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17 December 1992

Thomas H. Raddall
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Liverpool, Nova Scotia
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CANADA

Dear Mr. Raddall:

This inquiry concerns historical research, but first I must acknowledge that I have been among your army of admirers for half my life, since first encountering your writing in The Governor's Lady. A few years ago I used "At the Tide's Turn" and other stories for required reading in a course on Canadian History and Cultures. My students consistently remarked that your stories were their favorite assignment.

I hope I am not intruding on your privacy, but there is a question to which I urgently wish to know your response. Briefly put, were you influenced by the enclosed 1911 article in The Canadian Magazine when you wrote "A Harp in the Willows?"

I have been researching the loyalist settlement at Country Harbour for two decades, intermittently as I teach nine classes per year. There is precious little documentation for the settlement, and what there is raises more questions than it answers. Nevertheless, I am "coming along on it," as we say down here. A by-product is an article about one of the leaders of the settlement, a copy of which I enclose.

At the beginning of this century there was a live oral tradition at Country Harbour which had originated within the loyalist community. That oral tradition was a source of descriptive information for the 1911 article by Clare Giffin, who lived nearby at Isaac's Harbour and briefly taught school at Country Harbour. Miss Giffin brought considerable dramatic creativity to her depiction of the settlement and interwove it with what she heard



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from the grandchildren of the loyalist settlers. Part of my task is to separate Miss Giffin's creativity from the perceptions of the loyalist descendants with whom she talked.

Her article is the only attempt to treat the settlement which has been published, and therefore it carries considerable influence. Should you tell me that your perception of southern loyalist settlers in Nova Scotia was influenced by Miss Giffin's article, that would be a significant influence indeed.

On reading "A Harp in the Willows" I was struck by two similarities: 1) between the context of the story and the British Legion settlement, for which you provided a most valuable study in 1949, and 2) between the context of the story and Miss Giffin's Country Harbour. Of course, Country Harbour loyalists shared some characteristics with the men of the British Legion. Had you published "A Harp in the Willows" after your article on "Tarleton's Legion," I would have expected that your knowledge of the British Legion had been an inspiration for "A Harp in the Willows." The 1940 publication date for "A Harp in the Willows," however, raises this question: were you familiar with the circumstances and individuals in the British Legion at the time you wrote "A Harp in the Willows?"

You have tolerated my long letter thus far; thank you. You may wish to laugh now and toss it away. I acknowledge that I am asking you to think about things which you probably have not needed to think about for fifty years:

Were you influenced by Miss Giffin's article when you wrote "A Harp in the Willows?"

Were you influenced by your knowledge of the British Legion when you wrote "A Harp in the Willows?"



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Should you care to respond, I invite you to telephone me collect
at either number listed below.

Thank you very much for your patience and indulgence.

Most sincerely yours,

Carole Watterson Troxler

Carole Watterson Troxler
Professor of History

(919) 584-9282 before noon most days and after 5:00 p.m.
(919) 584-2386 my office, but I will be in class every
weekday afternoon in January after 4 January

enclosures