

A

Canadian History in the Twentieth Century
Grade 10
Academic

Time Period 1945 - 1968
Name of my Character George Smith
Occupation Produces Documentaries for NFB
Other Information Emigrated to Canada from Britain

B

October 3, 1951

Although I recently emigrated from Britain, I have already found a job here in Canada. I now work at the National Film Board and I produce, write, and put together documentaries. It wasn't hard to land my job - there are vacancies in every field! To fit in with most other people I bought a new car, which will be perfect for when I am on the road filming my documentaries. I have already been assigned to make a documentary on the baby boom and the new planned subdivision in Don Mills, Ontario. I am hoping to capture the excitement families have when moving into a new home and how the subdivision is an example of what can be expected in the future. I have noticed that the television industry has really been taking off and growing by leaps and bounds. I think television will be a very promising medium for my documentaries. Talking about innovations, the people at the NFB have invented the "dual 35mm 3-D camera, inter-ocular offset printing and projection system" - what a long name! It's really interesting because it can be used to create 3-D films - something I've never seen before. Things seem to be going very well here in Canada. The days are going by quickly because there is so much work. Tomorrow I'll be leaving for Don Mills to start on my documentary. It'll be fun to explore other parts of the country and expand my horizons.

C

March 6, 1956

A lot has been happening in the past little while. The NFB headquarters has been moved from Ottawa to Montreal so I'm just getting used to my new apartment. Montreal is different from Ottawa in the sense that it is bigger and has a lot more French culture. When I got here I bought this really nice electric typewriter so I can now type my scripts and reports. Two weeks ago I got back from the Arctic where I was on location for a documentary. I flew in on an airplane, it was quite a unique experience. It was my first time, and it was exciting to see the ground pass below and see how small everything is. Looking at the newspaper this morning it seems that natural resources are a really hot item in Canada right now. There are major drilling projects in the west that are providing oil to fuel all those new cars. There are now eleven new uranium mines that just opened in Elliot Lake. Who knows, maybe my next documentary will be on mining! My busy life demands that I stop writing now and go get dinner out of the oven.

D

August 26, 1959

Canada never ceases to amaze me! I recently attended the grand opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Seven locks in total were built in order to allow ships to go from the ocean to the Great Lakes at ease. Queen Elizabeth II and President Eisenhower were at the opening ceremony, which was kind of special. Also, the Trans-Canada Pipeline, which span from the west to Ontario, was built. It came into some controversy because it was made by a mostly American company with Canadian taxpayers' money. Meanwhile, a team at the NFB invented the 16mm "Sprocketape magnetic sound dubber" which I will be using for my next documentary. I will be interviewing Prime Minister John Diefenbaker about his "Northern Vision". I think his plans to tap the North's rich natural resources will bring some prosperity and growth to that area. There is a lot of potential. I've been hard at work here in Montreal editing my last film and I'm hoping it will raise a lot of attention. I guess that's about all that's been happening here.

Bibliography

1. **Fitzhenry and Whiteside.** Canada, Continuity and Change. 2000
2. **Newman, Garfield.** Canada: A Nation Unfolding. 2000
3. NFB- The 1950s: Technical Innovations.
<http://www.nfb.ca/e/2/6/2/innov50.html>
4. **NFB history: 1950s.**
<http://www.nfb.ca/E/2/3/2.html>

Teacher's Notes

Knowledge/Understanding

- The student demonstrates considerable understanding of technological developments and economic conditions, as illustrated by the following:
 - Each of the three entries includes discussion of technological developments appropriate to the time period (e.g., television, “dual 35mm 3-D camera, inter-ocular offset printing and projection system”, electric typewriter, “Sprocketape magnetic sound dubber”).
 - Each of the three entries includes discussion of contemporary economic conditions (e.g., availability of jobs, growth of the television industry, availability of new cars and homes, exploitation of natural resources, the opening up of Canada’s North).

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student demonstrates considerable ability to select and analyse relevant information, relating pertinent details directly to the chosen character (e.g., the character works for the National Film Board and uses the latest technology to make documentaries, including one on the new suburb of Don Mills).
- The student evaluates with considerable accuracy and effectiveness how and why technological developments and changing economic conditions affect the chosen character (e.g., in the 1951 entry, the character opines “I think television will be a very promising medium for my documentaries.”; in a later entry, the character takes a plane to Canada’s North to film a documentary on the Arctic).

Communication

- The student demonstrates considerable competence in writing diary entries, as illustrated by the following:
 - The entries are effectively personalized, although a sense of immediacy is sometimes lacking.
 - Ideas are communicated clearly, sentence structure is skilfully varied, and the entries are interesting to read.
 - There are few grammatical and typographical errors.

Application

- The diary entries convey a considerable sense of historical authenticity, as illustrated by the following:
 - Each entry effectively integrates at least one additional development that directly relates to the time period (e.g., the baby boom, newly planned subdivisions, the NFB's move to Montreal, the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway).
 - The student creates a historically plausible character, successfully portraying an immigrant who is able to adapt to technological developments and capitalize on the economic boom of the 1950s.
 - Although the student uses appropriate technical terms from the period, he or she does not incorporate colloquial language characteristic of the 1950s.

Comments/Next Steps

- The student writes in a polished manner, expressing a strong personal voice.
- The student could incorporate greater personal detail to create a more well-rounded character.
- The student could further enhance the diary's authenticity by linking more of the selected facts to the chosen character.

A

1929- 1939

May Pearson

Homemaker, wife of a farmer,
mother of one

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan/
Toronto, Ontario

B

November 4th, 1929
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

A few days ago, my husband and I heard over the radio that the stock market crashed. John is not too worried because we did not invest anything in it. Not too many people in our town of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan did. We all figure that it will go back up in a little while. Although, we have already seen a slight decrease in the demand for our wheat, but since the summer was a little dry, our production was down. John is hoping for a better summer next year, because we just purchased a new threshing machine. We had to take out a loan on it, but we decided that it was worth it, since it will make John's work on the farm a great deal quicker, and much better than horses. We also just bought a new Model T Ford. It is a shiny black, and our daughter Lucy absolutely adores going for rides in it. We recently got a movie theater built downtown, and John and I really like going to the silent films. We are fond of Rudolph Valentino. He is such a splendid actor! I am really loving my life on the farm.

It is nice being a farmer's wife, and not have to worry about the unemployment problem that is currently going on in the big cities. I just hope that life on the farms will be as prosperous as it has been in the past. I sure hope that the stock market crash does not affect us.

May Pearson

C

July 3rd, 1935
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Life on the farm just does not seem to have a future anymore. The past winters have been severe, and the summers are still dry. The drought has been killing most of our crops, and what was not killed from it, the grasshoppers ate. They are attacking all of the farms in Saskatoon, and other parts of the prairies. The little wheat that we produce is not even in demand. In the past five years, wheat production has dropped drastically. People just cannot afford to purchase it. So many of our friends from town are unemployed, and we are broke. We are still making payments on our thresher and Model T Ford. My husband and I even had to ask for relief from the government. These are bad times.

The only joy we get right now is watching five year old Lucy, and listening to American broadcasts over the radio. John is a big fan of the broadcasted hockey games. I enjoy going through the Eaton's catalogue. I recently saw an ad for a vacuum! That would save me so much time cleaning. But we just cannot afford it. John even considered "riding the rails" and looking for employment elsewhere. But he decided against it. We have many men coming through the town in search of work, but there just is not any jobs. All I know is that leaving our farm seems inevitable. We need to go to a big city and look for employment. Although I am not sure that there is any.

May Pearson

D

September 10th, 1939
Toronto, Ontario

John, Lucy and I have been in Toronto for two years now. We decided we would have a better chance of getting out of debt if we could find jobs in a big city. After several months of looking, John found a job working in a factory. He says it is extremely dull work, but at least he has an income. Since Lucy is ten years old, she is in school during the day. I thought I might look for a job. Unfortunately, employers just are not willing to give the few jobs that are available to woman. But I still I managed to find work doing domestic tasks. It is a lot of cleaning and a very low wage, but I feel that the economy is turning around. More people have jobs, and we do not need relief from the government anymore. But I am still worried. Canada has declared war on Germany, and John wants to enlist. I suppose it is the patriotic thing to do, but I am still worried.

Yesterday, John, Lucy and I went and saw the Wizard of Oz at the theater. Technicolor is great, and sound makes it wonderful. We like them better than silent, black and white movies. We are looking forwards to Gone With the Wind, and going to play miniature golf. At only ten cents a person, it is great!

May Pearson

WORKS CITED

Mennill, Paul. The Depression Years: Canada in the 1930's. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1978.

Fielding, John. Canada: Our Century, Our Story. Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Publishers, 2001.

Newman, Garfield. Canada: A Nation Unfolding. Canada: McGraw Hill Ryerson, Limited, 1994.

Teacher's Notes**Knowledge/Understanding**

- The student demonstrates considerable understanding of technological developments and economic conditions, as illustrated by the following:
 - Each entry contains a discussion of at least one example of a technological development (e.g., Model T Ford, threshing machines, vacuums, "Technicolor" movies).
 - Each entry contains a discussion of at least one example of economic conditions in the selected time period (e.g., decreased production of wheat, crops destroyed by drought and grasshoppers, migration to the city to find factory work).

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student demonstrates considerable ability to select and analyse information appropriate to the chosen character, making effective connections between the chosen character and the researched facts (e.g., going to the movies and playing miniature golf for amusement, looking through the Eaton's catalogue, listening to hockey games on the radio).
- The student evaluates with considerable accuracy and effectiveness how and why technological developments and changing economic conditions affect the chosen character (e.g., in the first entry the character, a farm woman, doesn't have to worry about the unemployment rate in the cities; in the second entry she is concerned about losing the family farm; by the third entry she and her family have moved to a city to find work in a factory).

Communication

- The student demonstrates competence in writing diary entries, as illustrated by the following:
 - All entries provide personal information and convey a sense of immediacy.
 - The writing is clear, and the sentence structure is varied, but there are a few grammatical and syntactical errors (e.g., "but there just is not any jobs").

Application

- The student creates diary entries that convey a considerable sense of historical authenticity, as illustrated by the following:
 - Each entry contains an additional development appropriate to the time period (e.g., “a movie theater built downtown”, “American broadcasts over the radio”, miniature golf).
 - The main character is historically plausible (e.g., the entries effectively describe the changes that a farm woman would have experienced in the Prairies during the Depression years).
 - The language and details are appropriate to the time period (e.g., government relief, “riding the rails”, Rudolph Valentino, *The Wizard of Oz*).

Comments/Next Steps

- The student writes in a confident and engaging manner.
- The inclusion of a location for each entry helps to create an effective diary.
- The student should proofread his or her work more carefully.