perspective of what he will want to do in connection with a picture but there must be a running story of human interest or it will be a waste of money. I have been getting more materialistic since you left me for the simple reason that all anybody seems to be concerned in is to get the tourist in irrespective of what becomes of the country and I feel quite certain that a picture such as he has in mind, as well as part of what I think you have in mind, would not be a big success. I feel if we are willing to give the picture a theatrical turn it might go over but I would be very doubtful of its success if we are depending on Grey Owl and a Canadian background.

- I am enclosing -

Miss M.B. Williams,  
24 Wendover Court,  
Finchley Road,

JC Campbell to MB Williams, Jan 1936

Transcription / Additional Information

[Letterhead]

Department of the Interior

National Parks of Canada

Ottawa

4<sup>th</sup> January, 1936.

My dear M.B.,

I had a letter from Grey Owl recently in which he was asking for an extension of time as he does not want to leave England until about the middle of March. He expects, I understand, to complete his lecture tour by the end of February and would like to have a couple of weeks to visit some worth while people, which I trust includes you. I told him I was anxious for him to get in touch with you as he has some ideas regarding a feature picture along the lines that he and I have been talking for the last two years.

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- I am enclosing -

Miss M. B. Williams,

24 Wendover Court

Finchley Road,

***The second page of this letter is unavailable.***

Ottawa, March 5<sup>th</sup>, /36

Dear Miss Williams,

I was delighted to receive your letter, as I have often thought of writing to you but renounced the idea as I did not have your address. You speak of Egalee. It is a strange coincidence that I should yesterday have resumed working on this story. I left it aside even before you did, when you were still in Ottawa and intended at the time to give it a good long rest, but I never thought that this would mean more than six years! I have since been engaged on a scheme of work & writing which left me no time for anything else and which is beginning to bear fruit. I have had 7 or 8 books published in the past two years and several more will come out this coming year. But I am now finding that I have over a month to finish Mehkela. Indeed, I revised, shortened & much improved it last summer, and had it retypeset. Instead of the 65,000 words which you read & revised this part of the text has build down to 35,000. I am now building up a third part I intend to bring up to us to over 50,000. The new part - the 3<sup>rd</sup> - will concern the relations of Cadwin with the child & his bringing up. All this is involved in an adventure which I am now unfolding & which, I believe, will add to the value & interest of the story.

To-morrow I will select a copy for you of whatever is done - 15 chps., & if you feel so inclined, you may read it & let me hear of whatever suggestions you are kind enough to offer; I am still anxious for further improvements. This story is the one on which I will bestow the greatest care and affection. As you & Mrs. Herdige have helped & encouraged me much. We have had delightful conversations about it. I am sorry there are no longer possible on account of the long distance.

You enjoy I hope your prolonged stay in London & abroad. I have had no precise news of you from time to time. Ed was, indeed, glad to read news coming directly from you. Mrs. Herdige's son is, I presume, still in London? Give her my affectionate regards. I still often think of the

Delightful trip we took to Quebec and remember the place, near St. Jean Deschamps, where Mrs H gently bumped a cart in which an old farmer seemed most surprised! And then an angel (wooden!) leaped overboard and fell upon the road without injury to its winged self!

The two books (which you will see mentioned in the M.C.M.'s catalogue) will be very attractively illustrated and presented. They have been completed as a result of my preparation but in remarkably little time. I will not tell more about them before you see them.

To-day I stopped at Mr. Harkins' office. I had not seen him for a year. But he called me asking to submit a list of wood carvings etc... for his new museum at Port Charley, which is now completed. He seemed very much as usual, although he complains of his health and of the amount of work his branch has to do with an insufficient staff. I suppose you have nearly forgotten the existence of the Branch & Body!

You speak of stories for children which you are preparing and seem to want to know about more materials - Canadian materials. What kind of materials do you have in mind? Indian or French Canadian folk tales, anecdotes & legends? and is the length of each definite in your plan. The field for unused (in a literary way) Indian stories is vast enough, but the materials when already published in scientific form are scattered through a large body of scientific books & magazines (J. A. Kollman) etc... The British Museum & Anthropological Institute (in fact of the British Museum) have most of these publications. Yet, if you wanted guidance in this difficult mass I would be glad to give attention to it. It would be impractical to think of unpublished materials in a museum (although there is much) because of its inaccessibility. Many of the French folk-tales I have published in the Journal of American Folk-Lore might be good materials for you. But they would have to be rewritten, as these are only as told by the folk tale teller. Several or eight of these series have appeared since 1916. Material I would be glad to let you use whatever you need.

Dalila & Helen, the Daughters too, are going fast. D. is now 16 and is as tall as myself - a difference since you last saw her!

To-morrow I will send you, under another cover, a few publications and various things meant as news. I presume you have been interested in Gray Owl's pre-emption to S.W.? He has just returned and was here in Ottawa last week.

Well, I will hope to hear from you again very shortly.

Affectionately yours

Sincerely to Mrs. Hemidge,

Marie Bonneau

P.S. I will ask Marie Bonneau (from Ottawa) to go and see you. She has worked for me last year to illustrate children's songs and dances and this year she has spent 2 1/2 months working beside me at the office for the illustration of my last two books. She is a remarkable young artist and has developed magnificent in the past year, as you will see from the work she has done - illustrations in black and white and chapter heads. She left for S.W. on the first of March. She has taken a copy of Medals with her to read while sailing.

**Marius Barbeau to MB Williams, 5 Mar 1936**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

Ottawa, March 5<sup>th</sup> /36

Dear Miss. Williams,

I was delighted to receive your letter, as I have often thought of writing to you but renounced the idea as I did not have your address. You speak of Egalee. It is a strange coincidence that I should yesterday have resumed working on this story. I left it aside even before you did, when you were still in Ottawa and intended at the time to give it a good long rest, but I never thought that this would mean more than six years! I have since been [waylaid] on a scheme of work at writing which left me no time for aught else and which is beginning to bear fruit. I have had 7 or 8 books published in the past two years and several more will come out this coming year. But I am now finding that I have over a month to finish [Mehlala]. Indeed, I revised, shortened and much improved it last summer and had it retyped. Instead of the 65,000 words which you read and revised this part of the text has boiled down to 35,000. I am now building up a third part I intend to bring up the ms to over 50,000. The new part - the 3<sup>rd</sup> - will concern the relation of Cadieux with the child and his bringing up. All this is involved in an adventure which I am now unfolding and which, I believe, will add to the value and interest of the story.

Tomorrow I will select a copy for you of whatever is due - 15 chp, and if you feel so inclined, you may read it and let me hear whatever suggestions you are kind enough to offer; I am still anxious for further improvements. This story is the one on which I will have place the greatest care and affection and you and Mrs. Herridge have helped and encouraged me much. We have had delightful conversations around it. I am sorry there are no large possible on account of the long distance.

You enjoy I hope your prolonged stay in London and abroad. I have had imprecise news of you from time to time. CW was, indeed, glad to hear news coming direct from you. Mrs. Herridge's son is, I presume, still in London? Give her my affectionate regards. I still often think of the

[pagebreak]

delightful trip we took to Quebec and remember the place, near St. Jean Deschaillons, where Mrs. H. gently bumped a cart in which an old farmer seemed most surprised! And then an angel (wooden!) leaped overboard and fell upon the road without injury to its winged self!

The two books (which you will see mentioned in McM.'s catalogue) will be very attractively illustrated and presented. They have been completed as a result of long preparation but in remarkably little time. I will not tell more about this before you see them.

To-day I stopped at Mr. Harkin's office. I had not seen him for a year. But he called me asking to submit a bit on wood carvings etc ... for his new museum at Fort Chambly, which is now completed. Seemed very much as usual, although he complained of his health and at the amount his branch has to do with an insufficient staff. I suppose you have nearly forgotten the existence of the Branch and Body!

You speak of stories for children which you are preparing and seem to want to know about more materials—Canadian materials. What kind of materials do you have in mind? Indian or French Canadian folk tales, anecdotes and legends? And is the length of each definite in your plan. The field for unused (in a literary way) Indian stories is vast enough, but the materials when already published

in scientific form are scattered [through] a large body of scientific books and magazine (J.A. Folk – Lore) etc ... The British Museum and Anthropological Institute (in front of the British Museum) have most of these publications. Yet, if you wanted guidance in this difficult mass I would be glad to give attention to it. It would be impractical to think of unpublished materials in a Museum (although there is much) because of its inaccessibility. Many of the French Folk-tales I have published in the Journal of American Folk-Lore might be good materials for you. But they would have to be rewritten, as there are only as told by the folktale tellers. Seven or eight of these may have appeared since 1916. Naturally I would be glad to let you use whatever you need.

[pagebreak]

Dalila and Hélène, [the] daughters here, are growing fast. D. is now 16 and is as tall as myself - a difference since you last saw her!

To-morrow I will send you, under another cover, a few publications and various things meant as news. I presume you have been interested in Grey Owl's peregrination to England? He has just returned and was here in Ottawa last week.

Well, I will hope to hear from you again very shortly.

Affectionately yours

Greetings to Mrs. Herridge

Marius Barbeau

P.S. I will ask Marjorie Borden (from Ottawa) to go and see you. She has worked for me last year to illustrate children's games and [ \_\_\_ ?] dances and this year she has spent 2 ½ months working beside me at the office for the illustration of my last two books. She is a remarkable gay artist and has developed magnificently in the past year, as you will see from the work she has done – illustrations in black and white at chapter heads. She left for England on the first of March. She has taken a copy of [Mehlala] with her to read while sailing.



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA

OTTAWA 20th March, 1936.

IN YOUR REPLY REFER TO FILE.....

My dear M.B.,

I suppose you are thinking I am never going to answer your letter but since receiving it I have had a strenuous time with our friend, Grey Owl. As you are probably aware he arrived here in the custody of a lady and remained here for almost a week, then went on to Toronto and returned here on Monday, the 9th, to have an interview with the Governor General. On the following Friday, the 13th, he dined with Mackenzie King and yesterday he and I interviewed Mr. Crerar, our Minister, regarding the taking of the Mississauga picture. For your private information he did not draw a sober breath from the time he arrived in Ottawa until Ernie and Joe poured him on the train last night for Toronto.

The picture that he wants to take as you may know is a four reeler taken on the Mississauga with three or four canoes, Indians, etc. He wants to direct it and he wants to title it. As far as I can figure it out it would cost about \$10,000. He is covering a river 250 miles long which he said would take about forty-five days. Needless to say I am not very enthusiastic about it. He has had no experience in directing and at the same time appearing in a picture. He talked it over with the three prominent persons mentioned above but his conduct in Ottawa did not impress the Commissioner or anybody else and certainly did nothing that would make you feel that he could be trusted to carry out the making of this picture at such a high cost looking at it from our point of view.

I note that you say that he was wearing English dress when he visited you. He arrived here wearing a mixture and when you say he is self-possessed he is more than that. He has developed an egotism that I am afraid from now on makes him of very little value to the National Parks. He appreciates everything you did for him and is kind enough to include me in it but I have no evidence that he means it and have come to the conclusion it is only a matter of words. I quite agree with you he is a great asset to Canada providing he does not make some very foolish break either through liquor, women or temper. Miss Rotenberg, the Jewish girl, did not return to Canada with him but Lovat Dickson sent a Mrs. Somerville back with him, a lady who returned to England about two weeks ago.

- I note you -

Miss M.B. Williams,  
24 Wendover Court,

I note you speak of the Mississauga picture. His only reason for wanting to do that is to impress upon the public that he is a backwoodsman and he has no other thought in his mind at the present time. Sajo might be filmed if one could get the right people but the only thing for him to do if he intends to take this picture is to go to a professional firm as I could not talk the Department into doing it. One of the things he does not seem to recognize is that the National Parks have distributed over 200 reels of his pictures which means that there has been thousands of showings not only in the United States but in other parts of the world. I quite agree with you that if he wants a picture such as you would appreciate Hollywood would not do it as it would not appeal to North American audiences. He really does not think that he needs suggestions from anybody and he only comes back to me when he gets into a jam and believe me he finds plenty of them.

I am very interested to know how you get along with Harper Cory. He is just as peculiar in many ways as Grey Owl. His real name is W.H. Corkill. He has done a great deal to make Grey Owl known in Great Britain but apparently Lovat Dickson couldn't see it that way with the result that they are at loggerheads.

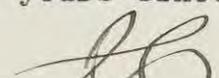
I am glad you ran away, if that is what you call it as it has been agony carrying on this last five years and I do not believe that it would have been any help to you either mentally, physically or financially to carry on and I am more than pleased after the work you did for me personally as well as for Canada that you got away and saw something different to the narrowness of a civil servant's life. I quite agree with you that the foolish, ignorant and slow Britisher has something that commands the admiration of the world and I think it can be summed up in one sentence - we believe in the greatness of our cause, the Empire and peace. I feel more strongly than ever that the British Empire does not exist for power or even trade, which is so essential, but has to play a part in the world for the good of humanity.

I did not go away this winter for which I am very pleased as the expenses allowed under the new regulations would not permit of my doing real publicity work. I am sorry that I cannot be as enthusiastic as you are over Grey Owl. There are many things I know that I cannot write to you and my constant prayer is that there will be no outbreak that would cast discredit on the National Parks and those with whom he is associated.

We are sending you a bundle of buffalo material which I hope is what you want and if it isn't let us know and if there is anything else we can do it will be a pleasure for us to do it for you.

I am sorry to say that Miss Ward has not been as well as she should have been this winter and if circumstances would permit nothing would give me greater joy than to see her join you in a little more leisure. Take care of yourself and remember me to Mrs. Herridge. With very best wishes, believe me

Every yours sincerely,



JC Campbell to MB Williams, Mar 1936

Transcription / Additional Information

[Letterhead]

Department of the Interior  
National Parks of Canada  
Ottawa

20<sup>th</sup> March, 1936.

My dear M.B.,

I suppose you are thinking I am never going to answer your letter but since receiving it I have had a strenuous time with our friend, Grey Owl. As you are probably aware he arrived here in the custody of a lady and remained here for almost a week, then went on to Toronto and returned here on Monday, the 9<sup>th</sup>, to have an interview with the Governor General. On the following Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, he dined with Mackenzie King and yesterday he and I interviewed Mr. Crerar, our Minister, regarding the taking of the Mississauga picture. For your private information he did not draw a sober breath from the time he arrived in Ottawa until Ernie and Joe poured him on the train last night for Toronto.

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Miss. M. B. Williams,

24 Wendover Court,

[pagebreak]

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Ever yours sincerely,

JC

# THOMAS NELSON & SONS LTD, PUBLISHERS

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Code: A. B. C. Fifth Edition

35 & 36 PATERNOSTER ROW

LONDON E. C. 4

23rd April, 1936.

Department H.

Miss M. B. Williams,  
24, Wendover Court,  
Lyndale Avenue,  
N.W.2.

Dear Miss Williams,

The more I think of your suggestion of this short book of the National Parks of Canada the more it appeals to me, and I must thank you very much indeed for making it. We could offer you a royalty beginning at 10% on the published price of 3/6 or 2/6, and an advance on account of royalty of sixty guineas, half of which could be paid on delivery of the complete manuscript. I feel sure it would be a great advantage if you could let us have this by the end of June, for publication in September, and could send at the same time or a little earlier a selection of photographs from which the illustrations could be chosen.

Would you kindly let me know whether our offer appeals to you? If it does I will send you at once an agreement in our usual terms for your consideration.

It would be a genuine pleasure to have a book from you on this subject, and we feel convinced that we could handle it very efficiently on both sides of the Atlantic, and we might sell a number of copies also in South Africa and other Dominions.

Yours sincerely,

*J. H. Hampden*

**John Hampden, Thomas Nelson and Sons, to MB Williams, Apr 1936**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Letterhead]

Thomas Nelson & Sons LTD, Publishers

Incorporating T.C. & E.C. Jack, LTD-London, Edinburgh, Paris, Melbourne, Toronto, New York  
City 5256 (2 lines)

Telegrams: Nelsons Publishers Cent London

Code: A.B.C. Fifth Edition

35 & 36 Paternoster Row

London E.C.4

Department H.

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Lyndale Avenue,  
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Yours sincerely,

John Hampden



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA

OTTAWA 16th April, 1936.

IN YOUR REPLY REFER TO FILE.....

My dear M.B.,

Congratulations. I have information that you have out Grey Owled Grey Owl and I understand that you were a big success at the National Council meeting.

There is one thing that you have got to do, however, and I feel you appreciate this and that is, go slowly and take real care. I got quite a thrill out of hearing that you were so much appreciated. Of course the thing is now that they will want you to talk frequently which you must not do.

Your letter just bore out every conviction that I have arrived at in connection with our gentleman friend. So far there has been nothing done about the picture and I am certainly not going to be a party to spending any Government money in which he directs and has much to say about it. As far as Government work is concerned I look upon him as being practically ruined and J.B. feels the same way about it. If he wishes to take it on his own with the Publishers money let him go to it but we are certainly not in favour of allowing Grey Owl and his connections spending money on a picture which would not be along the lines that we want.

I have not seen Hugh Eayrs of the Macmillan Company since Grey Owl returned but I believe that he will be quite in agreement with us in this matter.

The Jewish lady is the daughter of a pretty well to do Insurance Broker in the city of Toronto and Grey Owl while in Toronto stayed at their home. Personally, I do not think that she has any other idea but to make money out of him and he is just egotistic enough to think she is doing this for personal liking. I am not a darn bit sorry for Lovat Dickson. In the first place he didn't play the game when the arrangements were made for the tour and he tried to use great pressure through the High Commissioner's office in London which didn't have any effect here as the arrangements for Grey Owl's leave had already been made. Grey Owl has no idea of talking about anybody or anything but Grey Owl and he also informed me how much good he has done for Canada. He told me one morning that he had got practically above this beaver stuff so I take it that from a National Parks standpoint you can count him out. The unfortunate thing about it is that

Miss M.B. Williams,  
24 Wendover Court,

- while -

while we know the truth now we will have to let him carry on if the Publishers so wish until such times as he meets his Waterloo.

Cory is a peculiar chap but as far as I am concerned he has made no secret that he was endeavouring to earn a livelihood writing animal stories, preaching conservation and boosting Canada and I give him credit for liking to do the job providing he can eat while he is doing it. Cory told me the story about the meeting at which he should have been chairman and he was quite right to leave the meeting without making a fuss. The whole story is that Dickson didn't understand Grey Owl and Grey Owl succeeded in putting it over him like a tent.

I quite agree with you that the title of Cory's book is mis-leading and I wrote and told him so but at the same time he was preparing the ground for Grey Owl's lecture tour even if the main purpose was to make some money for himself. I personally believe he likes the job and as far as I know, except in this book matter, he has played the game.

Grey Owl has cost me plenty both mentally and financially and he thinks no more about me today or anybody else as far as I can make out, except those who are pandering to him so that they can make money but I am beginning to think that unless he straightens up he will find himself in the discard in a very short time. He is without a doubt the most plausible individual I ever met and he looks upon everything that is done for him as his right and neither appreciates nor remembers in any shape or form the support and kindness he has received.

Cory I understand expects to leave England for Canada on the 16th of May. You might write me again as soon as possible and let us know if there is anything we can do. Whatever you do try and conserve your own strength.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Herridge and best wishes for your health and happiness, I am, as ever

Yours sincerely,

  
Director of Publicity.

JC Campbell to MB Williams, Apr 1936

Transcription / Additional Information

[Letterhead]

Department of the Interior  
National Parks of Canada  
Ottawa

16<sup>th</sup> April, 1936.

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Yours sincerely,

JC

Director of Publicity.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS  
ELAGAMONT, LONDON.  
TELEPHONE NO  
WHITEHALL 3081.  
3 LINES

VISITORS ROOM,  
9, WATERLOO PLACE,  
PALL MALL, S. W. 1.

June 8/36.

Dearest

Your nice letter arrives this morning. I  
knew you would understand and sympa-  
thize about the book. It's not going very

well. I have five chapters written out of  
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bit vague. I shall have to do a lot

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You see, Darling, I just haven't the OS

capacity to work long hours at a stretch.

Really I shoud only work in the  
mornings and play in the afternoons.  
Go off in Babette and lie on a hillside  
and listen to the waterfalls falling and  
the bumblebees buzzing + perhaps find a

bit work a nice man. — I have been  
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it.

I am sending on your  
two articles on the petition to the  
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like to know about it.

I am afraid to have you send  
the Brian, Dearest, because I don't  
know about the English law. Wait till  
I have more leisure than I'll make  
enquiries here.

Nice to feel your dear & helpful  
sympathy - that is a very wonderful  
thing. A little home of kisses now &  
then would keep, to, but I get them  
even through the cold paper, & the little  
birds feather that comes from the nest  
in Kaz. What a mercy to have,  
It's marvellous to have done a thing like  
that. It means something for clarity, somewhere.  
Pen.

I have just got to know some members of a group who are working for betterment here. Such a fine man, who is the editor of an "Animals Welfare" paper, but a complete cripple. He has a good talk & he wants me to do some writing for him & to speak at a conference on Nat<sup>l</sup> parks - wild life conservation in Canada. But he is interested in the social movement, too. If you will lend me the date of that extract from the Banker's Mag. I will get him to publish it widely over here.

I'll <sup>write</sup> ~~say~~ for the Aug. Cath. pamphlets & other things you mention. Am sending you Vernon Bartlett's new magazine The World Review of Reviews. It gives a good resume' of the international situation from the eyes of other nations who don't regard England with quite the lofty approval she accords herself.

Your last budget of "Columns" was very hot stuff. Sometimes I am almost afraid somebody will knock you on the head or

run you into jail. You are absolutely fearless.  
but I suppose you know how to circumvent the  
libel law. R.B.B. never enjoy sticking a  
little knife into you. I am sure. But it's  
simply splendid, darling, to see how busy +  
useful you are. It's a big responsibility  
too, just now, shaping public opinion.

As you say, a great deal of the best  
thought over here is moving to socialism.

I am told Oxford is strongly socialistic + so  
secretly is the King. Someone who is very  
well informed told me he didn't want  
the crown at all but was only persuaded to  
take it because he was made to see he could  
really do more as King than any other  
way. But he complained it wasn't a  
man's job. (This isn't for publication)  
but it may be true, + if so, it's good.

Yes. I saw after I wrote you, that  
you had changed the Bengaly play

But the whole thing is coming here & here  
instruct every day.

There is a nice little bit about the King  
for that little play you spoke of. An M.P.  
tells the story in the last trash's mag. He said  
he took him through the unemployed areas, (around  
& the Clyde, before the last election & what the  
King said about the housing conditions was  
almost too strong to print. One Conservative  
organizer remarked. "Every time that fellow opens  
his mouth he loses us 100,000 votes. In  
a few weeks the King (then P. of W.) wanted  
to make another trip to the north. Influence  
was brought to bear to dissuade him but he  
would go. So the powers decided the next best  
thing would be to keep the visit as quiet as  
possible. Not let the press know. However the  
P. of W. heard of this & he deliberately gave the

visit as much publicity as possible + personally arranged that all the press men should be here to take down everything he said about the conditions.

It's a new era when a reigning sovereign refuses not only a private train but even a private coach + travels down to Sandringham in a 1<sup>st</sup> class carriage (reserved) carrying his own despatch case. Looks a bit nearer to Plato's philosopher King.

All this for chat-chat by the fire, & a drink, while we are "warming up". Time now to slip into silk + relax + lie back + look at the fire together. It's wood well-lost. Ah! those pine knot fires! What a lovely thing they were in themselves. One could write a poem about Pine-knots.

The lovely little cracklings + whip-snappings  
+ the wonderful architecture of the flames. What  
a lot of things we had. Do you have wood  
fires in B.C. or beach-fires. I could  
imagine the smell of red cedar logs burning  
and a bed of boughs in a little tent near  
the sea. Sort of Kay. all right long. Smell  
of pines, murmur of sea added. by dearest

do you know that it is 15 years this summer  
since Kay. It was a sort of Great Divide  
moment wasn't it, or was it for you. too.

Like Alice Meynell's essay on going down  
to Italy. For a time all the rivers are  
running north. Then one crosses the  
height of land and all the waters begin  
to run south, towards warmth + light  
+ flowers. You could make a poem  
out of that.

I can feel how your white silk shirt felt yet.  
It felt so cool, with the warm flow underneath  
& your heart beating harder & harder. I don't  
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remember that we counted most of the happy  
moments. That we didn't let many slip.  
That must be the bitterest regret of all "The  
might have beens". We squeezed on little orange  
family sized of juice each time but there was  
always just as much rest time.

Paster mawellous old world, wonder of  
life keeps anything like that hidden for  
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always imagine so much more than is  
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to R. B. s "all we have willed, or  
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Can you -

Oh love. dear love. why aren't you here this  
moment to hold me up & have me laugh. Pen-

**MB Williams to AB Buckley, June 1936**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Letterhead]  
Telegraphic Address  
Elagamont, London  
3 lines  
Telephone No.  
Whitehall 3081

Visitors Room,  
9, Waterloo Place,  
Pall Mall, S.W.1.

June 8/36.

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[Pen]



BANFF SPRINGS HOTEL

R.M.S. "Empress of Britain",

November 5, 1936.

*Dear Miss Williams:*

I was very sorry that the time at my disposal in London did not permit me personally to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter of October the 29th, and the author's copy of "Guardians of the Wild" by which it was accompanied.

I brought your book with me to read on the voyage. Imagine my delight to discover, amongst other matters of special interest in its pages, references to the Prince Albert Park and the all too kind mention you have made of my interest in that project. I just cannot tell you how the book itself, from cover to cover, has interested and delighted me. I hope the book may have a wide circulation in Great Britain. I know that in Canada it will be warmly welcome.

You have made a fine contribution to our national literature, as well as to our

national policy of seeking to preserve, for other generations, as well as our own, some of the "Wild Beauty of the Earth".

With my warmest thanks for your letter and book,

Believe me, dear Miss Williams,

*Yours very sincerely,*

*W. Woodhouse King*

Miss Mabel B. Williams,  
24, Wendover Court,  
Lyndale Ave.,  
London, N.W. 2,  
England.

**Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King to MB Williams, Nov 1936**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Letterhead]

Canadian Pacific

Steamship Lines

Banff Springs Hotel

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W.L. Mackenzie King

Miss Mabel B. Williams  
24, Wendover Court,  
Lyndale Ave.,  
London, N.W. 2,  
England.

Personal

Ottawa,  
December 2, 1936

*Dear Miss Williams:*

This is only a line to let you know of the due receipt of your letter of November 22nd, and to thank you warmly for its appreciative words, and for the suggestion it contains.

With renewed thanks for your splendid book,

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

*W. Woodrow Wilson*

*P.S. Mrs. Belli has declined at this time to be consulted. It dropped out of sight at the time of the constitutional crisis and has just*

Miss Mabel B. Williams,

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London, N.W.2,

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W.L. Mackenzie King

P.S. Your letter was declared at this time [circle \_\_\_?]. It dropped out of sight at the time of "the constitutional crisis" and was lost track of. WLMK

Miss Mabel B. Williams,  
24, Wendover Court,  
Lyndale Avenue,  
London, N.W.2,  
England.

*Prof. Thomson  
got this and sent it to me.*

RADIO BROADCAST

February 20, 1937

J.F. Macdonald

(Professor of English,  
University College, U. of T.)

"I see a great land waiting for its own people to come and take possession of it", wrote Edward Carpenter in Towards Democracy. This is the appropriate text which Miss M.B. Williams uses for her admirable little book, GUARDIANS OF THE WILD. In less space than a hundred and fifty pages Miss Williams tells the story of the beginnings and the development of our Canadian National Parks. It is a story Canadians will be proud to read in this account written by one who has herself had much to do with it from that day in 1911, when, a few months before the Liberal Government went out of office, they passed the Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act by which the existing reserves were created National Parks and were given a separate Branch to administer them. In the twenty-five years since then Miss Williams has seen the transformation wrought under the wise guidance of her chief, Mr. J.B.Harkin.

After a chapter entitled Beginnings, in which the steps leading up to the Parks Act of 1911 are detailed, Miss Williams proceeds to describe The Parks in the Mountains - Banff, Jasper, and Waterton Lakes. Glacier National Park of the United States is immediately to the south of this last. A few years ago, in commemoration of a century of peace between two good neighbors, the United States and Canada constituted these two reserves into an International Peace Park. It is a fitting region for a park of peace since it is not only a very beautiful part of the mountains but, according to Indian legend, a happy land where evil spirits do not come. Banff and Jasper, which straddle the boundary between Alberta and British Columbia, are much better known in Eastern Canada, I suppose because each is sponsored by one of our two great railways. The CP.R. runs through Banff and the C.N.R. through Jasper 150 miles to the north.

Miss Williams uses her brief space well in the hopeless effort to describe the glories of this great mountain region which extends 1200 miles to the north in a belt 440 miles wide. Even an eagle, which the traveller is sure to see in summer poised high

above the valley where his train runs, even an eagle, with his telescopic eyes, can take in little of this tumbled masses of mountains. I haven't the faintest idea how many eagles there are in the mountains, but if each pair had 100 square miles all to themselves for hunting, there would be room for more than 5000 pairs. Out of this vast area the Dominion Government has set aside these two parks and is now building a motor road to run from the heart of one to the heart of the other, 150 miles of road from north to south high up on the mountain sides. When it is finished there will be few motor trips in the world to rival it for scenic beauty.

I am not going to quote Miss Williams and I am not going to begin raving myself about the marvellous beauty of these two parks. For I had the great good fortune to spend some days in each of them two years ago. Lake Louise with its reflection of the glacier, the lovelier Emerald Lake, the thrilling ride over the Yoho Trail--it all comes back too vividly for description. And the shimmering light on Lac Beauvert at breakfast in the Lodge at Jasper Park. I have never seen anything like the play of colours on its placid surfaces in which is mirrored the lovely peak of Mt. Edith Cavell. The broad valley of the Athabaska at Jasper gives a sense of spaciousness and grandeur that is very restful as one gazes on the friendly peaks that sweep in a great circle around the level valley where Jasper Lodge and its numerous cottages rise beside the lake as if they were part of nature itself. But I am not going to try to tell you about the heritage we have in these parks. Read what Miss Williams has to say and then multiply her praise many times and you will approach the unbelievable truth.

The part of her book that will hold the interest of most readers is probably the chapter entitled Sanctuary. This tells how the game began to come back as soon as shooting and trapping were made illegal in the parks. How did the animals know that they would be safe within these boundaries. There is plenty of evidence that in some strange way news of an area of safety spread through the mountains. Goats and mountain sheep moved south from their haunts twenty miles to the north of Jasper and have stayed in the broad park area ever since and greatly increased in number. And they seem now to know

that the old warfare between men and beasts is over. They are still shy but seemingly not afraid. The clownish bears are far from shy. Indeed they have almost risen to the level of human racketeers. At any rate they sometimes hold up visitors in their quest of food and are not pleased if nothing is at hand to suit their taste. The moose are plentiful and the graceful caribou, that were almost extinct, are not uncommon.

The story of Canada's buffalo herd, now grown to several thousand in their great park at Wainwright, is told effectively by Miss Williams. She points out, as so many have done before her, the mad slaughter of the great herds that once roamed the plains, literally in hundreds of thousands, some say in millions. The white man in his greed for profit made no attempt at conservation. Let the future look after itself. The Indian, with his communal life, was far wiser. He knew that the future of his people was bound up with these great herds of buffalo who supplied him with food and clothes and tents. He killed only for need and over the body of his victim breathed the ancestral prayer, "Forgive me, my brother, if I take your life to save my own."

As I said, this chapter on Sanctuary and the one on Bringing back the Buffalo, will be read with the greatest interest. And surely, too, with the most satisfaction. The Commissioner for our National Parks and all his staff--most of all the rangers in the parks themselves, must have a deep sense of work well done when they see the animals living in peace and increasing in numbers in these great areas where they are safe from their most dangerous enemy - man. The story of the coming of the animals will match anything in Kipling's Jungle Tales. How did that herd of moose which had its feeding-grounds near the head waters of the Saskatchewan learn of Jasper Park? It must have learned in some way, for it climbed a high range of mountains and came down to live in the safety of that park. And a few years later a herd of the almost extinct Douglas caribou climbed the Great Divide and moved into the park. Here is a book for supplementary reading in our schools. It has all the glamour of romance and it is true. Moreover there are not many books so likely to breed a wholesome pride in our country.

After all, a country is more than a place in which to get rich quick. Miss Williams brings home this truth to the reader. She makes one realize how these great areas are really People's Parks where we can go for holidays that send us back refreshed in body and soul with a lasting memory of lovely places. Those of you who have not had a chance to visit any of these areas cannot do better than read this admirable little book with its dozen or more fine illustrations. It is the most persuasive argument to See Canada First that I have yet read. When you finish it, you understand why Miss Williams began with that fine vision of Edward Carpenter's "I see a great land waiting for its own people to come and take possession of it. I hope the people will be worthy of their land.

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These two books (Susannah, a Little Girl with the Mounties, Muriel Denison) are the best kind of propaganda for a sane and healthy patriotism. For if Guardians of the Wild tells us about the beauty of our land, Susannah shows that the land has guardians that are worthy of it. I am very grateful to both these women for their books, etc.....

**JB Harkin to MB Williams, Feb 1937**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Handwritten across the top]

Prof. Thomson got this and sent it to me. J.B.H.

Radio Broadcast

February 20, 1937

J.F. Macdonald

(Professor of English, University College, U. of T.)

“I see a great land waiting for its own people to come and take possession of it”, wrote Edward Carpenter in Towards Democracy. This is the appropriate text which Miss. M. B. Williams uses for her admirable little book, GUARDIANS OF THE WILD. In less space than a hundred and fifty pages Miss Williams tells the story of the beginnings and the development of our Canadian National Parks. It is a story Canadians will be proud to read in this account written by one who has herself had much to do with it from that day in 1911, when, a few months before the Liberal Government went out of office, they passed the Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act by which the existing reserves were created National Parks and were given a separate Branch to administer them. In the twenty-five years since then Miss Williams has seen the transformation wrought under the wise guidance of her chief, Mr. J. B. Harkin.

After a chapter entitled Beginnings, in which the steps leading up to the Parks Act of 1911 are detailed, Miss Williams proceeds to describe The Parks in the Mountains - Banff, Jasper, and Waterton Lakes. Glacier National Park of the United States is immediately to the south of this last. A few years ago, in commemoration of a century of peace between two good neighbors, the United States and Canada constituted these two reserves into an International Peace Park. It is a fitting region for a park of peace since it is not only a very beautiful part of the mountains, but according to Indian Legend, a happy land where evil spirits do not come. Banff and Jasper, which straddle the boundary between Alberta and British Columbia, are much better known in Eastern Canada, I suppose because each is sponsored by one of our two great railways. The C.P. R. runs through Banff and the C.N.R. through Jasper 150 miles to the north.

Miss Williams uses her brief space well in the hopeless effort to describe the glories of this great mountain region which extends 1200 miles to the north in a belt 440 miles wide. Even an eagle, which the traveller is sure to see in summer poised high

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above the valley where his train runs, even an eagle, with his telescopic eyes, can take in little of this tumbled masses of mountains. I haven't the faintest idea how many eagles there are in the mountains, but if each pair had 100 square miles all to themselves for hunting, there would be room for more than 5000 pairs. Out of this vast area the Dominion Government has set aside these two parks and is now building a motor road to run from the heart of one to the heart of the other, 150 miles of road from north to south high up on the mountain sides. When it is finished there will be few motor trips in the world to rival it for scenic beauty.

I am not going to quote Miss Williams and I am not going to begin raving myself about the marvelous beauty of these two parks. For I had the great good fortune to spend some days in each of

them two years ago. Lake Louise with its reflection of the glacier, the lovelier Emerald Lake, the thrilling ride over the Yoho Trail, it all comes back too vividly for description. And the shimmering lake on Lac Beauvert at breakfast in the Lodge at Jasper Park. I have never seen anything like the play of colours on its placid surfaces in which is mirrored the lovely peak of Mt. Edith Cavell. The broad valley of the Athabaska at Jasper gives a sense of spaciousness and grandeur that is very restful as one gazes on the friendly peaks that sweep in a great circle around the level valley where Jasper Lodge and its numerous cottages rise beside the lake as if they were part of nature itself. But I am not going to try to tell you about the heritage we have in these parks. Read what Miss Williams has to say and then multiply her praise many times and you will approach the unbelievable truth.

The part of her book that will hold the interest of most readers is probably the chapter entitled Sanctuary. This tells how the game began to come back as soon as shooting and trapping were made illegal in the parks. How did the animals know that they would be safe within these boundaries. There is plenty of evidence that in some strange way news of an area of safety spread through the mountains. Goats and mountain sheep moved south from their haunts twenty miles to the north of Jasper and have stayed in the broad park area ever since and greatly increased its number. And they seem now to know

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that the old warfare between men and beasts is over. They are still shy but seemingly not afraid. The clownish bears are far from shy. Indeed they have almost risen to the level of human racketeers. At any rate they sometimes hold up visitors in their quest of food and are not pleased if nothing is at hand to suit their taste. The moose are plentiful and the graceful caribou, that were almost extinct, are not uncommon.

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Wetaskiwin, Alberta, 3 Feb. 1937.

Miss M. B. Williams,  
24 Wendover Court,  
Lyndale Avenue,  
London, N. W. 2, England,

Dear Miss Williams,

May I plead the facts that we have mutual friends and that I am deeply interested in the preservation of woods, waters and wild life as an excuse for writing to you.

I have read your book, *Guardians of the Wild*, with great pleasure and interest and, if I may say so, I consider it a model of what a book of its kind ought to be. I have taken the liberty of bringing it to the notice of the editor of *Forest and Outdoors* because I think it ought to be in the hands of as many people interested in conservation as possible.

Your chapter on the buffalo had a particular interest for me because I happened to be one of five who induced the Government to set aside and fence Elk Island Park, by guaranteeing it would enclose a certain number of elk and deer. When it came time to build the fence and no one seemed disposed to tender on it, my fellow bondsmen elected me to do the fencing and I think it is not an over-statement to say that I thus became intimately acquainted with the park area. The rewards were not princely but

one of them was the privilege of helping to put the two shipments of buffalo into the park. I still look back on those ~~of~~ occasions as among the happiest memories of my early experiences of life in Western Canada.

Please give my kind regards to Mrs. Herridge.

Yours sincerely,

(Judge Lees)

*J. M. Lees*

Judge Lees, Wetaskiwin, Alberta to MB Williams, 24 Wendover Court, Lyndale Avenue, London, N.W.2, England, 3 February 1937

Dear Miss Williams,

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Please give my kind regards to Mrs. Herridge.

Yours sincerely,

[Judge Lees]

Dearest <sup>311</sup> Zue.

Come up to the garden, Zo.  
For the black old winter's gone (I hope)

Come up to the garden, Zo,  
Tho' the tulips and daffs are done,  
The mulberry tree is bursting in leaf,  
The roses are budding beyond belief,  
The little brown wren has its nest in the

And the swallows - alas - where <sup>tree</sup> they shouldn't  
be.

And everything's waiting and saying  
each day,

When is our Zue,

Our dearly loved Zue,

Now <sup>summer</sup> ~~what is the~~ Zue, coming our way?

The cat-bird calls from the hickory tree,  
"I know the chair where she ought  
to be,"

The cardinal calls: "Is she here? Is  
she ~~here~~?"

And the ~~fox~~ robin chuckles: "She's  
such a dear."

and the lilies and roses are trying  
to say,  
"Not till she's here, shall we all be gay."  
And the old moon peeks thro' the  
mulberry tree  
And is quite disgruntled coz it's only  
me,

Written to Zoe from Vancouver:  
M.B. lived in Vancouver from  
Sept 1944 - to March/April 1949.

She left London following her Mother's  
death (Apr 44) & returned to live with  
Ernie her brother - after wife Adha  
died ca 1949.

**MB Williams to Mary Bird Herridge ("Zöe"), 1940**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

Dearest Zöe

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Come up to the garden, Zo,  
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The mulberry tree is bursting in leaf,  
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The little brown wren has its nest in the tree,  
And the swallows – alas - where they shouldn't be,  
And everything's waiting and saying each day,  
Where is our Zöe,  
Our dearly loved Zöe,  
Now that the summer, coming our way?  
The cat-bird calls from the hickory tree,  
"I know the chair where she ought to be,"  
The cardinal calls "Is she here? Is she here?"  
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And the lilies and roses are trying to say,  
"Not till she's here, shall we all be gay,"  
And the old moon peeks thro' the mulberry tree  
And is quite disgruntled coz it's only me,

[In another pen:]

Written to Zöe from Vancouver

M.B. lived in Vancouver from Sept. 1994 [sic - 1944]-to March-April 1949.

She left London following her Mother's death (Apr 44) & returned to live with Ernie her brother - after wife Adha died in 1949.

222 Blewett Ave  
Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> / 41.

My dear M.B.

What an assignment - to carry coals  
to Newcastle!

I think the best way to answer your  
letter is to suggest you read a book entitled "Guardians  
of the Wild", written by a person named Williams.

The two societies you are to address  
expect you, presumably, to speak to speak on wild life  
principally, with Parks only an incidental. Well,  
it seems to me the general Parks story should serve  
as a perfectly good introduction. You will recall our  
first worry was to satisfy ourselves as to whether Parks were  
worth-while or not. And the worth-while-ness had to be  
measured in terms of human welfare, first spiritual; second  
mental; third, physical. No, not separately that way, we  
really felt that these were so intimately mixed up in life,  
that they were mutually dependent. So all three were  
required. You did more than anyone else to provide the  
proof. And you convinced the rest of us Parks could  
pay great dividends in those terms.

Our next problem was to sell Parks to our ministers,  
Parliament and the public. You were in the midst of  
these operations. There is no reason why we should not  
admit we figured that to get funds + public opinion  
behind Parks, (for development purposes) we had to  
first show the certainty of financial dividends.  
Hence our presentation of the values of tourist  
business. First we showed it in regard to Parks

2.  
themselves: You will recall the famous calculation of  
the report of <sup>Banks</sup> scenery and comparison with the return per  
acre from wheat reports. But Parks were much from  
much of Canada and so with Parks as a basis we  
carried on a campaign to ~~convince~~ educate the  
people of Canada of the importance of selling  
the scenery of every part of Canada. It must be  
fresh in your memory how well this plan worked out,  
even if it did embarrass us with an avalanche of  
demands for new parks. And thus we got our  
Parks working. But at the same time we never  
neglected the other kind of dividends; and the  
annual reports were used to present them to the public.  
Because they appeared sound — and perhaps because  
they were a novelty in a front publication — our  
contributions were great acceptance in the  
newspapers of Canada. The effect was  
especially obvious when our great 10 year fight against  
the power bars was in progress. Virtually all  
the press outside of Calgary was with us in the  
fight. (Of course since then the fight we won  
has been fought over again and lost — Minnewanka  
is gone. But it was not our fault.) (I should not say  
"fought over again", I fear).

Let me get my health again and get  
back to the keystone of Parks as we visualized them — viz  
as institutions primarily for the conservation of mankind.  
Because we wanted to conserve man we  
found it imperative (or at least important) to preserve wild life.

Perhaps at the very beginning when we were feeling on our way we simply recognized that wild things had an extraordinary attraction to humans and that therefore they were, at least, an important factor in the tourist industry on which we were then specializing. If we were selling the wilderness we would not be giving full value (or get the best returns) unless we had an ample supply of W. L. So, we proceeded to see that all parks were made genuine Sanctuaries. Your book has some good stories illustrating this.

As in the case of the tourist question Wild things will not constantly remain in protected areas and so we naturally had to look for co-operation from the province controlling the areas surrounding parks. And just about that time the proposal for a migration Bird Treaty with U. S. began to get under way. Several Dominion Depts were concerned with it and the result was the appointment of a Dominion Advisory Wild Life Board. That Board first dealt with the Treaty and then began gathering a perspective on W. L. throughout the Dominion. Each province legislated on W. L. from its purely provincial view point. The Board began a campaign to bring about co-operation and co-ordination among the provinces. It was felt that if justice was to be done W. L. (and the country) must be dealt with from

a broad national perspective.. It naturally followed that there should be Dominion-wide provincial conferences and so these were instituted, the Dominion undertaking all the cost of bringing official representatives of all the provinces each year. This ~~part~~ you cannot ~~overstate~~ <sup>overstate</sup> the results, because they were most valuable. The exchange of views and experiences, the emancipation from purely local considerations and from jealousies etc., ~~the~~ were most valuable, but ~~not~~ not more so than the ~~same~~ effect of the provincial officers and Dominion officers all knowing each other, learning to trust each other, and developing the sense that they were all engaged in a great work, greater than if viewed only from their <sup>own local</sup> view point, more worth while working at because of that; and a work which would promote the cause everywhere more effectively than ~~it~~ could be done in any other way. I know I am involved here but what we aimed at & secured was a "me for all and all for me" result. I overlooked in the evolution that the first step inside Paris w.f. work was our being assigned N.W. Gower Act,

it coming to us because we were doing W.F. work in parks. I also overlooked the parks, animal Parks, Buffalo, Elk Island, wh. ~~just about~~ also helped drive us into the wider field. The final act was the assignment of Migratory Bird Treaty act to us for administration.

Well, that's the background of Parks W.F. ~~activities~~ activities. (Again I say "Coals to Newcastle"). Where did we go from there?

One of the first steps was the building of active co-operation with U.S. conservationists. Not only the Federal but officials but also state officials and game organizations and conservation leaders like <sup>Normandy</sup> John B. Burnham, American Game Protective Association, Oscar Walter League etc. The aim was to bring about a North American perspective on W.F. problems. Such was vital for migratory birds; it was most helpful in regard to mammals as well.

You are safe in stating that Parks <sup>work on this</sup> based its conviction that human welfare demanded the perpetuation of W.F., that mankind would sustain a serious loss if W.F. disappeared. I will not elaborate the reasons and arguments in that connection. I think you know them pretty well; perhaps the greatest is the way W.F. attracts everyone (not just the hunter) to the wilderness. & if you want more on this line all depends on you.

What have we done specifically to conserve? That means details of laws, regulations, education, enforcement, laws, <sup>scientific</sup> studies of W.L. conditions and development of ~~scientific~~ solutions for problems.

Education - Lectures, pamphlets, newspaper and magazine articles, moving pictures, junior audubon societies & ~~societies~~. But the greatest & most valuable of all was perhaps the discovery & utilization of Grey Owl!

~~As~~ As in the case of "Report on Scenery" an effort was made to the financial side of the public by showing that ~~our~~ wild life constituted a great business fact, with millions invested in it and millions expended upon it each year. I must look up the figures for you. They are staggering. We had to go on the old line of presenting the financial side to secure support for the important side.

I almost overlooked the sanctuaries. Large ones in N.W.T.; scores of these in prairie provinces, quite a number on north shore of <sup>bay of</sup> St. Lawrence.

Re Migration Birds - You know of the drought problems and botulism; had passing disappearance of red grass; disappearance of water feeding areas in south (cultivation) ditto re breeding areas in Canada.

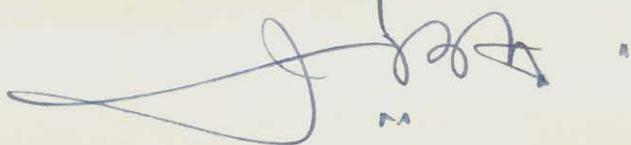
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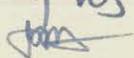
I wrote an article for the American Family Journal; will try to dig up a copy for you. It dealt with the attitude of pre-historic man towards W.F.; animal status in middle ages etc. and was designed to justify the idea of getting back to the old idea of man & W.F. being companions & friends etc. I think it wd be useful to you.

I am not going to read this over. I just sat down & wrote. Probably if I read it I wd tear it up.

Write me for specific things you may want. I started looking over some of my "book" notes on W.F. but they were so numerous that it wd be hopeless to start throwing them at you.

This is just a preliminary, dashed-off thing. If it is of any help I will be glad.

Sincerely yours  


Kind regards from both of us -  


**JB Harkin to MB Williams, Nov 1941**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

222 Clemow Ave

Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>/41.

My Dear M.B.

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Let me get my breath again and get back to the system of Parks as we visualized them - viz as institutions primarily for the conservation of mankind. Because we wanted to conserve man we found it imperative (or at least important to preserve wild life.

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Write me for specific things you may want. I started looking over some of my "book" notes on W.L. but they were so numerous that it wd be hopeless to start throwing them at you.

This is just a preliminary, dashed-off thing. If it is of any help I will be glad.

Sincerely Yours

JBH

Kind regards from both of us

3270 N. 37<sup>th</sup> Friday.

Dear Rufus.

Vancouver BC about #7

It is somewhere between 5 & 6 in the morning but Morpheus seems to be off the job so I've had a cup of bedside coffee - very weak - and have had a look at the rose garden - all wet with dew - & then thought, by a natural sequence, of you. For you would enjoy this garden. It's not only that there are so many roses, but that they are such beautiful varieties and such superb blooms. Mr. Simpson is a member of the Royal Rose Society of England and out of the 12 best roses, selected by them, he has 11 in the garden. The Oscar

Selection is a lovely pink, called by  
the unromantic name of Mrs. Sam  
McGredy. It has 50 petals + opens  
from a long deep bud to a full  
bloom that would just nicely fill  
a small bowl. In the reds they  
prefer "Etoile de Hollande" - Know it?  
Then there is "Lemon Pillar," a white  
climber with a tinge of greenish yellow  
and a faint lemonish suggestion  
in the perfume. It's a beauty. Some-  
thing like "Silver Moon," only more  
petalled and cup-like. Mr. Simpson  
has been showing us how to bud  
roses. He grows briars, or

Rugosas. Then he splits open a <sup>can</sup> stock  
& inserts a bud from a fine rose.  
ties it in & lo. The new rose grows  
out of the old. He fertilizes very  
richly early in the Spring & sprays  
as soon as the leaves appear, "early  
and often". And then he picks off  
about half the buds, very early,  
so that he will get large blooms.  
He says anyone can grow roses who  
can grow cabbages - no more  
trouble!! That's because he knows  
how. But he grew up in a garden  
of 100,000 bushes & as a boy  
used to sit up at night watching

Their prize blooms, for fear someone  
would steal them before Exhibition day.  
Sounds like race horses, doesn't it.

One - (Mrs H. + mine) 6 x 9 of  
Annuals to come in on apace. Del-  
phiniums almost out & pansies doing  
splendidly. <sup>double</sup> Clarkia, Nigella (love - in  
the mist) pimpernel, zinnias, asters  
& stocks, all doing well. Only the zinnias  
seem likely to disappoint. When  
everything is out it should be like a  
Dutch bouquet. One double pink  
and white cosmos (in another bed) should  
be nice for cutting & I've transplanted  
several hundreds of stocks - every  
shade. The green peas are almost

ready & the sweet peas are on the way up, with mums to come along at the tail of the procession. You can see we have lots to interest us and now that the young Hielchies have moved next door there is another garden to plan for. Kipped has gone in for vegetables. You should see him digging, stripped to a pair of short shorts. He looks very handsome.

All this about the gardens because they are the chief interest and will give you a sort of picture of our background. I wish I had a wee house of my own with a garden. Tho' I'd be starting about 20 yrs. too late - & you in it.

Do get back to you last letter. The  
Mail. Talk & visit sounded very inter-  
esting. Don't it queer how you are  
repeating the kind of life I lived.  
I used to be running down to Montreal  
(not to speak) but to work with  
the Rys. or the Associated Screen News.  
but I didn't attend so many "confer-  
ences." They've just had a good  
Regional Library one here. They brought  
Mr. Crouch out to speak to them.  
as the "head of the most progress-  
ive library in Canada." He spoke  
of the library as a cultural centre  
as it is in London. They have a  
terribly antiquated and inadequate

building here + are urging the construction of a new one. Did I tell you

about their "Friends of the Library"

Assoc<sup>n</sup>. \$100 fee. Idea is to build up

public interest + support behind the

Library. One Univ. Club subscribed

25<sup>00</sup> to it + Labour organ<sup>s</sup> + mens

clubs did likewise. Suppose they

spend the money in propaganda.

The plan now is for a new Civic Centre  
uniting Library, museum + Concert Hall.

as a war memorial.

I like the "patterus" (as the Eng. say)

of your furniture covering. I think it

shoned work out beautifully. Was a  
little in doubt about the navy blue  
at first, but think it's all right. You  
have to have something to give a  
bit of solidity - I suppose. That queer  
"pink". I like and can see it against  
the rug. No, you're going to like  
it, too, and it's fun to try it.  
Couldn't consider putting it into a  
house coat. It will fade a little  
& become a sort of neutral very  
soon, I think. Go ahead & do  
it. Am sure it will be interesting.  
Have been studying my new John  
Park. Just got it back from the

frames + like <sup>(3)</sup> it very much. He <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~  
an Englishman - something of an artist  
himself & he recognized John's quality  
at once & took an interest. Natural  
wood with gold rubbed in or brushed  
lightly on, just enough to show wood  
thru'. It suits the Spring Colours.  
John's Chord is purplish pink -  
(The Cherry tree in foreground). Clear  
Spring greens, (fields) with purple  
line of hills in background. Also  
have a new water color by Isabel  
Bayne. Just a big mountain but  
I like it as well or better than  
Fran's "Leighton". Saw Lauren Harris  
at The Spring Show at The Art Gallery

the other night. He has a lovely head  
of grey hair, is tall & slim & looks  
both distinguished & very friendly.  
He had a lovely "abstract" one in  
the show. Mountain forms - purples  
& white. Wonderful effect of light on  
the peaks. Then there were 6 or 7  
remarkable Army Carr's. She was  
berging on the abstract too, towards  
the end, especially interested in  
rhythms. Wish they had copies of them  
but these were loans. A very "per-  
sonal" interpretation - not at all  
imitative. Wish I knew Lauren  
Harris, he looks nice. Is a  
Theosophist, has been divorced, & now

married to a very pretty woman.

I'm talking of taking the trip to Alaska - think I'd like to see the coast all the way up - An Englishwoman, I've got to like who lives near, will go too.

Probably 1<sup>st</sup> week in July. What are

you planning? Only other item of news is my new Dip-top suit. 3-piece - black + white check. Hope it will be nice. Greenish blue felt hat (I hope). Nice for travel + trotting.

I've ordered "Sat Night" for two years for your birthday. They

don't accept 1 yr. subscrip<sup>n</sup> & thought  
might as well take it for 2. I  
dropped try Herald - Tribune book  
review - Got tired of it - You'll en-  
joy the "news". Judith has become  
a master of the ironical style. Whole  
paper very bright. This week our  
Wm. L. Mac King is devastating.  
The N. Yorker fallen off since Clifton  
Fadiman left.

I've been wondering whether to come  
home in the fall, settle up my London  
affairs + sell or otherwise dispose of  
the furniture. Ernie discovered a  
cockroach in their cellar + diagnosed

it as an exhaust in my stuff & so  
sent it to storage (!) Sure to keep it  
(not the cockroach but the furniture)  
& if Nan & Bill would like some  
it might keep them out. Then I could  
run down to Ottawa & see you &  
Mrs. Herbridge. I know just what you  
mean about her. She gets a bit lost  
intellectually. Wish she'd come & live  
out here. Wonder if Blanche will go  
to England. She always said she would.  
Think Lynn & Betty Lang might make  
a success of it. She'd be better than  
his mother for him -

Isn't this a long letter? Breakfast  
time and am I hungry? But I  
like to have a good talk with you.  
Last no. of Can. Art "very good, wasn't  
it." Haven't mentioned books. Best love  
Tante

P.S.

Seem to have missed this sheet.  
Think Jacola ~~will~~ <sup>may</sup> go up now.  
If it ever reaches what we paid for  
it, better sell. I think. Expect they've  
not done much on it. Mexico +  
Brazil have staged a splendid  
come-back. I'm clear with both  
of them but they're still climbing.  
No, you are wise not to touch  
stocks - I do much like horse racing  
Saw "For Whom the Bell Tolls" +  
Song to Remember (Life of Chopin) Just  
very dreary, too much fighting, but  
Paul Hume + Marie Oboron + the music  
good in second. In + Bergman lovely  
only flaw is her nose.

**MB Williams to her niece Ruth ("Rufus"), 1947**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

3270 W. 37th Friday  
Vancouver BC about 47  
Dearest Rufus,

It is somewhere between 5 & 6 in the morning but Morpheus seems to be off the job so I've had a cup of bedside coffee, very weak —and have had a look at the rose garden — all wet with dew - & then thought, by a natural sequence, of you. For you would enjoy this garden. It's not only that there are so many roses, but that they are such beautiful varieties and such superb blooms. M. [Sampson?] is a member of the Royal Rose Society of England and out of the 12 best roses, selected by them, he has 11 in the garden. The "Oscar"

[pagebreak]

selection is a lovely pink, called by the unromantic name of Mrs. Sam McGredy. It has 50 petals & opens from a long deep bud to a full bloom that would just nicely fill a small bowl. In the reds they prefer "Etoile de Hollande - know it? Then there is "Lemon pillar," a white climber with a tinge of greenish yellow and a faint lemonish suggestion in the perfume. It's a beauty. Something like "Silver Moon," only more petalled and cup-like. M. [Sampson] has been showing us how to bud roses. He grows briars, or

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Rugosas, then he splits open a cane stock & inserts a bud from a fine rose, ties it in & lo, the new rose grows out of the old. He fertilizes very richly early in the spring & sprays as soon as the leaves appear, "early and often." And then he picks off about half the buds, very early, so that he will get large blooms. He says anyone can grow roses who can grow cabbages - no more trouble!! That's because he knows how. But he grew up in a garden of 100,000 bushes & as a boy used to sit up at night watching.

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[pagebreak]

To get back to your last letter. The Mil. talk & visit sounded very interesting. Isn't it queer how you are repeating the kind of life I lived. I used to be running down to Montreal (not to speak) but to work with the Rys. or the Associated Screen News but I didn't attend so many "conferences." They've just had a good Regional Library one here. They brought Mr. Crouch out to speak to them as the "head of the most progressive library in Canada." He spoke of the library as a cultural centre as it is in London. They have a terribly antiquated and inadequate

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should work out beautifully. Was a little in doubt about the navy blue at first, but think its all right. You have to have something to give a bit of solidity I suppose. That queer "pink". I like and can see it against the rug. No. you're going to like it too, and its' fun to try it. Couldn't consider putting it into a house coat. It will fade a little & become a sort of neutral very soon. I think . Go ahead & do it. Am sure it will be interesting. Have been studying my new John Park. Just got it back from the

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I've been wondering whether to come home in the fall, settle up my London affairs & sell or otherwise dispose of the furniture. Ernie discovered a cockroach in their cellar & diagnosed

[pagebreak]

It as an [enhaut] in my stuff, so sent it to storage (!) Silly to keep it (not the cockroach but the furniture) & if Fran & Bill would like some it might help them out. Then I could run down to Ottawa & see you & Mrs. Herridge. I know just what you mean about her. She gets a bit lost intellectually. Wish she'd come & live out here. Wonder if Blanche will go to England. She always said she would. Think Lynn & Betty Lang might make a success of it. She'd be better than his mother for him.

Isn't this a long letter? Breakfast time and am I hungry? But I like to have a good talk with you. Last no. of Can. Art very good, wasn't it? Haven't mentioned books. Best love Tante

[pagebreak]

P.S. Seem to have missed this sheet. Think Jacola may go up now. If it ever reaches what we paid for it better sell. I think. Expect they've not done much on it. Nickel & Brazil have staged a splendid come-back. I'm clear with both of them but they're still climbing. No. You are wise not to touch stocks — too much like horse racing. Saw "For Whom the Bell Tolls" & Song to Remember (Life of Chopin) First very dreary, too much fighting, but Paul Muni & Merle Oberon & the music good in second. Isn't Bergman lovely only flaw is her nose.

Salem, Mass. May 10, '55

(On a visit here)

Dear Miss Williams,

Your letter gave me a nice surprise, after a prolonged silence. I often think of you, especially at the time when J. B. Harkin passed away. This brings back to my memory the times when I was associated with the Nat. Parks for the collecting of F.C. objects, and when you aided me in the pursuit of good writing. I remember the evening when, at the Authors' Assoc., a story of yours was read; it was full of tender affection -- was it ever published? This was one of the best stories I have ever heard. It paved the way for our later collaboration in "Esalce" as you fitly call her -- rather than Mountain Cloud -- as the tale later became. It has now long been out of print, although not a great popular success. The Carter Press, its publisher, later published Alaska Beckons (non-fiction), and will bring out, in a few months, Pathfinders in the Pacific.

The fine silver bracelet, made by Edusaw of the Haida, was a mark of my gratitude to you. Now you write that you are returning it to you, for safe keeping as it were. I am a bit surprised, for you must be personally attached to it, and it has been with you for many years. It makes us realize the passing of the years ... I accept it in the spirit that inspires you. It will go, I am sure, to one of my daughters, Hélène (the 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter), married to Marcel Rivest, chief ethnologist, at the Nat. Museum. I still keep my office here, and am more than ever productive. At present, I have seven books at the publisher or being completed. Hélène has three children and will have a fourth at the end of this month. We will go back to Ottawa for the event. Daktla, the elder daughter, married to the artist and craftsman Arthur Price, has four children. So I have many grand-children, who often come to our large home at Neacadum St.

Other news: We will be going to Europe on June 11, for three months, first to Oslo, where I'll represent the Nat. Museum at the International to the Nordic Council. We will stay three months in France and England. In Oct. we will drive

to Louisiana, when I have been invited to represent  
 Canada at the Bicultural of the Acadia Deportation. Now  
 I am completing a month's survey of eastern museums.  
 Strydom's here to lunch and we will pursue its progress  
 into Canada next week proceeding through West N.Y.,  
 Toronto, and coming back home on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

I hear from my office that a parcel has  
 arrived with your letter letter. I presume it is the  
 bracelet. I will acknowledge it, after I return.

Affectionately yours  
 Francis Barbear

My cordial regards  
 to Mrs. Herold

**Marius Barbeau to MB Williams, May 1955**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

Salem Mass. May 10, '55

(On a visit here)

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Your letter gave me a nice surprise after a prolonged silence. I often think of you, especially at the time when J.B. Harkin passed away. This brought back to my memory the times when I was associated with the Nat. Parks for the collection of F.L. objects, and when you aided me in the pursuit of good writing. I remember the eve'g when, at The Author's Assoc., a story of yours was read; it was full of tender affection ... was it ever published? This was one of the best stories I have ever heard. It paved the way for our later collaboration in "Egalce" as you fitly call her rather than Mountain Cloud — as the tale later became. It has now long been out of print, although not a great popular success. The Caxton Printers, its publishers, later published Alaska Beckons (non-fiction), and will bring out, in a few months, Pathfinder in the Parks.

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Affectionately your friend

Marius Barbeau

1425 A. Atlantic Ave.  
Daytona Beach. Fla.

Mar. 20. 60

Dear Mr. Lothian.

I was so glad to get your letter with all the recent news about the Parks, which are still close to my heart. The booklets came a few days ago and may I congratulate you upon them. I thought them very attractive and well written. Styles have changed

I haven't heard again from Prof. Winks, of Columbia University, who wants to write some kind of a book about our parks. He wrote me he would be in Ottawa in April and I have suggested he talk to you and Miss Barber, because you can tell him both about the present administration and the early days. He also wants "impressions" of J. B. A. and both of you can help him there.

I suppose it's practically impossible to get at the old files

since my time, I know, people don't want to read "pen pictures". If I were doing it to-day I should have to write quite differently, and I admire how well you have met the popular taste.

It sounds as if some of the people in charge still retain J. B.'s old ideas and ideals, and I was particularly pleased that they realize the value of some wilderness. If this Continent goes on filling up the way it is now doing <sup>in</sup> for another hundred years these wilderness areas will be useless possessions.

I have been trying to remember what they were called. There was a big one called "Publicity" on which we used to stick everything that related to public information.

I remember that Mr. Harlan went down to Washington at their request to advise them. It must have been around 1913 or 14 and there must have been letters but I haven't an idea where they would be - perhaps on Mr. Harlan's private files which were destroyed.

MB Williams, 1425 S. Atlantic Ave., Daytona Beach, Florida to WF Lothian, 20 March 1960

Dear Mr. Lothian:

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[new page]

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It sounds as if some of the people in charge are still retaining J.B.s old ideas and ideals, and I was particularly pleased that they realize the value of some wilderness. If this continent goes on filling up the way it is now doing in another hundred years these wilderness areas will be priceless possessions.

[new page]

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CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

# WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

1201 (4-00)

SYMBOLS

DL = Day Letter

NL = Night Letter

LT = International Letter Telegram

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is LOCAL TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is LOCAL TIME at point of destination.

.AA086 SYB193 MOB175

MO GA186 15=CNT FD OTTAWA ONT 25 1151AME=

1961 JAN 25 PM 12 37

W H COURTICE=

1025 SOUTH ATLANTIC AVE DAYTONA BEACH FLO=

SHOULD MISS WILLIAMS WHEREABOUTS BE KNOWN PLEASE LET HER  
KNOW OF MRS HERRIDGES DEATH YESTERDAY=

LYNN GREENE=...

**Telegram to MB Williams, Oct 1961**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

Western Union Telegram 1961

Jan 25 PM 12 37

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LYNN GREENE=...

Miss Mabel B. Williams,  
Apartment 609,  
100 Ridout Street South,  
London, Ontario.

OTTAWA 4, June 13, 1967.

Dear Miss Williams:

What a pleasant surprise to receive your letter of May 29, 1967! My first thought on going through the pages was that you have lost nothing of the vigour in your writing which I remembered from long ago. It is wonderful to have a memory such as yours and to be able to recall on the spur of the moment happenings of half a century ago.

Yes, I am trying to work up a history of the establishment and development of the National Parks. I was slated for retirement some time ago and my former position of Assistant Chief, National Park Service, was filled, but the Director, Mr. Coleman, asked me if I would stay on and help out during a staff crisis. Later I was assigned to the present job. Plans are that I will develop a history of each individual park and then compile a lengthy foreword. This will incorporate such items as how the Parks Branch came into being, how policy was developed, the institution of various features of our work such as promotion of tourist travel, construction of trunk highways, preservation of historic sites, conservation of nature, etc., etc. It looks like quite a job, but we already have on file a substantial nucleus in the form of brief draft histories of development and notes on most parks compiled by the various Park Superintendents.

I have already completed a chapter on Kootenay National Park and have done considerable work on Banff and Jasper Parks. Unfortunately, one of our key men in charge of lands and properties died suddenly in January and I was thrown into the breach to supervise the work until the position could be filled. This was done quite recently and I hope to get back to my labour of love soon.

Fortunately, some years ago I compiled bound histories of the illustrated reports of the Commissioner, Director, etc., and have these dating back to 1909. They have been a wonderful source of

information over the years. We also now have a well-stocked and documented library in our building (Centennial Tower) which houses the entire Department. This is a far cry from the 1930's when we were scattered all over town.

The notes which you have provided in your letter are very interesting and helpful. I have been digging into the annual reports as far back as 1883 and I have already consulted your informative little book "Guardians of the Wild".

The former National Parks Branch has been expanded considerably over the past few years. It is now composed of the Executive Division with three Assistant Directors; National Parks Service with <sup>operations and</sup> Planning Divisions; Engineering and Architectural Division; Canadian Historic Sites Division; Interpretation and Natural History Division; Information Division, Personnel Adviser, and Financial and Management Division. Moreover, we have regional offices at Calgary, Alberta; Cornwall, Ontario; and at Halifax, Nova Scotia, each under a Regional Director, with staffs of Park and Historic Sites Officers, Engineer(s), Clerical, etc. Most of the policy decisions are still made in Ottawa, and the Lands and Property records are also centred here. The Canadian Wildlife Service recently was given full Branch status and functions as a separate unit.

I was interested in your comments on the publicity activities of the old days. I am pretty well acquainted with these, and it came as a shock to one of my former Chiefs (Mr. W.W. Mair) when I told him that in 1930 when I joined the Parks Branch there were 24 individuals in the Publicity Division. As you probably know, this Division was decimated after you left the Department and has never regained its former status and prestige as much of its former work was absorbed by the National Film Board and the Canadian Government Travel Bureau. The enclosed chart may be of interest.

One has only to go through the old annual reports commencing in 1912 and read in the forewords Commissioner Harkin's ideas on what should be done for National Parks and the conservation of nature. He certainly was years ahead of his time. Strange to say, it is much easier to compile the history of the earlier days than that of more recent years. Our annual reports no longer contain detailed reports of the past years' activities and what is assembled must be gleaned from the files. Again we are up against difficulties as the Canadian Government instituted a file disposal system some years ago and a number of our files which would have proved useful in compiling historical data have been destroyed!

I am mailing you for perusal, a couple of copies of our staff magazine "Intercom" which contain short articles I contributed to help the editor out. This little publication is a staff magazine which normally is issued quarterly. Your letter has given me a real "lift". I do hope I can get down your way and have a chat with you before too long. Bert Spero lives in Thamesville and I saw him a few years ago

on my way to Point Pelee. I know you have been going to Florida in the winters for some time and in fact, I tried to get in touch with you on the occasion of my stay at Daytona Beach in November 1963. However, even with the help of Jim Abercrombie, who stays at 166 South Atlantic Avenue each winter, I was unable to contact you at that time. Mrs. Lothian and I have lined up a flight to England early in July with a tour of Central Europe to follow. We are sitting on pins and needles at present wondering if we will be able to go.

In the meantime, thank you very much for your most interesting and helpful letter. I shall certainly avail myself of your offer of help when the time comes.

Very sincerely yours,

W. Fergus Lothian,  
(Special Assistant).

LOTHIAN/ea

W. Fergus Lothian (Special Assistant), Ottawa, to Miss Mabel B. Williams, Apartment 609, 100 Ridout Street South, London, Ontario, 13 June 1967

Dear Miss Williams:

What a pleasant surprise to receive your letter of May 29, 1967! My first thought on going through the pages was that you have lost nothing of the vigour in your writing which I remembered from long ago. It is wonderful to have a memory such as yours and to be able to recall on the spur of the moment happenings of half a century ago.

Yes, I am trying to work up a history of the establishment and development of the National Parks. I am slated for retirement some time ago and my former position of Assistant Chief, National Park Service, was filled, but the Director, Mr. Coleman, asked me if I would stay on and help out during a staff crisis. Later I was assigned to the present job. Plans are that I will develop a history of each individual park and then compile a lengthy foreword. This will incorporate such items as how the Parks Branch came into being, how policy was developed, the institution of various features of our work such as promotion of tourist travel, construction of trunk highways, preservation of historic sites, conservation of nature, etc., etc. It looks like quite a job, but we already have on file a substantial nucleus in the form of brief draft histories of development and notes on most parks compiled by the various Park Superintendents.

I have already completed a chapter on Kootenay National Park and have done considerable work on Banff and Jasper Parks. Unfortunately, one of our key men in charge of lands and properties died suddenly in January and I was thrown into the breach to supervise the work until the position could be filled. This was done quite recently and I hope to get back to my labour of love soon.

Fortunately, some years ago I compiled bound histories of the illustrated reports of the Commissioner, Director, etc., and have these dating back to 1909. They have been a wonderful source of

[new page]

information over the years. We also now have a well-stocked and documented library in our building (Centennial Tower) which houses the entire Department. This is a far cry from the 1930's when we were scattered all over town.

The notes which you have provided in your letter are very instructive and helpful. I have been digging into the annual reports as far back as 1883 and I have already consulted your informative little book "Guardians of the Wild".

The former National Parks Branch has been expanded considerably over the past few years. It is now composed of the Executive Division with three Assistant Directors; National Parks Service with Operations and Planning Divisions; Engineering and Architectural Division; Canadian Historic Sites Division; Interpretation and Natural History Division; Information Division, Personnel Adviser, and Financial and Management Division. Moreover, we have regional offices at Calgary, Alberta; Cornwall, Ontario; and at Halifax, Nova Scotia, each under a Regional Director, with staff of Parks and Historic Sites Officers, Engineer(s), Clerical, etc. Most of the policy decisions are still made in Ottawa, and the Lands and Property records are still centred here. The Canadian Wildlife Service recently was given full Branch status and functions as a separate unit.

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Division. As you probably know, this Division was decimated after you left the Department and has never regained its former status and prestige as much of its former work was absorbed by the National Film Board and the Canadian Government Travel Bureau. The enclosed chart may be of interest.

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I am mailing you for perusal, a couple of copies of our staff magazine "Intercom" which contains little articles I contributed to help the editor out. This little publication is a staff magazine which normally is issued quarterly. Your letter has given me a real "lift". I do hope I can get down your way and have a chat with you before too long. Bert Spero lives in Thamesville and I saw him a few years ago

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In the meantime, thank you very much for your most interesting and helpful letter. I shall certainly avail myself of your offer of help when the time comes.

Very sincerely yours,

W. Fergus Lothian, (Special Assistant).

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Apt. 609, Ridout Towers  
100 Ridout St. S. London. June 15  
1967

Dear Mr. Lothian,

It was such a pleasure to hear from you and to know of the fine work you are doing. It is a big job you have undertaken, I know, but I can see from your letter and the article in your "Intercom" that you were the person to be chosen to do it. You will have all the information but will know how to make it interesting also. Too bad they burned those old files. They would have been a great help to you. There was one, I remember, on which we used to put everything that might be used in the Annual Reports, - some of it, of course, left out for lack of space, and some because Mr. Harker thought that some of his ideas might be considered a little "wild" by the powers - that - were. He used to say he had "a ten-cent store imagination" - and really he could think up a new idea every day.

I am so sorry I missed seeing you in Daytona. I am there every winter and

I should love to have a talk with you. You don't know what a pleasure it is to get into touch with Parks Affairs again. It is lovely to see that you have the same enthusiasm about them that made the years I spent in parks so happy and rewarding.

Don't hesitate to write me again if I can help in any way. and best wishes for your book. Will you send me one when it comes out? Hope you do get your English trip.

Very sincerely yours.

Hazel B. Williams

P.S. And thank you for passing on my letter to Mr. Coleman. I have just had such a good letter from him. I can see that Canada is lucky in having him in charge of National Parks. Have you seen this month's 'Monthly Letter' of the Royal Bank. I thought you might like to have it for your files if you hadn't. It goes to everyone of their thousands of shareholders.

MB Williams, Apt. 609 "Ridout Towers" 100 Ridout St. S London, Ontario, to Lothian, 15 June 1967

Dear Mr. Lothian:

It was such a pleasure to hear from you and to know of the fine work you are doing. It is a big job you have undertaken, I know, but I can see from your letter and the article in your "Intercom" that you were the person to be chosen to do it. You will have all the information but will know how to make it interesting also. Too bad they burned those old files. Hey would have been a great help to you. There was one, I remember, on which we used to put everything that might be used in the Annual Reports – some of it, of course, left out for lack of space, and some because Mr. Harkin thought that some of his ideas might be considered a little "wild" by the powers that were. He used to say he had a "ten-cent store imagination" and really he could think up a new idea every day.

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Don't hesitate to write me again if I can help in any way, and best wishes for your new book. Will you send me one when it comes out? Hope you do get your English trip.

Very sincerely yours,

Mabel B. Williams

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Apt. 609, 100 Ridout St. S.  
London, June 16, '68

Dear Mr. Lothian,

So many thanks for your kind letter. May I say how much I, too, enjoyed talking about the old years in the parks, and also what a pleasure it was to meet your charming wife. I quite fell in love with her.

I am sorry that your time in the active work is so short. There are a great many problems ahead and social changes are coming so fast that it will be hard to keep up with them. But I think your historical work will be very valuable - something that will

MB Williams, Apt. 609, 100 Ridout St. S. London, to Lothian, 16 June 1968

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2025 S. Atlantic Ave.

Daytona Beach, Fla. Dec. 11,  
1968

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Lottian,

So sorry Florida turned such a cold  
shoulder to you on your visit. She  
can be very unkindly at times. In  
fact we've had night temperatures near  
freezing the last three nights, though  
it is warming up today. We have  
have watched the weather reports since  
you left and it looks as if you may  
have run into even colder weather  
and some storm. We seldom have  
such low temperatures at this time  
and the Chamber of Commerce is  
trying to tell us this is very  
unusual - as it really is - the coldest  
for this date in 25 years! So you  
see it probably won't happen again  
for a long time.

We enjoyed seeing you both so  
much and were so sorry you had

had dinner before you came for  
we should have liked to take you  
to one of our favorite restaur-  
ants and had a longer visit  
with you. Perhaps you will  
come to Stratford next summer  
and if you do we hope you  
will come on to London. If  
we happen to be in Pt. Stanley  
at the cottage you can get  
us by telephone. We're only on  
a 4 month service there but you  
could get the number from informa-  
tion or if I knew when you were  
coming I could give you directions  
I enclose the photographs. I don't  
think I should have known Dr.  
Spero.

With best wishes from us both,  
Sincerely yours  
Mabel B. Williams

MB Williams, 2025 S. Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach, Fla, to Mr. & Mrs. Lothian, 11 December 1968

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Lothian:

So sorry Florida turned such a cold shoulder to you on your visit. She can be very unfriendly at times. In fact we've had night temperatures near freezing the last three nights, though it is warming up today. We have watched the weather reports and it looks as if you may have run into even colder weather and some storm. We seldom have such low temperatures at this time and the Chamber of Commerce is trying to tell us this is very unusual – as it really is the coldest for this date in 25 years! So you see it probably won't happen again for a long time.

We enjoyed seeing you both so much and were so sorry you had

[new page]

had dinner before you came for we should have liked to take you to one of our favorite restaurants and had a longer visit with you. Perhaps you will come to Stratford next summer and if you do we hope you will come on to London. If we happen to be in Pt. Stanley at the cottage you can get us by telephone. We're only on a 4-month service there but you could get the number from information or if I knew when you were coming I could give you directions. I enclose the photographs. I don't think I should have known Mr. Spero.

With best wishes from us both. Sincerely yours,

Mabel B. Williams

Received  
July 11/69

Apt. 609, 100 Redout St. S.  
London 16. June 24/69

Dear Mr. Lothian.

I have had a clipping by me re Mr. Waterton, after whom Waterton Lakes Park was named, and to-day I cannot find it. I'm beginning to believe in gremlins. Things disappear so inexplicably.

Well, as you probably know, he was a well-known English naturalist, who seems to have been a member of the Palliser expedition. What it set me wondering was: Have you ever seen a copy of the Palliser report? It never occurred to me to track it down, though I had his account of the Hector division, which really discovered the Kicking Horse by a kind of fluke because they were starving and turned back. But as Palliser was instructed to explore the whole East face of the Rockies to find a suitable military road across the mountains, the whole report would be very interesting. Palliser took the southern route & discovered Waterton Lake, etc. but what about the northernmost one. You may know, and have

done some research, but I never saw any account of it. I suppose it's quite possible the Archives has a copy of the report.

How is the book? Gone to press yet. What a valuable bit of history it will be. I'm so glad you undertook it.

We had a poor winter - weather-wise - in Florida, and what a Spring! I hope you and Mrs. Loshian are both well. Any chance of your coming up this way?

With kind regards to you both  
Sincerely yours,

Mabel B. Williams

after I had sealed this letter to Gremlins brought the clipping back. A nice man, wasn't he?

MB Williams, Apt. 609, 100 Ridout St. S, London, to WF Lothian, 24 June 1969

Dear Mr. Lothian:

I have had a clipping by me re M. [?] Waterton, after whom Waterton Lakes Park was named [?], and to-day I cannot find it. I'm beginning to believe in gremlins. Things disappear so inexplicably.

Well, as you probably know, he was a well-known English naturalist, who seems to have been a member of the Palliser expedition. What it set me wondering was: Have you ever seen a copy of the Palliser report? It never occurred to me to track it down, though I had his account of the Hector division, which really discovered the Kicking Horse by a kind of fluke because they were starving and turned back. But as Palliser was instructed to explore the whole East face of the Rockies to find a suitable military road across the mountains, the whole report would be very interesting. Palliser took the southern route & discovered Waterton Lake, etc. but what about the Northernmost one. You may know, and have

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With best regards to you both.

Sincerely yours,

Mabel B. Williams

After I had sealed this letter the Gremlins brought the clipping back. Nice [?] man, wasn't he?

1606 Dorion Avenue, Ottawa 8, Ont.

July 24, 1969.

Dear Miss Williams:

I am sending you under separate envelope a photo copy of the draft of the first chapter of my history. If you would be good enough to look this over and return with any observations, it would be appreciated.

It will be impossible, within the limits I have set out, to tell everything that has happened in the parks since 1885 and the present. However, after a rather detailed start, I plan to highlight the various developments as set out in the proposed chapter headings. The information I have set out herewith, has to my knowledge, never been published, and I thought it would be in the public interest to show just how hard it was to get the National Park movement really on its way.

In addition to the main dish, I am preparing historical sketches for use in planning division reports for each park. These later can be expanded into histories of each National park. Whether I'll live long enough to do them ( if I'M engaged), no one knows. I have been working on Jasper Park the past two weeks. Then I'll go back to Chapter Two, for which I have assembled considerable data.

This material is going forward to you at Government expense, but I have enclosed a stamped addressed envelope in which you can return the MSS with your comment,  
(over)

If you write a letter, please send it separately to avoid postal regulation infractions. (First class postage on printed material is now almost prohibitive.)

Hope you enjoy at least part of my "diggings". It even may be new to you.

With kindest regards,  
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W.F.Loethian

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WF Lothian, 1606 Dorion Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, to MB Williams, 24 July 1969

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Hope you enjoy at least part of my "diggings". It even may be new to you.

With kindest regards,

W.F. Lothian

# 609, 100 Redwat St. S. London.  
Aug. 7. /69

Dear Mr. Latham.

Your m.s. arrived almost a week after your letter, which shows how slowly second-class mail travels. I have found it most interesting. Couldn't put it down till I had read it through. You have unearthed such a lot of valuable information, all thoroughly documented, some of which was quite new to me. I only wish Mr. Harkiss could have lived to read it. He would have been delighted that it had been done. I always had to write my books in a hurry, and anyway what he wanted from me was to get people to have an emotional reaction something that would stir their desire to go to the Parks, or convince them of their value. It took a long while to get the National Park idea across. The <sup>central</sup> mountains were usually called "the Canadian Pacific Rockies". But now that that old battle is long since ~~over~~ won your work is especially useful, and it should stand for all time as a historical record to which the student or writer can refer. Even this first chapter must have meant a tremendous amount of work and research. Perhaps the later chapters will be easier, although, as I know, no writing is easy, especially when every fact has to be documented.

My congratulations + encouragement  
J. B. Williams.

I have made a few observations which you might consider.  
+ will possibly send later.

My regards to Mrs. Latham.

MB Williams, Apt. 609, 100 Ridout St. S, London, to WF Lothian, 7 August 1969

Dear Mr. Lothian:

Your m.s. arrived almost a week after your letter, which shows how slowly second-class mail travels. I have found it most interesting. Couldn't put it down till I had read it through. You have unearthed such a lot of valuable information. All thoroughly documented, some of which was quite new to me. I only wish Mr. Harkin could have lived to read it. He would have been delighted that it had been done. I always had to write my books in a hurry, and anyway what he wanted from me was to get people to have an emotional reaction, something that would stir their desire to go to the parks, or convince them of their value. It took a long while to get the National Park idea across. The central mountains were usually called "The Canadian Pacific Rockies." But now that that old battle is long since won your work is especially useful. And it should stand for all time as a historical record to which the student or writer can refer. Given this first chapter must have meant a tremendous amount of work and research, perhaps the later chapters will be easier. Although, as I know, no writing is easy, especially when every fact has to be documented.

My congratulations & encouragement.

Mabel B. Williams

I have made a few observations which you might consider & will possibly send later.

["My regards to Mrs. Lothian" vertically along margin]

Aug. 9

Dear Mr. Latham.

On re-reading your second letter I realize that most of the things I have mentioned are going into a separate report. They are, of course, already recorded and known. I can see how voluminous this one would be if you included everything - I didn't at first fully grasp your intentions -

You are right about the indifference of the Govt. to its parks until G.B.H. took over. I think 4 different departments dealt with phases of the work. + Forestry, which ostensibly was in charge - merely collected rents + issued leases.

We owe the park to the Hon. Frank Oliver an old westerner, who persuaded Sir Weyford to buy it.

Howard Douglas was really interested and did a lot, but it is said, he turned a blind eye to any game upachons by his friends.

Don't forget that G.B.H. inspired the invention of the first fire protection equipment. He called the whole staff, from the messenger up, and asked for ideas for a forest protection campaign.

Did you know that his very first action was getting rid of lumber contractors (who were illegally cutting green timber)? Howard Douglas seems to have known it.

highly intelligent, and could find their own food. I had one who had learned to eat anything - hard-boiled eggs, lettuce, salmon sandwiches, anything but bread + butter, with the butter side up.

Are you mentioning the Brewster dynasty? There was the father - the first outfitter, + three sons. Jim, Fred + Jack. - at least those were all I knew. Jim had the Banff business, Jack had the chalet at the Columbia Icefield, and before that outfitted + led the big tourist expeditions - the annual trip from Lake Louise to Jasper + Mt Robson - which took over 3 weeks - before the motor road was built. Fred had the Jasper outfitting.

In the early days they ran a trolley - ho from Banff to Lake Louise. There is a story that when Prince George (V) + Princess Mary visited Banff, they were driven in the trolley up Tunnel Mt. to see the view. Coming down they were driving very carefully when Mary asked if they couldn't go a little faster and they rolled into town at a great pace to delight.

I wonder if you have Ralph Edwards' book of 4 vols. pub<sup>d</sup> by H.R. Larson. I have one but can't find it at moment. It's very interesting +

I find it will send it on if you don't mind  
you have given a good deal of space to the rival  
claims for discovery of the Bauff Hot Springs. But  
it is interesting and has never been fully pub-  
lished before. I enjoyed it, as I did your  
account of the error "square miles" instead of  
"miles square." A bit of humor civil servants  
can especially appreciate.

I am returning the ms. under separate cover  
(Thoughtful of you to send the stamps) and  
these few suggestions by first-class mail. Again I  
want to say I think you have done a fine job  
so far + hope you can now get on with the  
rest.

Dr. B. W.

Typographical.

- p. 10 - Vermilion pass - - should as he was. | yes!
- p. 20. - 2<sup>nd</sup> line from bottom - "since" ? | n
- p. 25 - "sanitary." was this meant to be salutary ? | o in C
- p. 54 Why repeat details of leases, etc.

## Suggestions:

Could you make the divisions of the Rocky Mountains a little clearer? On p. 2 you say (par. beginning "less than") "the mountain region ... was relatively unknown. This would be true only of the central and southern regions - the Northern - say from House pass to the Yellowhead - was as you know - well-known and had been travelled for a hundred years and there had been a great deal written about it. Then on

p. 3 you refer to Sir Geo. Simpson's journey as our exploration of the "central Rockies", although his route was so far north, might <sup>this</sup> cause a little confusion? perhaps you think of the divisions differently.

P. 3. I haven't any reference books here but thought the Yellowhead Pass was known about 1800. It was called "Tete Jaune Pass" after Jasper House, who seems to have been in charge of the first (?) H.B. post on the Athabaska, about 1805. Simon Fraser following the conference of Mr. West partners at Ft. William in 1805 Simon Fraser + Thompson were sent to explore the mountain region + Fraser seems to have crossed (I can't check this) by the Yellowhead about 1806 or 1807. Later, of course, it was the travelled route to the Cariboo gold fields.

[One interesting party that crossed it was the expedition which was laying the telegraph cable around the world. They had got a few miles north of Hazelton, B.C. when the word came that the <sup>line</sup> route across the Atlantic had been successfully laid. The men immediately dropped everything + left. When I was at Hazelton there were still large piles of wire, etc. just as they were left.]

There are two periods you haven't mentioned which you might touch on - either in this chapter or later. The first is the Alpine Climbing Years. As soon as the Ry. was

9 August [1969]

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[new page]

[Material missing?] highly intelligent, and could find their own food. I had one who had learned to eat anything – hard-boiled eggs, lettuce, salmon sandwiches, anything but bread & butter, with the butter side up.

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If wonder if you have Ralph Edwards book of [ ] pub'd by H.R. Larson. I have one but can't find it at the moment. It's very interesting

[new page]

If I find it will send it on if you don't know if you have given a good deal of space to the rival claims for discovery of the Banff Hot Springs. But it is interesting and has never been fully published before. I enjoyed it, as I did your account of the error "square miles" instead of "miles square." A bit of humour civil servants can especially appreciate.

I am returning the ms under separate cover (Thoughtful of you to send the stamps) and these few suggestions by first-class mail. Again I want to say I think you have done a fine job so far & hope you can now get on with the rest.

M.B.W.

Typographical

p.10 – Vermilion pass – Should as be was. [Answer: “Yes!”]

p.20 – 2<sup>nd</sup> line from bottom – “since”? [Answer: ditto]

p.25 – “sanitary.” Was this meant to be salutary? [Answer: “O in C”]

p.54 Why repeat details of leases, etc.

[new page]

### Suggestions

Could you make the divisions of the Rocky Mountains a little clearer? On p.2 you say (par. beginning “less than”) “the mountain region ...was relatively unknown This would be true only of the central and southern regions – the Northern – say from Howse pass to the Yellowhead – was as you known well-known and had been travelled for a hundred years and there had been a great deal written about it. Then on p.3 you refer to Sir Geo. Simpson’s journey as an exploration of the “central Rockies,” although his route was so far north, might cause a little confusion? Perhaps you think of the divisions differently.

p.3 I haven’t any reference books here but thought the Yellowhead Pass was known about 1800. It was called “Tete Jaune Pass” after Jasper Hawse, who seems to have been in charge of the first (?) H.B. post on the Athabaska, about 1805. Following the conference of Nor.West partners at Ft. William in 1805 Simon Fraser & Thompson were sent to explore the mountain region & Fraser seems to have crossed (I can’t check this) by the Yellowhead about 1806 or 1807. Later, of course, it was the travelled route to the Cariboo gold fields.

[One interesting party that crossed it was the expedition which was laying the telegraph cable around the world. They had got a few miles north of Hazelton, BC when the word came that the line across the Atlantic had been successfully laid. The men immediately dropped everything & left. When I was at Hazelton there were still large piles of wire, etc. just as they were left.]

There are two periods you haven’t mentioned which you might touch on – either in this chapter or later. The first is the Alpine Climbing Years. As soon as the Ry was

[new page]

[page missing]

1606 Dorion Avenue, Ottawa 8, Ont.  
August 22, 1969

Dear Miss Williams:

I appreciated very much the interest you have shown in the manuscript I forwarded to you for review, and which has been duly received. I must apologize for typing errors. It was done by one of the junior typists, and as I am getting that service gratis, I couldn't complain. Unfortunately I had copies made before I caught out all the inconsistencies.

I intend to cover the Pablo buffalo herd purchase and the forest conservation program in later chapters. I have a copy of an article prepared by Mr. Harkin for the Commission of conservation, together with copies of photos, sketches, etc, which have been handed down from Captain Sparks. Harry Johnston, who as a member of the Railway Commission staff, helped design the fire-engine, still lives in Ottawa. His son Harry is a prominent member of the Historic sites and parks division.

For some time I have been trying to assemble a history of the Brewster family. A niece of Fred Brewster, who, incidentally died this summer, is in charge of a new public records building at Banff, the Archives of the Canadian Rockies. Funds for its construction were supplied by a wealthy resident of Banff, Mrs. Peter Whyte. She was an American, Catherine Robb.

Now with regard to your specific comment. The word "sanitation" in the Order in Council reserving the Banff Hot Springs is the actual wording, although the framers must have been thinking of health. The Oxford Dictionary explains that the word "sanitary" means "free from or designed to obviate influences deleterious to health", and I think the 185 officers of the Department had in mind the health advantages of the springs.

I agree that the hot springs controversy occupies quite a lot of space, but as you say, it has never been published, and we have had considerable correspondence with the descendants of William McCardell, who want their father recognized as the discoverer of the springs. I think I can trim the material on the lease hassle which led to the discharge of George Stewart as the first Park Superintendent.

In mentioning the early explorers, I tried to confine them to those who actually traversed lands now in the National Parks. Simon Fraser did not cross the Yellowhead Pass, as far as I can ascertain. We have a copy of his journals from 1804 to 1808, edited by Kaye Lamb, the former Dominion Archivist. The Encyclopedia Canadiana states that the first recorded crossing of Yellowhead Pass was in 1827. Robert Douglas in the book "A Guide to Jasper Park, gives it as 1826. We have on file a good paper on Jasper compiled by the late Judge Howay, who was a former member of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board.

Your suggestion about clarification of the term "central Rockies" is a good one, and I will try and clarify. The origin of the name Yellowhead seems a bit complicated. The same Encyclopedia Canadiana states that the name came from Tete-Jaune attributed to Francis Decoigne, who was in charge of Jasper House in 1814 when Franchere passed through on his way to Montreal from Astoria. Undoubtedly Jasper Haws or Hawes had charge of the post before that.

Your page of notes seems to end in mid-air with reference to the climbing area. era. Did you by mischance omit to include a second sheet. We have a complete set of the Alpine Club's Annual in the library, and I am familiar with the founding of the club.

As I have mentioned, I do appreciate your interest and suggestions and I think your memory is prodigious and your perspicuity undiminished. If you can stand it, I'll mail copies of further mss. when completed.

I am going out west on a reorientation tour on September 1, and I hope to get an appraisal of what has been done in the parks during the last ten years. It is 12 years since I made my latest official tour, but I did drive west with my family in 1964. I intend to take in Prince Albert Park, which I last saw in 1955.

On my return, I will have a better idea of the development that has taken place, particularly in respect of highways and campgrounds on which the Department has spent millions. For instance, the Banff Jasper Highway has a right of way 200 feet wide, is paved all the way with eight foot shoulders, and grades to Trans-Canada Highway standard, except up the "Big Hill" to Sunwapta Pass. Jim Wardle still lives in Calgary, and I am trying to get an interview with him.

I hope you have had a good summer. We have had a very hot one although I have space in an air-conditioned office. As you can see, this is my own typing, not very good, but better than my hand-writing. Again, thanks and my regards,

W. F. Lothian.

P.S. Harry Walker, a former Ottawa newspaperman and Civil Servant has produced an interesting history called "Carleton Saga". (\$12.00) It mentions your ancestors grant along the Rideau east of Bank Street, and states that your former home is still occupied (by Dr. Emmett O'Grady of St. Patrick's College at 96 Southern Drive. You knew, of course, that Rideau Gardens were subdivided about 15 years ago.

WF Lothian, 1606 Dorion Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, to MB Williams, 22 August 1969

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[new page]

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So sorry I couldn't go to hear Mr. Cherkov, as does a very good stand on the American

11  
apt 609, 100 Ridout St. S.  
London. Nov 16 (1969)

Dear Mr. Lotman,

Thanks for your very kind letter but alas! you praised me too soon. a few days after your Mrs. came down with a rather bad flu-pneumonia with heart complications and I'm just now getting on my feet (a little).

I had read the first half of your Mrs. before I was ill and found it very interesting. I think you have done a fine job that will be valuable for all time. You are a natural historian and you have done a job that no one will ever need to do again.

You said you wondered about some repetitions between the 1st part and the second. I queried that too, at first. but doesn't it depend upon whom you are writing for. You are not writing for the general public. Your book will be a book of reference - will it even be for sale?

or is it for the annals of the depot? It makes a difference. In the first

instance it has to pay for my  
and paper is expensive  
will yours be published by  
the ~~Queen's~~ printer

I wish I could go on reading the  
last half but this wretched pneu-  
monia has apparently affected  
my eyes and I find I can't  
read that faint typescript. I'm  
afraid it's permanent.

would it help the reader if  
you used a lot of side-heads  
or sub-heads? It's often done  
it does help a researcher.

What a clever son you have.  
You must be proud of him &  
have lots of ideas to exchange.  
Kindest regards to Mrs. Rothman  
& yourself. Yours sincerely  
Mabel B. Williams

by wonderful house keeper, whom  
I think you met, was ill all  
summer and died two weeks ago  
of cancer. It was a great  
shock. She was so loyal and  
capable and I thought would  
see me out.

If possible I hope to go  
to Fla. in mid - Dec.

MB Williams, Apt. 609, 100 Ridout St. S., London, to WF Lothian, 16 November 1969

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[Written vertically along edge of page:

“So sorry I couldn't go to hear Mr. Chretien. – He made a good impression, as does his stand on the Quetico”]

[new page]

Instance it has to pay and paper is expensive. Will yours be published by the Queens printer. I wish I could go on reading the last half but this wretched pneumonia has apparently affected my eyes and I can't read that faint typescript. I'm afraid it's permanent.

Would it help the reader if you used a lot side-heads or sub-heads? It's often done it does help a researcher.

What a clever son you have. You must be proud of him & have lots of ideas to exchange.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Lothian & yourself.

Yours sincerely,

Mabel B. Williams

[new page]

My wonderful housekeeper, whom I think you met, was ill all summer and died two weeks ago of cancer. It was a great shock. She was so loyal and capable and I thought would see me out.

If possible I hope to go to Fla. In mid-Dec.

---

100 Ridout St. E. Apt 609,  
London, Ont. June. 27/70

Dear Mr. Lothian.

I had such a kind letter the other day from Mr. Chretien in which he mentioned your name. It is possible that he passed my letter on to you. I had written about the papers relating to Canada's claim to the Northern Islands because I had always felt a little responsibility about them. Miss Barber had offered them to me but I wrote saying that I thought they should be placed somewhere in the public archives, but had never heard exactly what had been done with them. I knew that Mr. Harkin had believed there was something in Stefansson's belief that the Canadian claim to sovereignty had not been sufficiently established and that for three months he gave a lot of time to the matter. And before the first expedition sailed Capt. Bernier spent about a week in Mr. Harkin's office, going over the necessary supplies, etc. for the expedition.

How is your own work going? I hope you won't have to do such a lot of digging after you once get into more recent history. Mr. Chretien

kindly sent me the report on the Oranget  
Island affair, and I see Tom Harkin was  
also a little involved in that. He was a  
real Canadian, interested in everything that  
was for the good of Canada. You might do a  
biographical sketch of him sometime.  
Have you come across his ~~developments~~ <sup>experiments</sup> with  
the tar sands for the Jasper roads, and the  
utilization of buffalo wool + hides. He also did  
a lot of work in trying to find a cheap  
substance for highway surfaces, and he + Tom  
Williamson worked many nights trying to get  
a three-dimensional picture for movies - and  
ever so many more creative ideas, some of which,  
of course, came to nothing.

I'm holding my own pretty well, though  
both the eyes + the ears, ain't what they used  
to be. I do hope you + Tom Lathin are well -  
and busy. Shall be looking for your next  
chapter some day.  
With kindest regards to you both  
Sincerely  
Mabel B. Williams

MB Williams, 100 Ridout St. S. Apt. 609, London, Ont, to WF Lothian, 27 June 1970

Dear Mr. Lothian,

I had such a kind letter the other day from Mr. Chretien in which he mentioned your name. It is possible that he passed my letter on to you. I had written about the papers relating to Canada's claim to the Northern Islands because I had always felt a [full?] responsibility about them. Miss Barber had offered them to me but I wrote saying that I thought they should be placed somewhere in the Public Archives, but had never heard exactly what had been done with them. I knew that Mr. Harkin had believed there was something in Stefansson's belief that the Canadian claim to sovereignty had not been sufficiently established and that for three months he gave a lot of time to the matter. And before the first expedition sailed Capt. Bernier spent about a week in Mr. Harkin's office, going over the necessary supplies, etc. for the expedition.

How is your own work going? I hope you won't have to do such a lot of digging after you once get into more recent history. Mr. Chretien

[new page]

kindly sent me the report on the Wrangel Island affair and I see Mr. Harkin was also a little involved in that. He was a real Canadian interested in everything that was for the good of Canada. You might do a biographical sketch of him sometime. Have you come across his experiments with the tar sands for the Jasper roads, and the utilization of buffalo wool & hides. He also did a lot of work in trying to find a cheap substance for highway surfaces, and he & Mr. Williamson worked many nights trying to get a three-dimensional picture for movies – and ever so many more creative ideas, some of which, of course, came to nothing.

I'm holding my own pretty well, Though both the eyes & the ears, aint what they used to be.

I do hope you & Mrs. Lothian are well. – and busy. Shall be looking for your next chapter some day.

With kindest regards to you both,

Sincerely Mabel B. Williams

Pt Stanley Sept. 7

Dear Mr. Loshain.

It was a pleasure, as  
always, to get your long  
newsy letter with news about  
your writing and the parks  
situation. I had such a  
nice letter, too, from Mr. Christian,  
about the Northern Islands.  
The reason I wrote, I had  
always felt some anxiety as  
to what had become of them.  
Mr. Harkin considered them as  
"classified" and they were never  
kept among our own files. When  
he retired he took them to his  
own home and his Barbes  
found them there after his death.  
She suggested that I should  
keep them but I felt they  
should be placed somewhere

along other historical documents, as they might have something of value if the sovereignty was ever questioned. But I had never heard what had become of them and did not know if they might have some value just now, I ventured to write Mr. Christie.

I think part of Mr. Harkin's concern was that he felt Stephansson to be unreliable and he was in very bad odour with the government. I don't know just what the papers were but I do know that J. B. went time and time again to the Secretary of State, pressing action when they at last agreed to do so, Capt. Bernier came to our office, and Mr. Harkin

and he made out the plan  
and the list of supplies for  
the first expedition.

You see, it had nothing really  
to do with our own work,  
except that J. B. was very much  
interested in preserving the wild  
life as a food for the Eskimos.

He was always thinking of  
the whole of Canada. For  
example the Reindeer experiment,  
and the discovery of the great  
Tar Sands - now so important.  
Did you know he had a road  
in Jasper park paved with the  
stuff. Then he + F. H. H. W.  
spent many nights trying to  
find a cheap substitute  
for road making. He felt

must be <sup>some</sup> cheap chemical substance which could be combined with say, sand dust which would make a hard surface. They did get some promising results but about that time the other work grew too heavy.

I'm so sorry to hear about the northern buffalo herd. It promised so well. You spoke of the Wainwright park. It had, of course, grown too small, but they were keeping the herd down by selling it for meat. The meat is delicious, better flavour than beef - if young - but it was hard to popularise. I was told that the real reason for closing the park - that speculators thought there was oil there & I don't know. It was after I left.

One thing you may not have come across was Dr. Starbuck's interest in developing

Canadian handicrafts, souvenirs,  
etc. He had a survey made of  
all the provinces to see what mat-  
terial was available. They did find  
china clay but west, and a won-  
derful pink quartz deposit in New  
Brunswick. He also got the rail-  
ways interested in designs for  
their textiles and china using  
Indian motifs. Mr. Beddall de-  
signed some for china - not very  
good - & the men & women pris-  
oners in Kuper's pen made  
some fine hooked rugs, and a  
very beautiful pink quartz bowl.  
He had formed a Shong committee  
with members of the Group of Seven,  
Dr. Barbeau, Harold Smith, etc.  
but just then Mr. Bennett came  
in and our friends in the pen-  
itentiaries was removed, Gibson  
came to power and the whole  
thing fell through.

as you are writing about him  
the credit for starting  
the whole world in developing tourism  
travel as a source of income.  
and really, ~~settling~~ <sup>forming</sup> the philosophy  
of National Parks. The idea of  
"Wilderness Areas" was wholly his.

I have been spending the summer  
at Lake Erie but will be going up  
to town very soon. My future is  
a bit uncertain, my faithful  
housekeeper, who had been with  
the family for 30 years, has de-  
veloped cancer and the case is  
terminal. I'm not sure what  
my future will be, but hope a  
friend ~~will~~ <sup>may</sup> go with me to Florida.  
It has been a shock in every way  
but I am hoping there will be  
a happy solution.

My kindest regards to both  
Don. Robeau + yourself, and I shall  
look forward to your next  
instalment. M. B. W.

MB Williams, Port Stanley, to WF Lothian, 7 September [1970]

Dear Mr. Lothian,

It was a pleasure, as always, to get your long newsy letter with news about your writing and the parks situation. I had such a nice letter, too, from M. Chretien, about the Northern Islands.

The reason I wrote, I always felt some anxiety as to what had become of them. Mr. Harkin considered them as "classified" and they never were kept among our own files. When he retired he took them to his own home and Miss Barber found them after his death. She suggested that I should keep them but I felt they should be placed somewhere

[new page]

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[new page]

and he made out the plan and the list of supplies for the first expedition.

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[new page]

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[new page]

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[new page]

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My kindest regards to both [Mrs.?] Lothian & yourself, and I shall look forward to your next instalment.

M.B.W.

Mr. John I. Nicol  
Director

OTTAWA, Ontario K1A 0H4  
January 7, 1972

Former Branch Staff

A recent issue of the Department's house organ "Intercom" contained a story describing 1971 as the diamond jubilee of the National Parks Branch. The issue also contained a reproduction of a photograph taken in March, 1913, of the Branch staff, then about 18 months old.

I forwarded copies of the paper to three survivors of the early staff, Miss Mabel Williams, Mrs. W.H. Courtice, and J.E. Spero. Miss Williams of London, Ontario, who will be 94 in February, replied as follows:

"So glad to get your letter and know that you are still at your good work which will be a boon to posterity. Too bad I shall not be able to read it. I can now not even read headlines but write in the dark and hope you can read it a little. The Parks staff must be very large. How do you find its works? Mrs. Courtice and I must be the only members of the original staff left. I think Mr. Chrétien has done a fine job in setting aside so much, but people don't seem to realize yet how much we may need the solitude and wild country. They will soon! .....

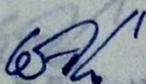
From Mr. Spero, now of Thamesville, Ontario, I heard as follows:

"... We enjoyed the paper you sent. I am in the old age group - 85 in another month." (January 19)

Mrs. Courtice, widow of an early member of the staff who also is portrayed in the 1913 photograph, lives in Ottawa. She will attain the age of 88 on October 26 next.

I am sure you will be interested to learn how durable the original staff of the National Parks Branch really was.

LOTHIAN/s1

  
W.F. Lothian,  
Branch Historian.

WF Lothian, Branch Historian, Ottawa, to John I Nicol, Director, 7 January 1972

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Branch Historian.



February 16, 1972.

Miss Mabel B. Williams,  
Ridout Towers - Apt. No. 609,  
100 Ridout Street, S.,  
London, Ontario.

Dear Miss Williams:

In December last, my Department's staff paper, "Intercom", contained a feature article calling attention to the fact that 1971 commemorated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the National and Historic Parks Branch. I was delighted to learn that two members of the original staff, assembled by Commissioner Harkin in the Birks Building, Ottawa, in September 1911 - yourself and Mrs. W.H. Courtice - were still active and able to recall this unique event.

I have since learned that on February 18, you will celebrate your 94th birthday. This in itself is an historic occasion. Consequently, I wish to convey to you personally, and also on behalf of my large and widely distributed National Parks staff, my sincerest congratulations and very best wishes. May I express the hope that you will enjoy many more birthdays and be able to look back with pride and satisfaction on the part which you played in helping to develop the National Parks idea in Canada.

Yours sincerely,

  
Jean Chrétien

**Jean Chrétien to MB Williams, Feb 1972**

**Transcription / Additional Information**

[Letterhead]

MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

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Yours sincerely,

Jean Chrétien

1606 Dorion Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario

November 26, 1972.

Miss Eleanor Shaw,  
100 Ridout Street, South,  
London, Ontario.

Dear Miss Shaw:

I had intended writing to you some time ago, but absences from the city and other poor excuses have caused a deferment. May I explain that I was one of Miss Mabel Williams associates in the National Parks Branch many years ago, and over the past five years we began corresponding after she found out that I was writing a history of the National Parks system of Canada.

I was very sorry to learn of Miss Williams death, although I realized that she was running out of time. However, she never lost her enthusiasm for the parks, nor her regard for our former Commissioner, the late J.B. Harkin. I guess what finally prompted me to write you was the fact that quite recently the Department asked me to prepare a short biographical sketch of Mr. Harkin. This I was able to do, largely on information that Miss Williams had furnished.

I have one item on which I would like information. Prior to Miss Williams last birthday, I suggested to the Director of National Parks, Mr. Nicol, that the Minister send her greetings on her birthday. I was delegated to prepare the letter. I know it was signed by Mr. Chretien, and I have always wondered if Miss Williams received the letter before she became too ill to understand its import.

I also would like to know if, among the items forming her estate, she left any early papers belonging to Mr. Harkin, or relating to the early days of the National Parks Branch. I know that her old friend and associate, Miss Dorothy Barber of Ottawa, had custody of some of Mr. Harkin's papers, which I believe eventually were received in the archives here in Ottawa. If there was anything else, I am sure the Archives would like them.

Miss Williams also had one or more photographs of Mr. Harkin. If any of these were surplus to the requirements of the legation it would be treasured in the National and Historic Parks Branch as it is now called.

With respect to the history on which I have been working for nearly four years, you may be interested to know that I have completed four chapters, and was able to mention Miss Williams name. As a senior citizen, I haven't got the stamina of my work output of a few years ago, but manage on an average five hours a day on a five day week.

I shall miss hearing regularly. She was very pleased to learn that some one was writing the Parks history, and I do hope I will be able to finish. The trouble is that history is in the making while I try to recapture the past. Ten new parks have been set aside since I commenced this job.

Well, Miss Shaw, I hope the foregoing will not offend or bore you. It is really meant as a tribute of my high regard for Miss Williams, and my wonder at the stamina she retained to reach the status of a nonagenarian. My last note from her was at Christmas when she apologized for her writing, which she could no longer follow by sight. She certainly was a wonder.

Yours very sincerely,

W. Fergus Lothian

[WF Lothian to Eleanor Shaw (a close friend of MB's in later life), 26 November 1972]

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Yours very sincerely,

W. Fergus Lothian

Apartment 803,  
100 Ridout St., South,  
London, Ontario,  
N6C 3X5 (1972)  
Nov. 20

Dear Mr. Lothian:

I was very pleased to hear from you, but I am afraid that I cannot be of much help, as the disposal of Miss Williams' effects was completely in the hands of her nieces. All that I have relating to the Parks are her book and her bulletins.

One thing I can tell you, though, is that she did indeed

early days was so very thrilling; I only wish that I had written down the stories that she told of her experiences. Her niece, Mrs. Wertheimer, did do an hour or so of tape recording, but I am not sure exactly on what subjects, as she took the cassettes back to Toronto with her and I did not hear them.

When your History is complete, I should so like to purchase a copy. It will be a very fine record to

receive Mrs. Christian's letter and that she was deeply pleased by it. It was, if I may make the comment, a most happy thought and you wrote a very warm and gracious and appreciative letter. You have no idea how much pleasure it gave her.

She was also much interested in your history of the National Parks, and I hope that the family may have photographs, etc., to send you. Her part in those

have. I know what you mean about "history in the making"; Canadians should all take great pride and satisfaction in the fact that these many new parks are being set aside.

I am sending your letter to one of Miss Williams' nieces, Mrs. W. G. Girling, R. R. 7, London, (just outside the city limits). She may write to you herself or she may send your letter

on to another niece, Mrs. Leonard Wertheimer, 27 Maclean Avenue, Toronto 13.

Miss Williams was, indeed, as you say, "a wonder." Although, during the last year or two of her life, she went slowly downhill, physically, ~~she~~ and although she became almost blind, she retained her brilliant mind and her radiant personality. She was

beloved by everyone; even  
strangers who had met  
her only once, wanted so  
much to see her again.  
She was unique.

If I can be of  
any further assistance,  
please let me know.

Very sincerely,  
Eleanor Shaw

[Eleanor Shaw, Apt. 803, 100 Ridout St. South, London, to Lothian, 20 November 1972 (date is wrong; this was written in reply to Lothian's letter of 26 November 1972)]

Dear Mr. Lothian:

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Eleanor Shaw

---

Apartment 803  
100 Ridout Street South  
London, Ont. N6C 3X5  
October 18, 1980

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 Crutshank. We have, in our Public Library's Canadiana collection, his writings on the War of 1812, and Miss Williams, although ~~to~~ twenty years younger than Mrs. Crutshank, was her most intimate friend, <sup>for years</sup> until she died.

In the beginning of your book, Sir George Simpson's mention of finding heather, made me think of Miss Williams' little booklet, "A Sprig of Mountain Heather", in which she goes into the subject extensively and delightfully.

I thought that illustrations and some snaps 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 shrewd 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 now theirs for all time. Her monographs have, I understand, never been superseded and 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. Harkin did a marvellous piece of work.

It is in no way your fault, Mr. Nathan, 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 her 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

Dear Mr. Lothian:

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[new page]

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Short Biographical Sketch of

Mabel Berta Williams

Mabel Berta Williams was born in Ottawa, Ontario on February 18, 1878. She was a descendant of Lewis Williams, who received the original crown grant of property along the Rideau River east of Bank Street, and known for many years as the 'Rideau Gardens'. It directly opposite the Billings Homestead, which lay on the south side of the River.

Mabel Williams was a graduate of Toronto University, and entered the Public Service of Canada on January 5, 1901. She was assigned to duties in the office of the Minister of the Interior (Hon. Clifford Sifton), where she remained until the summer of 1911 when she became a member of the original National Parks Branch of the Department. During the intervening period, she had been an associate of J.B.Harkin, Commissioner of Dominion Parks from 1911 to 1936. Mr. Harkin joined the Interior Department on December 2, 1901, as private secretary to the Minister.

During her 20 years as a member of the 'Parks' Branch, Miss Williams served as a publicity writer, and authored many interesting and entertaining publications describing Canada's National Parks, and also the production of numerous motion picture films, the negatives of which were filmed principally by W.J.Oliver. She also assisted in other facets of national park administration.

In April, 1931, Miss Williams voluntarily retired from the Parks Branch at a time that the Department was undergoing a period of severe retrenchment sponsored by the Prime Minister, R.B.Bennett. She lived for a period in England, where she wrote a popular book on the Canadian national park system 'Guardians of the Wild, published by Thos. Nelson and Sons. She also rewrote some of her early park booklets and had them published in Saskatoon, Sask., by H.R. Larson.

Mabel Williams spent her declining years in London, Ontario, residing at 100 Ridout Street, South. She indicated great interest in the compilation of a history of the national park system, which was undertaken in 1969 by a former associate, W.F.Loethian, and provided the latter with much valuable information about the early years of the National Parks Branch.

She is survived by two nieces, Mrs. Ruth Wertheimer of Toronto and Frances Girling of London, Ontario. Mrs. Wertheimer's address is 27 Maclean Avenue, Toronto, Ont.

W.F.Loethian, March 20, 1984

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W.F. Lothian, March 20, 1984

HOMELAND DEAR FOREVER

.....

O sunbright land, 'neath northern skies,  
Land where hardy men may dwell,  
How can thy sons who hold thee dear  
Onehalf thy beauty tell.  
So rich in pine and leafy wood,  
In mountain, lake, and river,  
By mighty oceans triply bound,  
A homeland wide forever.

Chorus: O Canada, our hope, our pride,  
O homeland dear forever,  
God grant us men both wise and true,  
To keep thee strong forever .

Where noble Wolfe and Montcalm fell,  
Equal in glory, death, and fame,  
Where two great peoples blend their strength  
Beneath one flag, one name.  
Where folk from many another shore  
Have <sup>Crossed</sup> ~~faced~~ wide sea and river  
To build a home where freedom lives

And make it theirs forever. Chorus: O Canada....

Dear land of peaceful aims and ways,  
Rich with many a glorious name,  
Land bright with snows, with golden fields,  
Or autumn woods aflame,  
Still may thy people firmly stand  
For truth and freedom ever,  
With hands out-stretched to all the world.

In brotherhood forever. Chorus: O Canada.....

## Homeland Dear Forever, date unknown

### Transcription / Additional Information

Homeland Dear Forever

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Land where hardy men may dwell,  
How can thy sons who hold thee dear  
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In brotherhood forever. Chorus: O Canada.....

An interminable Ode.

I remember, I remember the place where "Parks" was born  
The dirty wind where ~~xxxxxx~~ no sun came creeping in at morn  
Yet 9 never came a wink too soon, nor brought too long a day  
For working under J.B.H. was less like work than play.

There were Maxwell, Byshe and Johnson and good F.H.W.  
Wise A.K. and witty F.V. and quiet M.B. too.  
There were piles and piles of dusty files about leases, lots and land  
Way back when business was ~~s~~ polite and memos were writ by hand

Soon in slipped Howard Courtice with a manner quiet and wary  
Like the "Last of the Bison" seeking mist sanctuary  
Then Spero came and Dora B both young alert and bright  
(She knew who paid their bills in Banff and who went hunting at night)

And every day as we felt our way we saw how big was the job  
Something to make for Canada's sake, and we set to work by ~~gob~~  
Boor J.B. ruffled his thick brown hair (there was enough to ruffle ~~th~~  
then)  
And he groaned, "I took Parks for an easy life, must I be a slave ~~age~~

(A true, true work, though spoken in jest, for from that earliest day  
He never had a moments rest, and never a holiday)  
But he cried Gadzooks! to his waiting staff, "Ye must shoulder spade  
and axe

The House is full of Scotsmen, we must hit them hard with facts!  
Get facts be-dad (with none to be had for who knew of Park's existence?)  
But a newspaper life is as good as a wife to stiffen a man's persistence  
ce)

So he drove us forth, east, west, south, north, with noses close to  
the ground  
Hard on the trail of the Lonesome Facts and at last one fact was found  
But J.B. cried, "By the Buffalo's hide" one fact is enough for me  
'Tis a great deal more than I had of yore when I wrote politically.

And out of that small and modest fact, with the single yeast of his ~~no~~  
mind mid  
He fashioned a Tourist Gospel that struck those Scotsmen blind.  
Till even Mr. Meighen said, "That Harkin man is a honey" ~~This is far~~  
This is far less painful than taxes, let us give the lad some money!"

And once we had the stuff to spend there soon was the Heather Pamph  
(Poor Mr. Knechtel down on his knees gathering sprigs at Banff)  
And so it went from year to year like a snowball getting bigger  
And some of us lost our hair at last and some of us lost our figger  
Then others came to join us, Ethel Allen, merry and pretty,  
And ~~bro~~th eyed Edith who feared at first leaving Lands was a pity  
And Bertha B. with the keen, keen nose for the rare and costly book  
Getting it too if the Auditor G. at the price tag didn't look

So many years, such happy years, under a leader kind  
Broad visioned, wise and generous and tolerant of mind  
Who never sought for fame or pelf, advancing others not himself!

over



## **An Interminable Ode, date unknown**

### **Transcription / Additional Information**

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Who never sought for fame or pelf, advancing others not himself!

[pagebreak]

But history will record his share in building up a land more fair  
Praising his dream of man's release through contact with Nature's peace  
And men unborn will better be because his heart and mind could see  
That though one half of us be clod, through Beauty we rise to God.

(Read to J.B. at a party given by some of the old staff of Parks.)

**MB Williams oral interview, conducted by her niece Ruth and Ruth's husband Len Wertheimer, 1969-70**

**M.B. Williams Audio Interview Timeline**

**[Track One Timeline \(31:40\):](#)**

**00:06** - The background of national parks in Canada.

**02:16** - Frank Oliver proposed a government branch for national parks. A second branch was created for waterpower.

**02:34** - JB Harkin was given the opportunity to become head of the branch of his choice and selected the Dominion Parks Branch.

**02:42** - Harkin offered MB Williams a position with the Parks Branch.

**03:17** - Williams' work history and duties. Includes discussion of Clifford Sifton, JB Harkin, and Frank Oliver.

**07:28** - Harkin and the Doukhobors.

**08:41** - The Parks Branch's move into the Birks building in Ottawa at the end of August 1911.

**09:22** - The early days of the Branch, and MB's duties.

**09:37** - Information about the Dominion Parks Act.

**10:04** - Frank Oliver's interest in the buffalo.

**11:03** - Further information on the Dominion Parks Act.

**11:20** - Land ownership.

**12:44** - MB's discovery of 19 lumber companies that had been allowed to cut timber in the parks having violated of their leases.

**14:04** - Harkin looking in 1912 for a way to justify requesting a large appropriation for the Parks Branch from the House of Commons. He asked MB to find anything to "supply a monetary argument."

**15:25** - MB's finding a volume of the Scenic and Historic Preservation Society of America, which stated that "beautiful places" had the potential to attract tourists and therefore bring in money.

**16:04** - Williams took the information to Harkin, who liked the idea. They contacted various tourist destinations for data about the income from tourist traffic.

**17:26** - Harkin wrote about the benefits of tourist travel in the first annual report for the Dominion Parks Branch, which was sent to every Member of Parliament. The desired appropriation would later be approved in the House of Commons.

**18:23** - A copy of the Dominion Parks Branch's annual report's were also sent to every newspaper in Canada. Many newspapers published editorials about the benefits of tourist travel.

**19:18** - Conservation.

**27:00** - Harkin began to develop a system for the conservation of large areas.

**28:49** - How MB Williams began writing promotional material. Discussion of the creation of the 1914 travel brochure *Just a Sprig of Mountain Heather*. (Continued in Track Two)

## Track Two Timeline (27:36):

**00:01** - On writing *Just a Sprig of Mountain Heather*. (Continued from Track One)

**00:12** - Williams given more writing duties when Harkin discovered she had a talent for writing.

**00:29** - *Just a Sprig of Mountain Heather* widely distributed to anyone that the Canadian Pacific Railway or the Canadian government thought would be interested in it.

**00:46** - Harkin's idea of publicity was "to get as much as possible for nothing" and to appeal to people's emotions.

**01:57** - MB's increased writing duties through the 1910s.

**02:03** - MB's writing of the 1921 *Through the Heart of the Rockies and Selkirks*.

**02:39** - MB's role in writing long memoranda to the prime minister and the annual reports for the Dominion Parks Branch.

**03:27** - The United States followed Canada's example and created a single governing organization for their national parks. Dr. Klotz [?] from the Kruger National Park in South Africa visited the National Parks Branch offices.

**04:54** - *Through the Heart of the Rockies and Selkirks* did very well; the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) bought 2000 copies for their "deluxe" tourists. A discussion of CPR publicity follows.

**05:32** - The National Parks Branch got involved in the making of travel and wildlife films in the 1920s. MB's job was to create the intertitle scripts; she was involved in approximately 50 documentaries.

**08:18** - MB's role in writing the first Empire broadcast for King George V.

**08:35** - MB's changing job titles.

**09:54** - Discussion of 19<sup>th</sup> century American and European visitors to the Rockies.

**14:41** - Marius Barbeau and Harlan Smith.

**17:43** - Marius Barbeau.

**18:21** - While at Jasper National Park, Marius Barbeau invited MB to Hazelton, British Columbia, to attend the "last" potlatch.

**21:48** - On writing about the Banff-Windermere Highway and Waterton Lakes National Park.

**22:28** - The national parks and Harkin. Also, discussion of fire protection engines and fire prevention.

**25:15** - Harkin's personality.

**25:49** - MB and the "hardship" of staying in a cabin at Jasper National Park.

**26:04** - Tells of meeting Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, then visiting his cousin Maynard Rogers, the superintendent of Jasper National Park.

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## About the Author



Alan MacEachern

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Alan MacEachern teaches History at Western University in London, Ontario, Canada. The founding director of [NiCHE: Network in Canadian History & Environment](#), he has written extensively on Canadian national parks, including *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935–1970* (2001); “Canada’s Best Idea? The Canadian and American National Park Services in the 1910s” (2016); and, for *Arcadia*, “Banff is ...Hell? The Struggle of Being Canada’s First, Most Famous, and Most Visited National Park” (2016). He has also previously written on “M.B. Williams and the Early Years of Parks Canada” (2011). MacEachern was a Carson Fellow at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in 2016. He can be reached at [amaceach@uwo.ca](mailto:amaceach@uwo.ca).

MacEachern, Alan. “MB Williams: Living & Writing the Early Years of Parks Canada.” *Environment & Society Portal, Virtual Exhibitions* 2018, no. 2. Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. [doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305](https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/8305).

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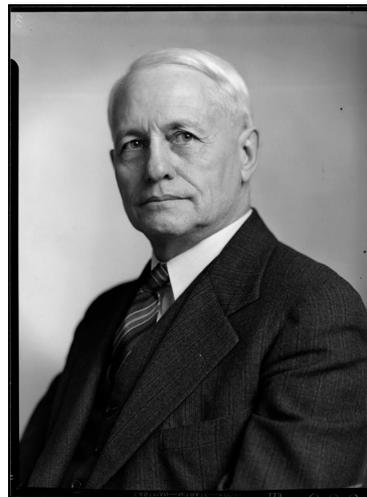
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From left to right: MB’s mother Sarah, sister Eva, and MB at Grand Bend, Lake Huron, Ontario. Photographer and date unknown.

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of MB Williams.

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Commissioner James Bernard Harkin, MB’s boss. Photograph by Yousuf Karsh, 1937.

Yousuf Karsh fonds / Library and Archives Canada, Accession 1987-054

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MB Williams (seated left-hand corner of the second row from the bottom—note small “x”) was a member of the first group of women to graduate from the University of Western Ontario, in 1900. This photo also includes those who graduated in 1901 and 1902, so may date from 1902.

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of M.B. Williams. Photographers: Shannon & Brockenshire, 201 Dundas St., London Ontario, “MB Williams and the first female graduates of the University of Western Ontario, ca. 1902.”

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An undated photograph of MB Williams

M.B. Williams fonds, Library and Archives Canada, R12219-0-3-E

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MB’s house on Queens Avenue, London, Ontario (post-1949)

Photographer and date unknown.

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A photograph from the Associated Screen News Ltd. of Montreal of MB Williams, ca. 1929. The company produced travel films in cooperation with the National Parks Branch.

M. B. Williams fonds, Library and Archives Canada, R12219-0-3-E.

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MB (seated, in white), J. B. Harkin (seated at right, under lamppost), and others gather at Jasper Lodge in August 1923.

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of MB Williams.

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A portrait of MB Williams's family, 1881. In the back row are father David Williams, brother Ernie ("Stalky"), and mother Sarah (Longley) Williams. In the front row are sister Eva ("Brownie") and MB ("Fuzzy").

Photograph by Frank Cooper, London Ontario, "Family, 1881." Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of M.B. Williams.

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"Rockies Scene, 1920." A photograph from one of MB's 1920s research trips in the Rocky Mountains.

Courtesy of Sylvia Watson.

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MB Williams picnicking during a research trip in the Rockies in the 1920s

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of MB Williams.

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MB Williams—sixth row from the bottom, second from the left—at the Polytechnic Party, Pilatus Kulm, Switzerland, on 7 September 1909

Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson, grandniece of MB Williams.

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MB Williams and her sister Eva (“Brownie”) from 1892

Photograph by Frank Cooper, London Ontario, “MB and Brownie, 1892.” Photograph courtesy of Sylvia Watson.

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“Cars,” adapted from the cover of *The Kicking Horse Trail* by Adam Crymble.

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Grey Owl (Archibald Belaney), photographed by Yousuf Karsh

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