

CONKIN-MORIEN DISTRICT HIGH  
Donkin, C.B., Nova Scotia

April 28, 1967

Mr. Thomas Radall  
Lunenburg, N. S.

Dear Sir:

In the spirit of Canada's Centennial year, the grade eleven class of this school has undertaken a special project on Canadian Literature.

The most important and difficult part of this project is getting opinions on Canadian Literature today and how Canadian authors and their works have been received in foreign lands.

Your opinion on these questions would be greatly appreciated and of educational value to the students of this high school.

Respectfully,

Joanne Shewchuck

May 6, 1967

Miss Joanne Shewchuck,  
Donkin-Morien District High,  
Donkin, Cape Breton, N.S.

Dear Miss Shewchuck:

In reply to your questions, I can only speak from my own experience, of course. Canadian literature is a big subject. There are some critics, including some professors of English in Canadian colleges, who say that Canada has no literature -- just a lot of third rate books. But in my observation none of these gentlemen could write an interesting postcard, let alone a book, and I suspect that most of them are frustrated would-be writers, as so many critics are, the world around.

I am a Canadian writer who has lived most of his life in Nova Scotia, writing about Nova Scotia and its people, past and present. My first short story was published in a Canadian magazine in 1928, when I was working in a Nova Scotian wood-pulp mill on the Mersey River. During the next ten years I contributed short stories to various leading magazines in Britain and the United States. These were written in my spare time. Times were hard in the 1930's, I had a wife and two small children, and I couldn't give up my steady job. However in 1938 I did. My friends all thought I was mad, because very few Canadian writers, living in Canada and writing entirely about Canada, had made a successful career of it. The Canadian market was too small to support them, and countries abroad, including Britain and the United States, had little interest in this country or its history and people.

I had a hard time for years, but I continued to live in Nova Scotia and to write about it. I have written straight history, historical short stories, historical novels, short stories of my own time, and short stories of the past.

Here is a list.

History .....	4	volumes
Historical novels .....	6	"
Historical short stories...	1	"
Contemporary novels .....	3	"
Contemporary short stories..	3	"

In addition to these of course I have written a good many articles about Nova Scotia, for magazines in Canada, the United States, and Britain.

My novels have been published in Canada, the United States, Britain, and in most of the countries of Europe. (Eleven foreign languages.) Some have been printed in Braille, also, in Britain and the United States.

Altogether, in all languages, nearly 2,300,000 copies of my books have been sold. In view of that I can say that my books have been well received at home and abroad. I am now quite prosperous. And I have received three of the annual Governor-General's Medals, and one from the Royal Society of Canada, for my contributions to Canadian literature. These people, as you see, believe that there is a Canadian literature!

Sincerely,

