

Figure 1. Procession at Roddick Gates, ca. 1930.

THE GATES OF MCGILL: AN UNPUBLISHED NOVEL OF THE 1920'S BY "DINK" CARROLL

By Robert H. Michel

Austen (Dink) Carroll (McGill Law 1923) was a well-known Montreal sportswriter from the 1940s to the 1980s. Early in his career, he also wrote fiction. This article quotes and summarizes Carroll's unpublished novel about student life at McGill University in the 1920s, placing the story within its McGill context and the college novel genre. In his novel of a McGill student's rites of passage, Carroll combined experience with invention. Against a realistically drawn McGill and Montreal background, Peter, the novel's protagonist, goes through the archetypal experiences of many North American university students in the 1920s. He plays football, lives in a fraternity, cuts classes, discovers campus intellectuals and the world of ideas, and Montreal's taverns, brothels and bustling international port. Carroll left his partly autobiographical novel unfinished; this article suggests a nonfictional conclusion in the form of a postscript about Dink Carroll's career after graduation.

L'Université d'il y a soixante-quinze ans reprend vie dans un roman inachevé et non-publié du rédacteur sportif montréalais, Austen (Dink) Carroll. Le roman suit son héros, Peter Rice, durant sa première année d'études en arts à McGill tandis qu'il joue au football, devient membre d'une fraternité, lit les écrivains modernes, découvre Montréal et apprécie la liberté de la vie étudiante dans les années 1920. Cet article permet de découvrir ce roman non publié sous une forme abrégée et éditée dans laquelle on trouve la citation de passages mémorables, un résumé assez précis de la trame du roman, qui le situe dans son contexte historique mcgillien, et un post-scriptum de Carroll lui-même.

INTRODUCTION

MCGILL SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS ago comes back to life in an unpublished, unfinished novel by Montreal sports writer, Austen "Dink" Carroll. The novel follows its protagonist, Peter Rice, during his first year in Arts at McGill as he plays football, joins a fraternity, reads modern writers, explores Montreal, and enjoys the free life of students in the 1920s. The strength of this unknown work lies in its atmospheric descriptions of the McGill campus, Montreal, football practice, and a freshman's exposure to diverse influences. The purpose of this article is to let this unpublished novel speak for itself, in an edited, shortened form, by quoting some memo-

orable passages, closely summarizing its plot, placing it in its McGill historical context, and rounding out the unfinished story with a postscript on Carroll himself. Quotations have been chosen for their McGill or Montreal interest and importance to the plot; they generally follow the order in which they appear in the narrative so that Carroll's story unfolds at the same time. Since the novel lacks a title, one is proposed here: "The Gates of McGill," evoking McGill's trademark Roddick Gates (built in 1925, which Peter sees on arrival, Fig. 1) as well as the novel's perception of the University as a place apart – deliberately chosen, entered, and one day left. To bring

Carroll's McGill alive in images as well as words, places and people in the novel (real and imaginary) are illustrated by contemporary photographs and art. It seemed appropriate to complement a novel about a McGill student in the 1920s with student artwork of the same era in issues of *Old McGill*.

This unfinished novel consists of 114 type-written pages; it is held among Carroll's papers in the McGill University Archives. In 1920, after a year at the University of Toronto, Carroll came to McGill, where he played football brilliantly, joined a fraternity, Zeta Psi, and took his degree in Law in 1923, but did not practise. From the 1930s to the 1980s, he wrote about hockey, football, baseball, boxing, golf, salmon fishing, and sports characters, mainly for the *Montreal Gazette*, but also for the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Liberty*, and *Maclean's*. He had played the sports he wrote about; admired Hemingway, the prototype novelist-athlete-journalist; and was friends with writer Morley Callaghan. After graduating from McGill, Carroll may have hoped to be a novelist rather than a journalist. In one of his unpublished stories, Joe, a recent graduate of McGill, boards at his old fraternity one summer and tries to write short stories or a novel but has trouble getting started. In the 1930s, and probably the 1940s, Carroll wrote many short stories, mainly depicting Montreal or sports. One, "The Amateur," was published by *Esquire* in January 1936;

his other fiction, mainly unpublished, is in his archive.¹

In one of Carroll's stories (ca. 1930s), a character declared: "What I really should have done instead of becoming a copywriter was to have written a novel based on undergraduate life. This I should have done the first year I was out of college, like F. Scott Fitzgerald."² As it turned out, Carroll began just such a work – a McGill novel – before he found his destiny as a sports journalist with a novelist's eye. Carroll could draw on his own McGill past for Peter Rice's football and fraternity life. But like most writers, Carroll extended his protagonist's experiences beyond his own. Peter, unlike Carroll, an Arts student, plunges into all the archetypal university activities: bull-sessions, drinking bouts, and the discovery of new ideas and friends. Inspired by Montreal's steamy reputation, Peter and his friends go to a brothel, exposing the alluring degradation of this rite of passage in the days of the double standard. Carroll set his novel around 1927 or 1928, several years after his own student days. He probably wrote it in the 1930s. (The typescript's dating is discussed with other details in the Note at the end.)

Carroll's story, and this summary, may appeal mainly to McGill's community, but the novel also stakes a modest claim for McGill in the Fitzgeraldesque college novel genre, which offered an ideal

1 The novel is in the McGill University Archives, Austin "Dink" Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C2, file 1. There are also about 20 short stories. Some of Carroll's papers, focusing on correspondence with Morley Callaghan, were described in Robert Michel, "The Austin 'Dink' Carroll Papers in the University Archives," *Fontanus*, VI (1993): 149-56. In addition to Carroll's unpublished literary manuscripts, which include vignettes of the Montreal advertising business, the McGill Archives holds sporadic runs of Carroll's correspondence, usually about sports. The papers include some photographs, but mainly they consist of original textual records, ca. 1930-1990; about 1.5 metres in extent. The Trent University Archives holds correspondence from Carroll in the A.J.M. Smith Fonds (78-007, Correspondence "C" 1963-1977). A sample of Carroll's magazine articles includes: *Liberty*, 5 Mar. 1938; *The Saturday Evening Post*, 8 Jan. 1938 ("The Hard Harrys of Hockey"); and *Maclean's*, 1 July 1943 (on Montreal fighter Johnny Greco). The story about Joe is in the Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C.1, file 2, untitled.

2 Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C.2, file 4, untitled vignettes, possibly for a novel set in advertising. Carroll meant Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920), set autobiographically at Princeton. Carroll might also have been influenced by Fitzgerald's later writing on college life in the Basil and Josephine stories published in the *Saturday Evening Post* around 1930-1931, which enshrined scenes of football and courting at Princeton and Yale, republished in Fitzgerald, *The Basil and Josephine Stories*, ed. J. Bryer and J. Kuehl, 1973. In Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), the character Tom Buchanan had been "one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven – a national figure in a way, one of those men who reach such an acute limited excellence at twenty-one that everything afterwards savours of the anticlimax" (Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, 1988), 6. Football as life's high point is also enshrined in Irwin Shaw's classic "The Eighty-Yard Run," (*Esquire*, January 1941); its protagonist recalls a football practice in the 1920s as the high point of his life, which has gone down hill ever since.

forum to discuss ideas, sports, ambition, social mobility, and romantic trials. "College" as used here comprises the American sense of post-secondary education – what Canadians call "university." College novels show how their authors experienced or imagined student life. Not all such authors actually attended college. Those who, like Carroll, had gone to the institutions they portrayed brought authenticity to their stories. From 1900 to 1940 (the period influencing Carroll), many writers fed the public's avid interest in college life, as philanthropy, state funding, prosperity, and an increasing demand for technological training multiplied colleges and students in the United States and Canada. Among others, Thomas Wolfe, Willa Cather, Carl van Doren, George Santayana, Dorothy Canfield, Irving Stone, and S.V. Benet wrote college novels. Compiling a bibliography of American college novels through 1979, John Kramer defined college novels as those in which colleges and universities were a crucial part of the setting and included students or staff as main characters.³ Hundreds of novels have been set at Harvard, Yale, Princeton and other actual or fictional American colleges. Likewise, British writers have made an industry out of the Oxbridge genre since the days of Tom Brown, Verdant Green, and Julian Home, 140 years ago. For their part, as American authors do with

Harvard, Canadian writers attach the recognisable McGill label to any off-the-rack character who can read and write, litigate or heal. But while McGill probably appears in fiction more often than any other Canadian university, it rarely does so in much detail. In contrast, Carroll's work fulfils Kramer's definition of a college novel; McGill provides the setting and main characters. Moreover, Peter Rice's odyssey offers a realist counterpart to two satires of McGill by McGill professors: Stephen Leacock's famous *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* (1914) and Regis Messac's unknown *Smith Conundrum* (1942). Messac's novel, like Carroll's, is set at late-1920s McGill, but from the point of view of a professor vainly trying to teach dim, frivolous students. Coincidentally, the fullest nonfictional memoir of McGill student life – *Campus Shadows* (1946) by Harold Trott (M.D. McGill, 1924) – also is set around the same time, 1920.⁴

Carroll wrote Peter Rice's story in the third person past tense, revealing Peter's thoughts, but no one else's. For emphasis, quotations of Carroll's text are given in italics, (followed by their source pages within parentheses). For clear differentiation between Carroll's text (phrased in the past tense) and the rest of the article, editorial summary of the plot is phrased in the present tense.

3 The genre of novels set at universities and colleges is examined by John O. Lyons, *The College Novel in America* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962); Ben Siegel, ed., *The American Writer and the University* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989); Mortimer R. Proctor, *The English University Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957). John E. Kramer, Jr., *The American College Novel: an Annotated Bibliography*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1981), is a valuable reference work covering novels published up to 1979. Kramer excluded works with sexual themes as their main rationale – the college novel subculture of luridly-covered paperbacks popular from the 1940s to the 1970s about stuffy profs learning from sexy students, which confirmed the worst fears of those who did not attend university. Accordingly, he left out the best seller, *Harrad Experiment*, by Robert Rimmer, 1966 – about free love at an imaginary offshoot of Harvard.

4 Leacock and Messac are discussed in Robert Michel, "Floreat Plutoria: Satirical Fiction about McGill," *Fontanus*, IX (1996): 29-45, 81-86; Harold W. Trott, *Campus Shadows* (Hemlock, New York: Crosset and Williams, 1946). Shorter recollections by 1920s students are included in E. A. Collard, ed., *The McGill You Knew* (Toronto: Longman, Canada, 1975), including "The immortal 'Shag'", 89-94. For historical background see Stanley B. Frost, *McGill University, for the Advancement of Learning*, 2 vols. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980-1984); Margaret Gillett, *We Walked Very Warily* (Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981); Ian Pilarczyk, *A Noble Roster: 150 Years of Law at McGill* (Montreal: McGill University Faculty of Law, 1999). A notable socialist attack on every aspect of American college culture, ca. 1920 – sports, capitalist control, lack of academic freedom, even pseudo-medieval college architecture, is Upton Sinclair's *The Goose-step*, rev. ed., (Pasadena: California, 1923).

FALL: FOOTBALL AND FRATERNITY

The story starts with Peter, still a Toronto-area high school student, resolving to attend McGill after he watches McGill's football team beat Toronto.⁵ After the game, he meets the McGill coach, "Frank Connelly," modelled on McGill's real coach, the legendary Frank "Shag" Shaughnessy. Both wear soft hats and long overcoats, are big and tanned, have huge hands, huge voices, invent new plays and coach unbeatable teams. Three years later, Peter comes to McGill. By now he is attracted not just by football, but by Montreal; he rejects humdrum Toronto:

In his schoolboy world of quickly shifting values, the emphasis was not now entirely on football. He had been too long already in Toronto. The place was familiar and unexciting. Even with the new liberty he would have as an undergraduate, the city held little appeal for him. Whole sections of it were beautiful, but its life was uninteresting. After eleven o'clock at night, its streets were as deserted as the main street of a boom town when the gold fever has passed. 'A big bush town' someone had called it, describing its sprawling regularity. It was a city of homes and quiet friendships, a city for settled, mature people, not for the 20th Century young who can exist on excitement alone. Wasn't Montreal the most romantic, as well as the largest city in the Dominion? Weren't its inhabitants an entirely different variety of the genus homo? Wasn't it an ocean port, with a floating, cosmopolitan population? (prologue, pp. 3-4)

Peter arrives by berth car, dreaming of football. Since most Montrealers were French, he decides he will learn French. He looks out as his train approaches Windsor Station:

He saw the smoke of factories against the leaden sky. Then the horizon grew abruptly attenuated, and the backs of houses appeared; they were passing through the cross-section of slum district that greets travellers entering any large city. Curious speculations about the next four years stirred in his mind. He guessed he expected a great deal from them. The tendency of older men to speak with scarcely concealed sentimentality about college had not escaped him. There must be a reason for it. (p.2)

Peter takes a taxi to McGill, his new home, impeded by nearly as much traffic as we have today.

He had his first eager glimpse of the city. He was sensitive to colour and, in the slanting rain, the city's tone appeared to be grey. There were varying shades, but that was the basic colour. They circled around a square [Dominion], bordered by huge sandstone edifices: cathedrals [St. James the Great] and hotels [the Windsor] by the look of them. On all sides of the square were the picturesque hansom cabs of another era, now disappeared from the streets of most cities. The patient horses looked shrunken in the rain. They were in the middle of heavy traffic, and at a corner where the tram lines intersected, they halted momentarily. Straight ahead, back of the city, stood the mountain. It dominated the whole scene... The life of the city seemed to struggle up towards the huge hill. They moved again, past a smart hotel [The Mount Royal, opened in 1922], and up to a wide street [Sherbrooke], where the driver made a right turn. All the houses were built of the same coloured stone, very close together, giving the effect of terraces that extended for solid blocks. He had never seen anything like it except in pictures of some parts of New York and certain European cities. (p.3)

⁵ Peter Rice's attraction to McGill for its football is paralleled in real life by the remark of Norman Levine (who like Carroll studied at McGill and set several stories at McGill) that seeing the McGill Redmen play football helped him choose McGill: "Why I am an expatriate," *Canadian Literature* 5 (Summer 1960): 52. An early, gory encounter between McGill and Toronto appears in Ralph Connor's *The Prospector* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1904). However, this was a case of the McGill name being useful for novelists. In his autobiography, Connor declared the bloody match was based on one his Toronto rugby football team had played in the 1880s, not against McGill, but "with a band of savage Irishmen from Ottawa College who played to win regardless of rules and regulations and reckless of life and limb, their own or their enemy's." See Charles W. Gordon, *Postscript to Adventure: the Autobiography of Ralph Connor*, New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1938), 43. Thus reality traduces art.



Figure 2. Field House and Molson Stadium, ca. 1921.

Peter's taxi drops him at the Student Union (now the McCord Museum of Canadian History). Across the road was the University with its old greystone buildings and huge elms: the campus in September.

At first, he was conscious only of its beautiful site—nesting at the base of the mountain. Then he noticed the lush green turf of the campus, the red clay tennis courts and the towering elms [planted by Principal Dawson sixty years before]. Elaborate semi-circular gates of stone, with a small clock tower at one end stood at the entrance to the grounds, and the spreading branches of the elms on either side of the road leading up from the gates formed a green canopy overhead. The dignity of age, the solidity of stone and the perpetual youth of green grass and green trees were elements that somehow harmonized in the picture. (p.3)

The Roddick Gates, which Peter has just seen, were a crescent of modernized Doric columns built in 1925 in memory of Medical Professor Sir Thomas Roddick. The Gates immediately became the campus symbol.

As the main entry to the campus, they still notify those walking or driving through them that they are entering a separate kingdom of knowledge.

Peter goes into the Student Union and immediately sees a McGill notable: a stocky, bald-headed man with a livid scar across one cheek. This is Major Coles [in real life, Major Stuart Forbes, manager of athletics, former star of football and other sports at McGill, 1907-1911, war hero and exemplar of sports as the training ground for life and the battlefield].⁶ Next, Peter sees Coach Connelly at breakfast reading a paper. Connelly tells him to get a tray of breakfast and join him. How much does he weigh? One hundred and fifty pounds. What position did he play? Backfield. Connelly advises Peter to get a room in one of the rooming houses on University Street and not to tell the landlady he will not stay long. He assumes Peter will join a fraternity soon. (As yet McGill had no men's residence, although its Royal Victoria College provided sumptuous lodgings for women students.) Peter finds a house with a "Chambre à louer" sign and takes a room for five

6 See E.M. Orlick, "The Major" – Salute to Stuart", *The McGill News* (Spring 1949): 14-16, 50, 52, 54, 56-57.

dollars a week. Later he climbs the hill for his first football practice. The field is above the campus, on the mountain's shoulder:

He thought the Molson Stadium was the most beautiful thing of its kind he had ever seen (Fig. 2). It seemed to be carved right out of the side of the mountain, the concrete stands rising sheer against it at the same violent angle. Back of the field house... were the massive buildings of Royal Victoria Hospital (Fig. 3). Many an injured hero was wheeled to the window of his sickroom of a Saturday afternoon, from which vantage point he watched sadly and impotently the tide of battle as it ebbed and flowed. Through the wooden fabric of the bleachers on the open side of the field, he could see the city below – flat rooftops, avenues of trees, the bare network of electric signs, curved church domes and jutting spires, and the isolated super-structures of half a dozen skyscrapers. But there was something in the crisp, clear altitude of the field, in its glorious setting, that made him think vaguely of the Greek stadia of the old Olympiads.... This was the proper setting for football heroics. (pp.6-7)

The spectators' stands were on the north side of the playing field, looking south across McGill and the city to the St. Lawrence River, a view later largely blocked by a south stand and high rise buildings. Molson Stadium had opened in 1919, a memorial to McGill graduate Percival Molson (B.A. 1901), who had excelled at sports, won the Military Cross, fell in battle in 1917, and like Major Forbes symbolized the blood ties between prowess and courage in sports and war – ties re-enforced again in 1939, when the long-awaited gymnasium, built to serve as an armoury as well, was dedicated to the memory of McGill's war dead and McGill Principal Sir Arthur Currie, Canadian Commander in the First World War. It was first used as a drill hall, as the Second War began; a war memorial room was added after 1945. To return to the gym-less 1920s: Peter practices with the team, under Coach Connelly's gentle encouragement:

'Football's a driving game and you gotta drive them,' declares Connelly. Practices would be tough, Peter realizes. The routine included a turn at the bucking machines, heavy box-like structures loaded down with blocks of cement and mounted on coasters. The linemen pushed these up and down the field in short, hard charges. Then came the bucking straps, held on each side by a player, with a padded noose in the centre just large enough to allow a plunging back to thrust his head through. The sandbags followed. A dozen of these bags stood in a line about five yards apart and the player threw himself across the first bag, scrambled to his feet, picked up speed and hurled himself at the next bag. Then, dizzy and reeling, he had the privilege of setting them up for the next man. The tackling dummy was another delight. Standing next to the dummy, Connelly roared: 'Hit it! don't pet it! Stay on your feet and tear into it! Hurt it! Knock it cock-eyed!' Assisted by former players, he supervises every exercise: 'Good God, you couldn't break into a conservatory with that sort of a charge,' he chided a sweating aspirant at the bucking machine. 'Get some leg drive! Push! Now – go!' Practice finishes with some start-and-stop sprinting. Connelly encourages an exhausted, slow-responding player: 'Careful there, Buster. You'll step on a shoelace and break your neck!.' (p.8)

Connelly's famous original, "Shag" Shaughnessy, had captained the Notre Dame football team in 1904 and was a non-practicing law graduate like Carroll. McGill hired him in 1912 to give professional coaching. He was Canadian football's first American import. The first Canadian university to use professional coaching, McGill, like other universities, used football to win prestige and alumni support. Shaughnessy always argued that team sports inspired the entire University; he introduced the training table, where athletes ate together and built team spirit. Shaughnessy not only coached but also publicized and interpreted football to the McGill audience by writing in the student annuals and the *McGill News*. To students and the public, he was better known than any other McGill staff member, except Political

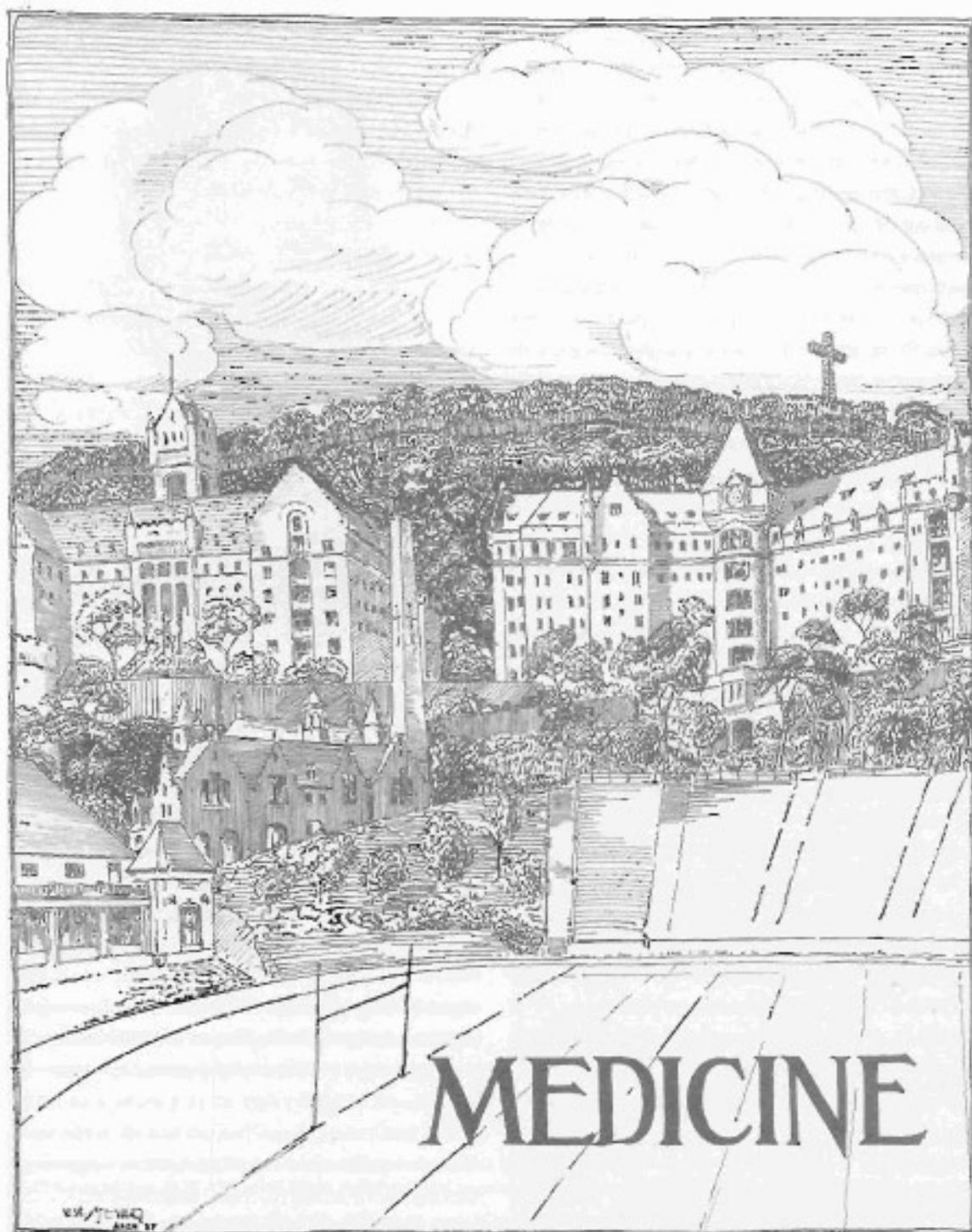


Figure 3. *This was the proper setting for football heroics.* Football field, Molson Stadium, Royal Victoria Hospital and Mount Royal, by N.M. Stewart, Arch. 1927.

Economy Professor Stephen Leacock and Principal Sir Arthur Currie. While Leacock was known for his peculiar but gentle wit, Shaughnessy was famous for sarcasm. In 1921 a McGill law student, Frank Genest, (LL.B 1921), published a little book about a McGill student just off the farm called Si Whiffletree; on meeting Si in the Union, Shag says: "Greetings haystack, when did you get in – on the last load of huckleberries?" Covering football for the *McGill Daily*, Whiffletree watches Shag coaching: "puttin' his bevy of retirin' young society buds through the hoops. He was handin' out so dum many compliments that the hull team was blushin' up like a burlesque queen on bein' asted what was her age by the Census man."⁷

Shaughnessy and Carroll (Figs. 4, 5) became life-long friends. Besides the portrait rendered through Connelly, Carroll wrote about Shaughnessy's techniques in nonfictional articles: "If he thought a player was dogging it, he didn't hesitate to give him a tongue lashing and order him to do a few extra laps around the track...." Dissidents complained this might be all right for professional sports, but college football was supposed to be fun. In the 1920s, Canadian football kept some features of English Rugby; it also differed from American football. Shaughnessy described the Canadian game as "a combination of bucks, passing runs and lots of kicking." Besides introducing innovations in blocking and other strategies, Shaughnessy long advocated the forward pass, which had opened up and enlivened American football. Shaughnessy introduced the forward pass in an exhibition match with University of Syracuse at McGill in 1921; it revolutionized the Canadian game when it was finally adopted in 1931.⁸



Figure 4. Coach Frank "Shag" Shaughnessy.

Meanwhile, Peter and his teammates would be required to learn how to exploit the existing rules effectively. After practice, Peter and the other players relax in the clubby atmosphere of the locker room:

If the field was solemn with serious purpose, the field house was mad with the spirit of fun. It was a natural letdown after the strain of practice. There was a great shouting, laughing and whistling. Men, their muddy uniforms dumped in a heap before their lockers, spined with each other in their birthday suits. Steam from the

⁷ Frank Genest, *The Letters of Si Whiffletree – Freshman*, preface by Stephen Leacock, (Montreal: s.n., 1921), 8, 26. It is written in hazy-seeled style, about the life of "stooidents," in letters home to Pa. Genest was Associate Editor, *McGill Daily*, 1919-1920, and *Old McGill* 1921.

⁸ Dink Carroll, "Frank Shaughnessy – Football Pioneer," *The McGill News*, (Fall 1951), 19; Frank Shaughnessy, "Football: English-Canadian – American," *Old McGill*, 1925:225-226; Frank Shaughnessy, "The Forward Pass in Canadian Football," *The McGill News*, 12, no. 4 (September 1931):19-20. The continuing differences between American and Canadian football were discussed by Ted Moorhouse (pseudonym for T.E.M. Newton, M.A., McGill, 1927), "Touchdown Torpor: a Comparison Between American and Canadian Football and Some Suggestions for Each," *The McGill News*, 19, no. 2 (Spring 1938): 35-39, 63-64. See also Frank Consentino, *Canadian Football* (Mussion: Toronto, 1969); Leslie Roberts, "The Forward Pass is Here," *The Canadian Magazine* (September 1931), 12, 32; Roberts, "Americanizing Canadian Sport," *The Canadian Magazine* (November 1931), 8, 41.

hot showers clouded the mirrors and cloaked the room in a mist. Someone threw a glass of cold water over the top of a shower and the irate occupant emerged and pulled the bench out from under three or four innocent onlookers. One chap, anxious to get away, had progressed in his dressing to the point where he stood combing his hair before a spot he had carefully wiped in the frosted mirror. Several times, men passing to and from the showers had run devastating hands over the parted hair. With a philosopher's patience, he rammed his hat down on the wet, tangled mass and departed. Even Connelly unbent. Smiling, he went from man to man, inquiring how they felt. He instructed the trainer to take particular care with the men who had been scrimmaging. He seemed to have a private word for everyone. (pp.9-10)

Connelly (like the real coach, Shaughnessy) wants the players to build up loyalties and friendships; he makes sure Peter meets the other men. Peter becomes friendly with his teammate Don Horwill, who lives in a flat west of McGill; soon they will join the same fraternity. We learn Peter is taking Arts. He wanders down to St. Catherine's Street to eat at the popular chain restaurant, CHLD's. (While not wealthy, he never seems to lack funds.) Back at his boarding house, he ponders his future apprehensively and writes his mother that he has found a room (his father is dead, we learn later; there is nothing more about Peter's family). Later he reads Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (foreshadowing his later fascination with novels):

As he read the account of Carrie's strange flight with Hurstwood to Montreal, and of her bewilderment in that alien city, his own feeling of unreality deepened. Lying on his back, staring at the high ceiling in the old-fashioned house, he had the half-scared feeling that he was beginning an entirely new life in which nothing was familiar.... A few weeks later, when the fall term had officially begun, he looked back with wonder at his frightened uncertainty during those first few days. (p.12)

Peter makes the football team easily. He excels (as Carroll had) at punting. He can kick the ball farther,

higher, and more accurately than any man on the squad (p.14). His picture appears in the *McGill Daily*; he is already a celebrity. He eats supper at the football training table, which features steaks, milk, toast and high calories for energy. There are detailed descriptions of football practice and Connelly's chalk talks at the blackboard in the dining room for an hour and a half, after training dinners, shooting questions at half-asleep players. Peter realizes Connelly lives for football, corresponding far and wide to keep up with developments across the continent. If a new play was introduced in, say, California, he would be explaining it a week later to his own team. The first game approaches. Former players, now distinguished in the City, begin to show up at the training table, urging the players to uphold their traditions. Practices attract spectators. There is a rumour that a stranger is taking notes on the plays. Connelly and Major Coles close the stadium to keep out spies. To open the season, McGill will meet Queen's (Toronto



Figure 5. Austin "Dink" Carroll on the McGill Football Team ca. 1921.

is the other great rival). The night before the game, Connelly gives a pep talk:

If you don't know the plays by now, you'll never know 'em. We've only gotta few. I kept 'em simple purposely... plays don't mean much. Fundamentals mean everything.... Make your own breaks and watch for 'em!... About blocking – if every man takes the man he's supposed to take outta the play – well, we're long gone! (pp.17-18)

Pep talks like Shaughnessy's may have doubled in importance after 1921, when the Canadian rules banned coaching from the sidelines during games in order to force the players to decide their own tactics. The Queen's students are already on the campus; their team stays at the glamorous new Mount Royal Hotel. The press waits to see Connelly; McGill football is big news in Montreal. A pep rally is in swing in the Student Union. Peter has trouble sleeping, afraid he will fumble. The next day, the team gathers at the Student Union before the game. Connelly sees Peter is nervous:

'Come over here, son.' He put a kindly arm around his shoulders and led him to the window.' Listen. I know how you feel. You're that type – temperamental. The other kind you gotta kick awake. There'll be another game tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that. Lots more games, see? I'm not expectin' miracles. All I want is for you to gimme your best.... A crowd's memory is damn short. You're a hero today if yuh win – and a bum tomorrow if yuh lose. So to hell with 'em all. Go out there and play the best game you know how.' (pp.21-22)

Then the team walks up University Street past the old greystone houses, up the hill to the stadium, past police at every corner, cars jammed together, girls in tams with streamers flying, boys carrying rugs, fraternity men on their door steps. *The air was as light and heady as wine.* Connelly gives them a final speech: *'A team that won't be beaten can't be beaten,' Connelly said grimly. 'There's only one way you can*

disgrace the university, disgrace yourselves and disgrace me. That's by goin' out there and layin' down.' (p.23) (It sounds like marching into battle, with Connelly taking over the role of the Spartan mothers who told their sons to return with their shields or upon them.) On field, the referee says something about the new rules (the rules were constantly changing and debated in Canada and the United States), the band plays God Save the King, and the kick-off comes straight at Peter:

At the right moment, he made a mechanical movement with his hands, the ball nestled in the basket formed by his arms and ribs, and he started forward. Impelled solely by instinct, he evaded the first two tacklers and sped along until an end, cutting across the field, lifted him clear off the ground in a crashing tackle.... That tackle was like a dive in a clear, cool lake. He came up, his head clear as a bell, his nervousness miraculously gone. (p.24)

Although Connelly had doubted that Peter could stand up to heavy tackling, Peter now establishes himself as a ball carrier as well as a punter. McGill scores in the second quarter. At half-time the men lie on blankets sucking oranges while Connelly points out their mistakes; they are lucky Queen's is so terrible! But McGill goes on to win. *There was jubilation in the field house. Everyone was absurdly light-hearted and light-headed. It was a luxury to be able to undress deliberately, step under the warm shower, stretch out on the rubbing table and have the soothing fingers of a trainer knead liniment into tired muscles. Peter had had his baptism of fire and had come through nobly* (p.26). The team gets a night off the training table. Connelly warns them not to go wild. Peter and some others go to the Mount Royal Cafeteria for steaks. On the way home Peter reads about his punting in glorious terms in the late papers.

* * * * *

Besides making the football team (Fig. 6), Peter chooses a fraternity. Peter's picture and biographi-

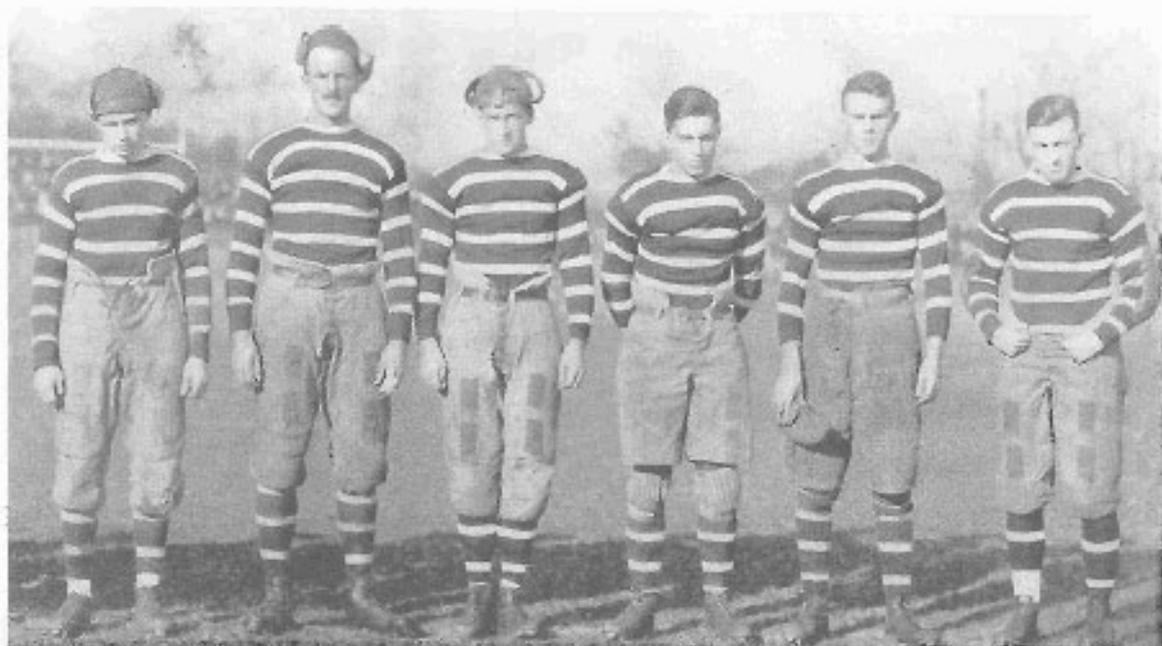


Figure 6. McGill Football team (partial), Dink Carroll at far right, 1921.

cal sketch had already appeared in the *McGill Daily* (Canada's oldest student daily, founded in 1911). As one of the celebrities in his class, Peter is rushed by several fraternities. At McGill as elsewhere, the athlete, especially the football player, was hailed as a B.M.O.C. (Big Man On Campus). Though Peter eats at the football training table in the evening, he breakfasts and lunches at the various fraternity houses:

He met so many men he couldn't hope to remember names. Gradually, he came to identify certain frats with one or two individuals, for in the confusion of faces one or two always stood out. There were six or seven freshmen like himself, who were being rushed by the same frats, and he became more familiar with them than with his hosts. (p.13)

Fraternities usually sought graduates of the private preparatory schools. Although Peter's schooling was less posh, his football prowess conquers all:

The fellows most sought after were those who had come up from the RMC [Royal Military College, Kingston] or the preparatory schools: St. Andrews, Upper Canada College, Trinity College Schools, Bishop Ridley College,

Ashbury and Lennoxville. All of them had someone ahead of them, school friends of former years, who were taking care of their social futures. The bulk of the high school element, ambitious but bewildered, didn't have a chance. An occasional one of their number, and Peter fell into this category, early displayed some special talent that augured prominence. Then they became part of the charmed circle considered the elite of the class. (p.13)

Indeed, football could be the key to increased social status, gaining admission to prestigious fraternities and assisting one's future career. Peter would note later that *Football had opened doors to him and had given him a place in the life of the university he could never have achieved without it...* The Inter-Fraternity Council forbade offering memberships until enough time had passed to let prospects and houses get to know each other and so avoid mismatches. The fraternities got around this by telling their favourite prospects beforehand that they would be bid. Choice could be treacherous; it was important to learn as much about one's potential fraternity brothers as possible:



FRATERNITIES

Figure 7. *Every fraternity had a legendary reputation.* Drawing by N.A. Fellowes, Arch. 1927.

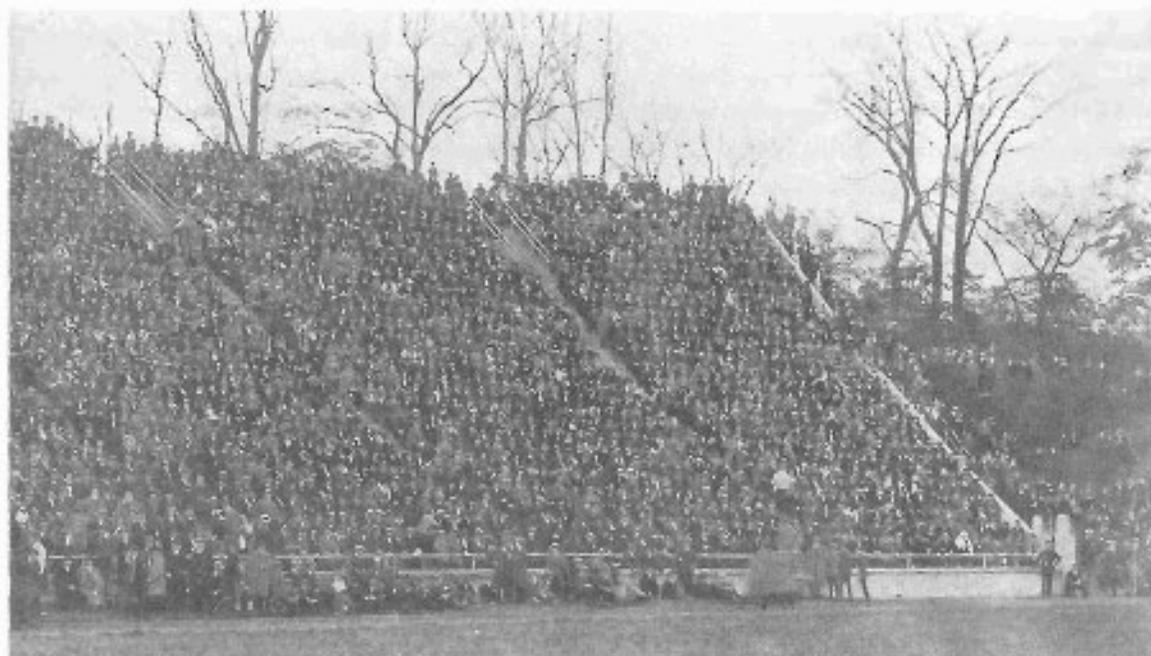


Figure 8. Spectators at football match, Molson Stadium, ca. 1921.

Every fraternity had a legendary reputation (Fig. 7), partly founded upon truth, but in most instances the result of the exaggeration of a quality into a fault by rival fraternities. Thus one fraternity was a house of snobs; another a house of grinds; another a crowd of alcoholics; another an organization of thick-skinned athletes; and still another a club for rich men's sons. (p.14)

In late October, the fraternities make their bids. They compete sharply for the desirable students, often helped by graduate members as advocates. One graduate tells Peter that the choice of a fraternity would be more important than the choice of a profession, religion, business partner or wife. The final week of rushing is tense. Amusing stories circulate. One popular freshman was dining at one house but was supposed to go to a show right after with another crowd. The first fraternity set the clock back an hour; the student missed his appointment; and the second crowd, which he had preferred, soured on him. Peter accepts the Rho Delta bid; their friendliness seems more sincere than most. Peter hears how the prospects are discussed:

During the next few days he saw men he considered decent fellows 'piled' [blackballed] because they 'couldn't hold their liquor,' because their 'father was in trade,' because they didn't 'dress like gentlemen,' because their 'brother had a bum war record,' and for personal vagaries and antipathies explicable only to Freud and the brothers who cast the pills. (p.30)

One prospect is turned down after his Rho Delta uncle has argued in his favour and pointed out he would be rich someday – this is a fraternity not a banker's trust, replies a member and the prospect is unanimously black-bailed, as members uphold their gentlemanly indifference to money and their privilege to refuse membership on any grounds they chose, down to the colour of the candidate's socks.

Carroll invented "Rho Delta." He had joined Zeta Psi, a prestigious house with chapters at important American universities. The McGill chapter, founded in 1883, was McGill's first fraternity. At first, McGill administrators and many students opposed fraternities as secret societies. In vain: they were firmly established by the 1920s. The Zetas had many distin-

guished members in Toronto or McGill, including John McCrae and Stephen Leacock as well as Percival Molson, who had endowed the football stadium in which Peter [and Carroll] played (Fig. 8). Drawing many of their members from the medical faculty, the Zetas had staffed the McGill Hospital in World War One. After occupying other quarters, Zeta Psi built an elegant house on University Street in 1925. In Peter's time, McGill still lacked men's' residences, and fraternities offered members an attractive, prestigious alternative to rooming houses.⁹

Fraternity initiations are secret but similar. Peter must wait on a street corner in old clothes with two dollars in his pocket. He is picked up by a horse cab. Two men, hats down over their eyes, blindfold him. He ends up on Mount Royal, is told to climb a tree, realizes his captors are drunk, is told to jump off the edge of something (still blindfolded) and does. Though it is only a foot drop, Peter worries that they may bung him up for football. Now they ride a while; he feels sure he's in the country. A rope around his waist pulls him off his feet. He is put in a bed and realizes he's probably in the fraternity house. In the next part of the ritual, he hears himself on trial with his candidacy about to fail. Then his friends speak up for him, the blindfold is removed and he is surrounded by his new brothers. In the concluding part of the ceremony, Peter learns the secret hand grip, is told the secrets of the society and declared a full-fledged member. His two dollars is missing – it paid the cab (pp.31-35).

Out-of-towners are expected to live in the fraternity and Peter moves in. He shares a double room with Eric Mowat, an Englishman. Eric finds Canada disap-

pointing; there are no cowboys and Indians as the cinema and Canadian Pacific Railway posters had led him to expect. He asks Peter where are the Indians? On reservations mostly. Where are the cowboys? Well, there are some in Alberta. Is that far? About 72 hours by train. For his part, Peter is amazed at Eric's gear: clothes for every possible climate, pictures, tobacco jars and pipes, teapots and books. Peter blames motion pictures and the C.P.R. publicity for distorting Canada's image for people like Eric:

They gave people on the other side a wrong idea of this country. Peter gradually came to understand that he [Eric] had looked forward to Canada as a great adventure, though it was hard to conceive how the product of an English public school could be so misinformed; probably because pictorial art registered more graphically on the mind than the printed or spoken word. He had expected a life like the romantic one depicted in the films of the old west, which had a great vogue abroad. Bucking broncos, cowboys in chaps, six shooters, picturesque and cunning Redskins, hellish saloons and dog teams on Main Street – all the props of the pioneer west – had filled his imagination for weeks. Instead he had found Montreal, which was just another large city, smaller and less amusing than his own London and the Paris he had frequently visited. (p.37)

Meanwhile, the football team nears the end of the season undefeated. Connelly's solid basic training succeeded. The team needed no more than a dozen plays. When plays failed, it was generally because the opponent had a defence for them. To counteract this, Connelly had reverses for all his plays.

9 The spectacular new McGill chapter house of Zeta Psi was built as a memorial to its war dead – the first building in Canada designed to be a fraternity house and valued at \$80,000. It opened in 1925 after Carroll graduated. Previously Zeta Psi occupied a rented house on University Street (No. 635 in the old numbering system) and, in the closing years of World War I, a house at 297 Prince Arthur Street. The latter may be the house Carroll knew. See Howard Bement and Douglas Bement, *The Story of Zeta Psi*, (New York: Zeta Psi Fraternity, 1928), 168-74, 469-82. In the 1920s, McGill had about 14 fraternities. The history of fraternities at McGill is an untapped source for student history. The archives of individual fraternity chapters are usually held by the local chapters or the national headquarters. However, the McGill University Archives holds some documentation in the records of the Principal and other offices dealing with students or real estate. Entries for each McGill fraternity, listing its branches at other universities, appeared in the annual *Old McGill*.

If the straight plays didn't work, then the reverses would, because it was physically impossible for a man to be in more than one place at the same time. When the opposing team shifted its defence to stop the reverses, then straight power plays were effective.... A season of football under Connelly was like any other course in the curriculum. You learned first principles and were taught how to apply them. Connelly was learned in his subject, was conscientious, knew how to impart his knowledge and his salary was on a parity with that of most of the professors. Under his tutelage, a game that had been largely guesswork and luck became regular and ordered ... attendance at practice was more obligatory than attendance at a course of lectures and there was too much strain. [Peter] had no control whatever over his imagination... He forgot that football was primarily fun and recreation. It took on a seriousness out of all proportion to its importance. The thing to do was to win. The things that he might do which would bring about a defeat were always present in his mind.... By Friday night he could think of nothing else. He became grave-faced and detached, paralysed with nervous excitement, waiting for the whistle and the first fierce contact that would snap the awful tension. (pp.37-38)

Here, Peter seems to admit that McGill let sports be over emphasized to the neglect of studies. He wishes that instead of suffering pre-game jitters he could stay cool the way Don Horwill always did. *Don was the season's sensation... it was uncanny the way he could slice through a line, needle-thread his way through the secondaries and find the open field like a crazy colt. (p.30)*

The season is ending and McGill's team must conquer one last opponent: *The final game was played against the traditional enemy, Toronto University, from two o'clock of a cold November day until after the sulky sun went down behind the mountain and the long shadows of the stands and the flagpole dissolved in the twilight blur. The weather was snappy and the big, prosperous-looking crowd, bundled in expensive furs, beat out a rhythmic tattoo with tapping feet and slapping hands. (p.42)*

Neither team scores in the first half, but *scornfully denounced* at half time by Connelly, the McGill players win the game and the intercollegiate championship. The season ends in glory. Carroll notes that this would be Peter's only championship team. (In reality, McGill won the championship Yates Cup in 1919 and again in 1928 – perhaps Peter is meant to have played in the 1928 season.) A celebration dinner at the Windsor Hotel is attended by the Principal [Sir Arthur Currie, not characterized]. Heavy drinking follows; every second man seemed to have brought a bottle of whisky. Quebec, it will be remembered, was spared Prohibition, still in force in the States. Toasts are given. Connelly gives a modest, emotional speech and is pelted with bread rolls, butter pats, and celery sticks in revenge for all his sentences of extra laps and verbal encouragement. When the Principal and older men leave, the party cuts loose. They sing "Alouette". For the first time Peter is tight. He leaves with teammate, Don Horwill; they go on to crash a supper dance at the Ritz-Carleton Hotel. Peter wakes up the next day at the fraternity, with a headache and his dinner clothes flung all over. He recalls sitting down at a strange table at the Ritz-Carleton and talking to a girl called Anne Somers, engaged to someone else, one of the prettiest girls he has ever seen. He vaguely remembers talking to her long and earnestly, although he can't remember what it was about. He suspects he has made a fool of himself, but his friend Don reassures him that he has not. Indeed, she has told Don to bring Peter around sometime. (pp.44-45)

* * * * *

All Fall, Peter had been obsessed with football. As the season ends, the story's focus changes. He notices the rest of the University: both the range of its learning and the students' casual approach to lectures:

At luncheon at the house, or over the bridge table, you heard a little of everything: the exact amount of tension on the cables of a famous suspension bridge; how much it was going to cost to operate the government this year...



Figure 9.
The professors were sympathetic
and approachable...
Principal Sir Arthur Currie
and Stephen Leacock.
Cartoon by F.S. Lemessurier, 1923.

the current make-up of the Reichstag... what was wrong about the architecture of the Royal Bank Building... a world of ideas, stimulating enough, and everyone had the right to speak or listen, as he chose. The sense of absolute freedom, of complete independence, was new and thrilling. If you chose to sleep in rather than turn up at a lecture, that was your own lookout. You were presumed to have enough sense to feel responsible. Students came to lectures and acted as they pleased. Brazenly they went to sleep right under the lecturer's nose, if they felt he was being dull and they could afford to miss what was being said. Or they heckled him with absurd questions, or stalked out while the lecture was still in progress. It was good-natured protest and accepted in that spirit. (pp. 39-40)

In contrast to students at many American universities, McGill students could cut classes and make their own boarding arrangements. In 1925 Principal Currie's assistant asserted that in Canada "the general policy has always been to interfere as little as possible with the undergraduate."¹⁰ The professors were sympathetic and approachable and often drank with students in taverns; no subject was taboo (Fig 9). Peter notices that McGill students argue excitedly about every subject on the curriculum – history, economics, and psychology, with an intensity he had reserved for football.

Peter discovers that, unlike some other universities, McGill does not turn out a standard, identifiable product: *The university did not produce any specific type, perhaps because its student body was so cosmopolitan and exposed to too many influences to allow any one to predominate* (p.40). (In Peter's day, about 1927, there were 2772 students at McGill, including 1038 in Arts, 757 women, 229 Americans, 59 Englishmen, and one Englishwoman.) A student's expenses for an academic year – tuition fees, lodging, board and books – were estimated to cost about \$800.¹¹ Rather than take on a standard veneer, students tended to keep their original identities:

The Medical Faculty, with Sir William Osler its prize product and still animated by his ideals, was famous all over America. The Faculty of Science was not far behind. These two schools attracted students from everywhere, who managed to keep their identity. Bare-headed Englishmen, in flannel bags and sports coats, roamed the campus no matter what the condition of the weather. In the halls, one saw American youths in polo shirts and crew sweaters, heard American accents varying all the way from New England to California. There was a liberal sprinkling of West Indians, looking like Negroes and employing the voices of Old Country Englishmen. In Peter's faculty there

10. Letter from Assistant to the Principal (Wilfrid Bowey) to Leslie H. Allen, Editor, *The Liberal*, 15 January 1925, McGill University Archives, Principal's Office, RG 2, C.46, file 469, U-1k 1921-1938.

11. *McGill University. Annual Report of the Corporation for the year 1926-1927* (Montreal: McGill University, 1927), 3-4; on expenses: Letter from Wilfrid Bowey to C.A. Magrath, 30 Oct. 1925, McGill University Archives, Principal's Office, RG 2, C.47, file 478, McGill 1922-1939.

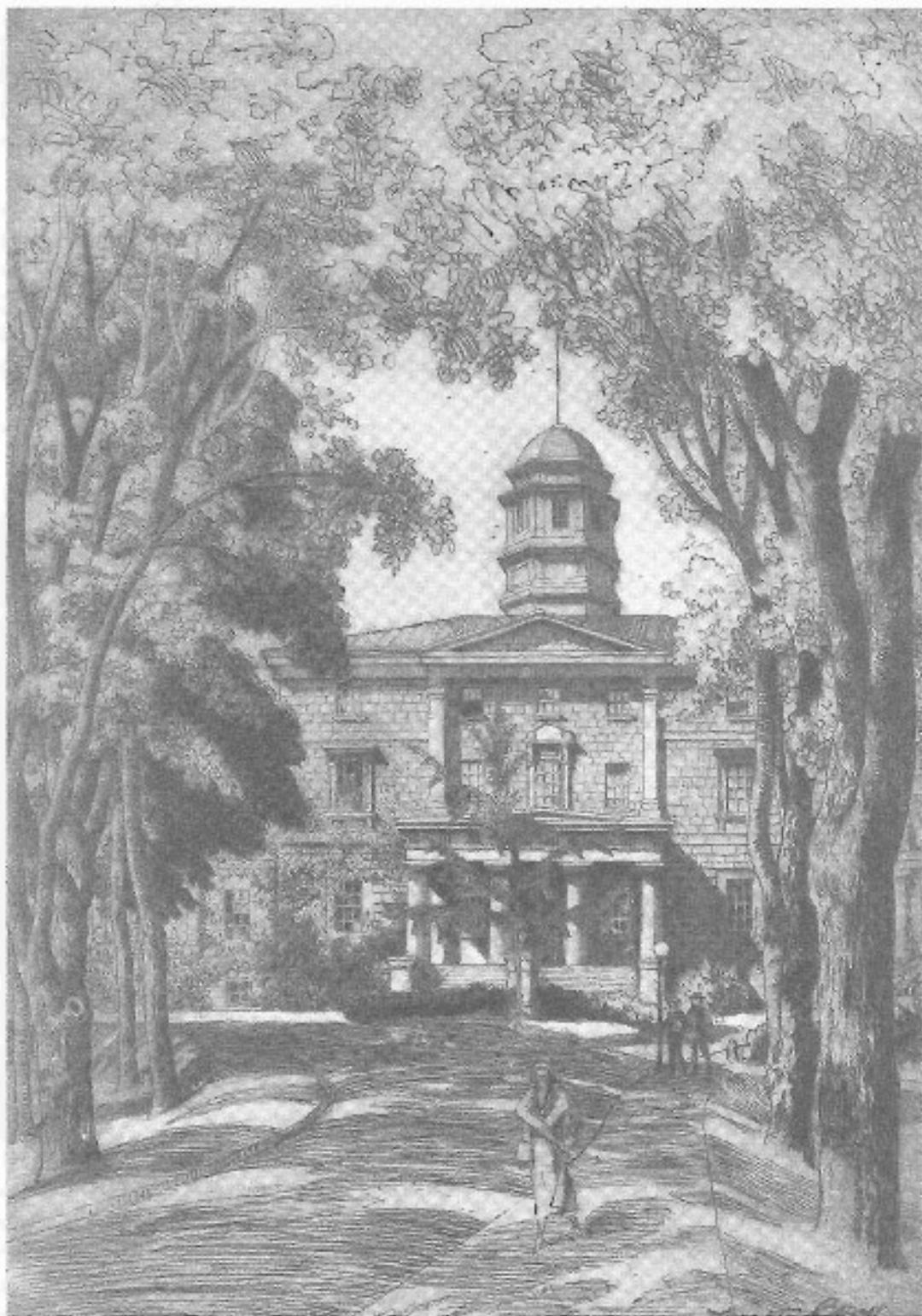


Figure 10. *The Arts Building, refurbished a number of times, was the original building of the University. Drawing by Walter R. Duff, 1924.*

was a genuine Chinese prince. But by far the bulk of the student body consisted of Canadian born lads from every province in the Dominion. There were many French-Canadians, and Peter found their oddly accented manner of speaking extremely droll, though the fact remained that they could all speak English and only a small percentage of the English born population could speak French. It gave him an odd sensation to hear the roll called: Lachance, Lafleur, Lafontaine, Laliberté, Lamont, Lemoine. Examination papers could be written in French or English. He began to develop an ear for French and he thought he could distinguish those who had studied abroad, as many of the French-Canadian students had. (pp. 40-41)

Peter looks at the campus architecture, the stately old buildings facing Sherbrooke Street, Montreal's equivalent of New York's Fifth Avenue, and notes that McGill was built not by government but by private benefactors:

The university had celebrated its centennial anniversary six or seven years before [in 1921], and the Arts Building, refurbished a number of times, was the original building of the university (Fig. 10). Long and low and darkened by more than a century's dust, it stood at the very end of the driveway that lead up from the gates. There the road split, the two new sections curving away on either side. To the right of the main road were the science buildings, of a newer vintage, the contribution of a great tobacco fortune [Sir William Macdonald's]. To the left were the moss-covered library... and the Museum, whose donor [Peter Redpath] had made millions in sugar. The Medical buildings [gift of Lord Strathcona], newer still, were in back of the Arts Building, further up the hill and closer to the Royal Victoria Hospital (Fig. 11). The city's capitalists had given both money and affection in large gobs to the university. (p.41)

Novels and memoirs referring to McGill often focus on the campus's architecture: the horseshoe of greystone buildings, in a hodgepodge of decorated nineteenth-century styles, facing the mansion-

lined boulevard of Sherbrooke Street; and its imposing gates and elm-treed road. At the road's end is the weathered greystone icon, the original Arts Building, dating from the 1840s, long before the little college was transformed by Dawson, Osler, and Rutherford into Canada's national university, renowned for medicine and science. And always looming above is Mount Royal. Writers focus on the tall ancient trees and odd grey buildings. Carroll's friend Hugh MacLennan wrote about McGill's campus poetically in *The Watch That Ends the Night* (1959), as did Harold Trott in his memoir. Carroll described its atmosphere in the 1920s:



Figure 11.

The city's capitalists had given both money and affection in large gobs to the university. (The Macdonald Physics Building, the Strathcona Medical Building, and Royal Victoria College.)

The campus, fringed with giant elms, was a magnet for old and young. White-flannelled cricketers set up their wickets on its green turf. Tennis players dashed about its red clay courts. Bearded old men walked reflectively under its trees and children, under the watchful eyes of governesses, played about on its grassy slopes. Late at night, undergraduate revellers lurched along its narrow sidewalks. (pp. 41-42)

With football over, Peter becomes an ordinary mortal. During football season, the fraternity had excused him from the duties new members, known as "babies," carried out in the house. They had to answer the doorbell and the telephone, keep the common room tidy, prepare the chapter room for meetings, mail letters to the alumni, and do odd jobs. Peter and his roommate Eric resent the chores and are censured for their apathetic attitudes at house meetings, not realizing such criticism was routine and not meant personally. Eric complains, *When I was first introduced here I was given the impression that it was a gentleman's club.... Then after one is persuaded to join, one is treated like a steward* (pp.45-46). When Eric talks this way, Peter thinks of the pompous stage Englishman. Yet he enjoys Eric's mannerisms:

Eric had so much more dignity than Canadian youths of his age that it sometimes appealed to him as ridiculous. He was, in appearance, the clean-looking type of English public school boy you see in the illustrated London papers. He looked tall because he was slender and long in the legs, but in reality he was only a fraction of an inch taller than Peter. He had a long, thin English head and narrow face, skin like a girl, pleasant blue eyes and hair the colour and quality of corn silk. (p.46)

Eventually Peter and Eric get into trouble. Assigned to polish the common room floor, they begin after breakfast, when the house is empty *except for the servants*. Soon Eric suggests they hire someone to do it. So a *derelict from an employment agency* finishes the job for them. Unfortunately the house president, Ken Hyde, returns and sees what has

happened. At the next Saturday meeting, Hyde announces that two of the new brothers have refused to perform a menial task assigned to them and will be disciplined after the meeting. The whole chapter seems to know about it and two brothers are sent to *prepare the freezing mixture*.

When the meeting adjourned, they were escorted upstairs, stripped of their clothes and conducted to the bathroom. Then they saw the freezing mixture: snow and ice and salt and water filled the tub. The bathroom and the hall outside were jammed with grinning brothers, eager spectators at the first bath party of the year. Eric was grabbed by the feet and the hands and hoisted into the air. Once, twice, three times they dipped him in the icy tub and, each time as he was lowered, a mock cheer rent the air. A bath towel was flung over his shivering shoulders and he was led away, while Peter was subjected to the same treatment. (pp.47-48)

Afterwards, Don Horwill says not to take it too seriously. It happens to someone every year, means nothing, and is good for discipline. Eric feels insulted and thinks of resigning his membership. However, he is persuaded that if they do not laugh it off, their lives might be made unpleasant – each assigned chore could provoke a crisis. Resigning could spoil one's university career; the individual not the fraternity would be blamed. Peter notices more things he does not like. Freshmen are discouraged from full participation in house politics. Another "baby," Tim Manson, who had grown up on an Alberta cattle ranch and who was taken in only because his brother had belonged, naively suggests at a meeting that the fraternity reform its treatment of new members. After an ominous silence, the president declared that the traditions of the chapter had stood for nearly fifty years, and it was presumptuous of a "baby" to criticize – so presumptuous that Tim is subjected to the same freezing immersion meted out to Peter and Eric. Peter begins to find the fraternity too like an army barracks. He is also disconcerted that his brothers

ridicule the dances and potential romances that are part of life at co-ed campuses like McGill's by the 1920s.

WINTER: BOOKS AND BEER

The term has ended. It is January and exams loom. Peter had brought notes and books home to Ontario to study over the Christmas vacation. But he had goofed off, gone to parties, and basked in the admiration of local girls impressed by his football feats. Back at McGill, he realizes he knows nothing about the four Arts subjects he's taking – *He had neglected the primary, academic side of college for football and fraternity activities* (p.51). We hear nothing about Peter's courses. Carroll like most college novel writers, concentrated on sports and extra-curricular socializing. As everyone crams for exams, the fraternity house becomes quiet: *the threat of examinations muzzled the radio and the victrola, dimmed bright lights into student lamps, gagged the garrulous and drove the bridge players away from the tables* (p.51).

Peter now pays the price for exercising his freedom to cut classes. He makes a last-ditch attempt to catch up on his studies, living on sandwiches from a restaurant, coffee and caffeine tablets. When the results of the January exams are posted, he finds he has failed two courses. His prestige in the fraternity drops, since failures lower the chapter's status on campus. The fraternity president starts to keep an eye on him. Then he hears Coach Connelly is off him: *He says you're the kind of guy who makes all that overemphasis talk possible* (p.53). Throughout the 1920s, the professionalization of college sports caused controversy. Indeed, the 1928 *Old McGill* carried an article, "The Over-Emphasis of Athletics," warning that Canadian universities were in danger of falling into the American practices of dropping academic standards, commercializing sports, and even paying players.¹²

To recoup academically, on Don's advice, Peter prescribes a new routine for himself. He finds he can attend his lectures, spend two hours in the library and still have free time (Fig 12). Football seems long past, as Peter's interests turn more cerebral. He discovers a passion for books and ideas; indeed his reading of novels appears to be his private alternative to McGill's formal curriculum. After lectures, he starts going to the Student Union where he meets students talking from table to table about literature, theatre, campus affairs, and Professor Leacock's latest *bon mot* (p.55)

'Have you heard Stevie's latest?' someone cried with a burst of preliminary laughter.

'Let's have it.'

'He says O. Henry is the great master of modern literature.'

'No! Did he mean it?'

'Who can tell?'

'He's probably just living up to his reputation as a funny man.'

Peter learns that because students in Arts and Law have easy courses, they can drop into the Union cafeteria for both morning and afternoon sessions, over tea, coffee and pipes – *students never seemed to be able to talk without eating or drinking at the same time* (p.55). Peter discovers the "Aesthetes" – the theatre and literary crowd. They know about literature and drama, even music and painting, and argue hotly over the latest play by O'Neill. Some write for the *McGill Daily* or for the "Literary Review." Those too superior to write talk. Carroll probably modelled the Aesthetes on the students who wrote for the *McGill Daily Literary Supplement* in the early 1920s, and more particularly for the *McGill Fortnightly Review*, which came out to acclaim from 1925 to 1927. Known as the "McGill Group" or "Montreal Group", the students included E.R. Scott, A.J.M. Smith, Leon Edel, Leo Kennedy, and A.M. Klein. Many of the McGill group went on to distinguished literary careers. At McGill they

12 Duncan A. L. MacDonald, *Old McGill* (1928), 234, 348.

espoused modernist poetry, admired Eliot and Yeats, and reviled the lingering Victorianism of Canadian letters. Edel recalled that the McGill Fortnightly group would talk in the McGill Union with others of similar interests like Graeme Taylor and John Glassco. Unlike the other McGill writers, Glassco would also write erotica of the governess genre.¹³

Peter meets Tony Dodds, a friend of the Aesthetes. Tony plays the piano in the Union, writes music for the student Red and White Revue, and plays the faded guide to the naive Peter. One afternoon, Peter and Tony desert the Union for the student haunt, the Prince of Wales Tavern, known as the Pig and Whistle, on McGill College Avenue. This (real-life) tavern played a large part in student life for decades. For McGill students:

When you said beer, you meant the Pig.... The Pig was smoky, noisy and cheerful. Peter and Tony sit down in one of the cubicles that lined the wall. Two men worked feverishly behind the counter supplying the waiters with bottles of ale, drawing steins of draft beer and relaying food orders to the kitchen.... When they weren't busy, the four waiters loafed at the end of the ram... swallowing occasional beers with prodigious speed. They were extremely good natured, took a lot of kidding, cashed students' cheques without hesitation and even lent them money. They were all French Canadians: Armand, fat and jolly; Albert, thin, short and bespectacled; Big Romeo, as lankly, loose-jointed and soft-spoken as a Negro; and Little Romeo, with a falsetto voice and liquid black eyes as soft as a woman's. (p.57)

The boys order two Molsons, which the waiter Armand calls "moleskins," an untiring joke. After a

few drinks, Peter feels like skipping supper at the fraternity: *He had a feeling he wanted to do something to-night, have a little excitement, see a little life* (pp.58-59). Peter and Tony move on from the Pig to Krausman's in Phillips Square. Krausman's had a four piece orchestra which played Viennese waltzes. It had lost its popularity because of the War, but it still served excellent hocks and kraut and Pilsner beer.¹⁴ Tony asks Peter how he likes the Aesthetes. Peter says he likes listening to them. When Tony grins slyly, Peter adds,

Oh, I know what they say about them... but you can't believe that stuff. Tony broke into a laugh. 'I don't know... A couple of those guys look a little delicate to me. I wouldn't like to go on any long canoe trips with them.' For a fleeting moment, Peter was wary; then he almost laughed out loud at the absurdity of his suspicions. Why was it that whenever a man appeared ready to dilate on that topic you invariably suspected him? Looking Tony over, he decided that he certainly didn't display any of the badges of the order. There was no preciousness in his manner. He let his bushy hair grow longer than was usual, but so did Paderewski. And he had a rugged face without a trace of femininity in it. For the rest, his suit was well cut though unpressed, and he was addicted to polo shirts with soft comfortable collars. The ensemble was careless, but it had a quality of deliberateness about it pardonable in a youth with a facile talent for musical composition. (p.60)

Changing the subject from the love that knew no name, especially at McGill, they talk about the goal of education. We are told it's not to teach us to make a living, but to make us cultured, says Tony. Then the education system fails, declares Peter. He

13 Leon Edel, "When McGill Modernized Canadian Literature," in E. A. Collard, ed., *The McGill You Knew* (Don Mills, Ont., Longman Canada, 1975), 12-27. Among Glassco's works was *Harriet Marwood, Governess*, first published in 1960 under the title, *English Governess*.

14 Most of the restaurants and nightclubs Peter visited existed. According to *Lovell's Montreal Directory, 1926-1927*, Krausman's Lorraine Cafe was on Phillips Place and the Venetian Gardens was at 602 St. Catherine St. West. The Pig and Whistle Restaurant also existed, of course. The hotels where the dinners and balls took place were real, too: the Ritz Carleton is still a hotel while the Windsor is now converted to offices and the Mount Royal to shops and condominium dwellings. However, "Chez Sol" and the "Moonlight Gardens," where Peter and Tony go after Krausman's, are not in *Lovell's, 1926-1927*.



 ARTS 
BETTS
JUNIORS

Figure 12. Peter spends two hours a day in the (Redpath) Library.
Drawing by R.C. Betts, Arch. 1928.

criticizes McGill for its lack of courses in the arts, music, and painting. He knows nothing about painting or any of the arts; he has a sketchy idea of literature only because he was curious: *Why couldn't they give us the rudiments?... enough to stimulate our interest. They manage to in European schools* (pp. 60-61). Contemporary critics shared Peter's frustration that Canadian Universities failed to instil culture in their students. In 1930 A.F.B. Clark singled out McGill and Toronto when decrying sterile literary scholarship for concentrating on dry philology instead of great ideas.¹⁵ Playing devil's advocate, Tony argues that history is made by warriors and statesmen. But they don't teach us anything, says Peter. They mix their conversation with lots of Pilsner. Tony spouts about the lives and loves of famous composers: *Dvorak's drunkenness, the evidences of homosexuality in Wagner's work... the Vienna of Franz Schubert and Richard Strauss* (p.61). Tony wants to visit Austria and Germany, where good food and good music come first; *and the women over there, he was sure, even the professionals, were more sympathetic and less mercenary than the bags in this man's town, with whom he was entirely fed up* (p.61).

By three in the morning, they find themselves in Chez Soi via the Moonlight Gardens, in the east, French-speaking part of town, exotic to English-speaking Montrealers:

far past the boundary line fixed by nice people as the farthest you could go in an easterly direction after night-fall. The women were obvious enough: different versions of the same type. The men were more heterogeneous: people employed in the amusement business – jazz band players, vaudevillians and waiters – who came down here for relaxation after their own establishments closed; respectable business men, a little the worse for liquor, making a night

of it; one or two undergraduates like themselves thinking they were exploring the depths; and the usual number of touts and pimps indigenous to the place. (p.62)

Peter tells Tony he is curious to see "a house." Until civic reforms in the 1950s, brothels were kept fairly openly in some seedy downtown districts and, according to fiction and memoirs, sometimes were visited by the more venturesome students. Actor Hume Cronyn recalled that when he was a McGill student in 1931 he frequented Flo's on Milton Street and caught the clap.¹⁶ Tony knows where the houses are, in spite of the efforts to eradicate them by the "Committee of Sixteen" (a Montreal reform group active around 1920). He takes Peter uptown to a row of ancient, red brick, two-story houses. A panel in a door is slid back. They are admitted to a front room. The madame has a heavy accent, tawny, wine-coloured skin, and something of a moustache. She reminded Peter of the madames of stage and fiction. The madame rings a bell for the girls. While they wait, Tony puts a nickel in the piano slot; it plays like *breaking glass*. (p.63)

Peter wasn't prepared for the ghastly half-dozen 'girls' who filed into the room in various stages of dishabille.... They were grotesque – caricatures of women. Their make-up was as thick as a circus-clown's and, when they smiled, they showed hideous gold teeth. He stared at them for a moment, fascinated. From the depths of his chair, Tony laughed. The madame looked from one to the other of them with concern. 'Come on,' she urged, 'choose your girl.' Tony laughed still harder. Peter leaped nervously to his feet. He wanted to get out of the place – at once! If he stayed there another minute he would be contaminated... (pp. 63-64)

The boys leave. Amused, Tony says that it is the worst place in the city; he just took Peter there for

15 A.F.B. Clark, "Literary Scholarship in Canadian Universities," *The Canadian Forum* 10, no. 115 (April 1930): 244-48. In similar vein: H. Steinhauer, "Why We Have No Great Canadian Scholars," *The Canadian Forum* 10, no. 117 (June 1930): 321-23.

16 Hume Cronyn, *A Terrible Liar: A Memoir*, (Toronto: Key Porter Books, Toronto, 1991), 81-83.

a lark. Peter retorts that it was awful: *Those women weren't human – they were like ghosts.... How could anybody ever have anything to do with them?* (p.64).

Tony replies that the customers are sailors or long-shoremen, not very particular. He assures Peter most houses are better; this is the worst.¹⁷ Home in bed, Peter imagines those painted faces grinning at him. Writers of the time often portrayed prostitutes as garishly made up, disease ridden and aging. The clients seem to be re-enacting their older brothers' harrowing war experiences – they go over the top to face, not German guns, but venereal disease and police raids. Pleasure is all but forgotten.

After this misadventure, Peter happily returns his attention to the campus, now frozen in Montreal's winter, unforgettable for students from gentler climates:

Winter laid determined siege to the land, sending icy blasts roaring down out of the northwest in consecutive waves (Fig. 13). Layer after layer of snow brilliantly redecorated the old summerhouse in the neighbour's yard and, in the mornings, the kitchen maid struggled with the milk bottles, frozen to the doorstep. Golf bags and sweaters disappeared from the cloakroom of the Rho Delt house and skates, skis and windbreakers appeared in their stead.... At night, under the arc lights, forms moved jerkily, like dancing marionettes, about the campus rinks, and the mountain was black with flying figures in the moonlight, their hazardous flights propelled and guided by a pair of frail poles. The transportation companies advertised special excursion week-end trains up north, and the display

windows of the big departmental stores looked like miniatures of St. Moritz. (p.65)

Peter cares nothing for skiing. He enjoys watching his English roommate Eric Mowat piling coats high on his bed at night against Montreal's winter. Peter is amazed at how methodically the Englishman sorts his clothes: dress shirts, collars, socks, gloves, pajamas all carefully sorted into separate drawers; formal clothes (which Peter will borrow before the story ends) hung carefully in a bag. At first, Eric has been disappointed with Canada, but now he begins to study the differences between Canada and the Old Country. He follows professional hockey rabidly, keeping a notebook on Les Canadiens, the Maroons, and other clubs. Eric also studies North American slang: *Peter told him that, so far as he knew, it originated with the sports writers, the Broadway stage and the underworld.* So Eric reads the sports pages and grades Peter on his knowledge about the gangsters in the headlines: *Where is Cook County? What is a stool? What is a gorilla? Who is the pay-off man for the Capone mob?* The "Talkies" come in [ca. 1927] and Eric loves them (pp. 65-67). He sees "Broadway Melody" seven times, while American gangster films make up for the Canadian cowboys and Indians he will never see.

Peter pursues his reading and attends a lecture by G.K. Chesterton, in town on a tour of North America:¹⁸

He was disappointed in the enormous man with the long

17 While this house presumably was imaginary, Al Palmer referred to a real Maggie's far east, on Clark Street, when describing the red-light district in the decades before 1950 in *Montreal Confidential*, (Toronto: Export Publishing Enterprises, 1950), 12. On the brothel milieu, see also Ronald J. Cooke's novel set in Montreal in the 1930s, *The House on Craig Street* (Toronto: Publishing Enterprises Ltd., 1949). The Committee of Sixteen was a private watchdog body, consisting mainly of English speaking Montrealers, including Lady Hingston and J. Howard Falk, Director, Social Service Department, McGill University. The Committee of Sixteen cited sociological and moral arguments for suppressing prostitution in *Some facts regarding toleration, regulation, segregation and repression of commercialized vice*, Montreal, 1919. Avowing that Montreal was a strategic point in international white slavery, Evanston I. Hart also advocated teetotalism and denounced Stephen Leacock for defending the freedom to drink; Leacock's attitude (wrote Hart) should deter parents from entrusting their children to McGill: Evanston I. Hart, *Wake Up! Montreal: Commercialized Vice and Its Contributors* (Montreal: the Witness Press, 1919), 24-25, 32.

18 Carroll himself may have heard Chesterton when he toured North America, including Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa, in 1921. Chesterton described his impressions, ignoring Canada, in *What I Saw in America* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923).

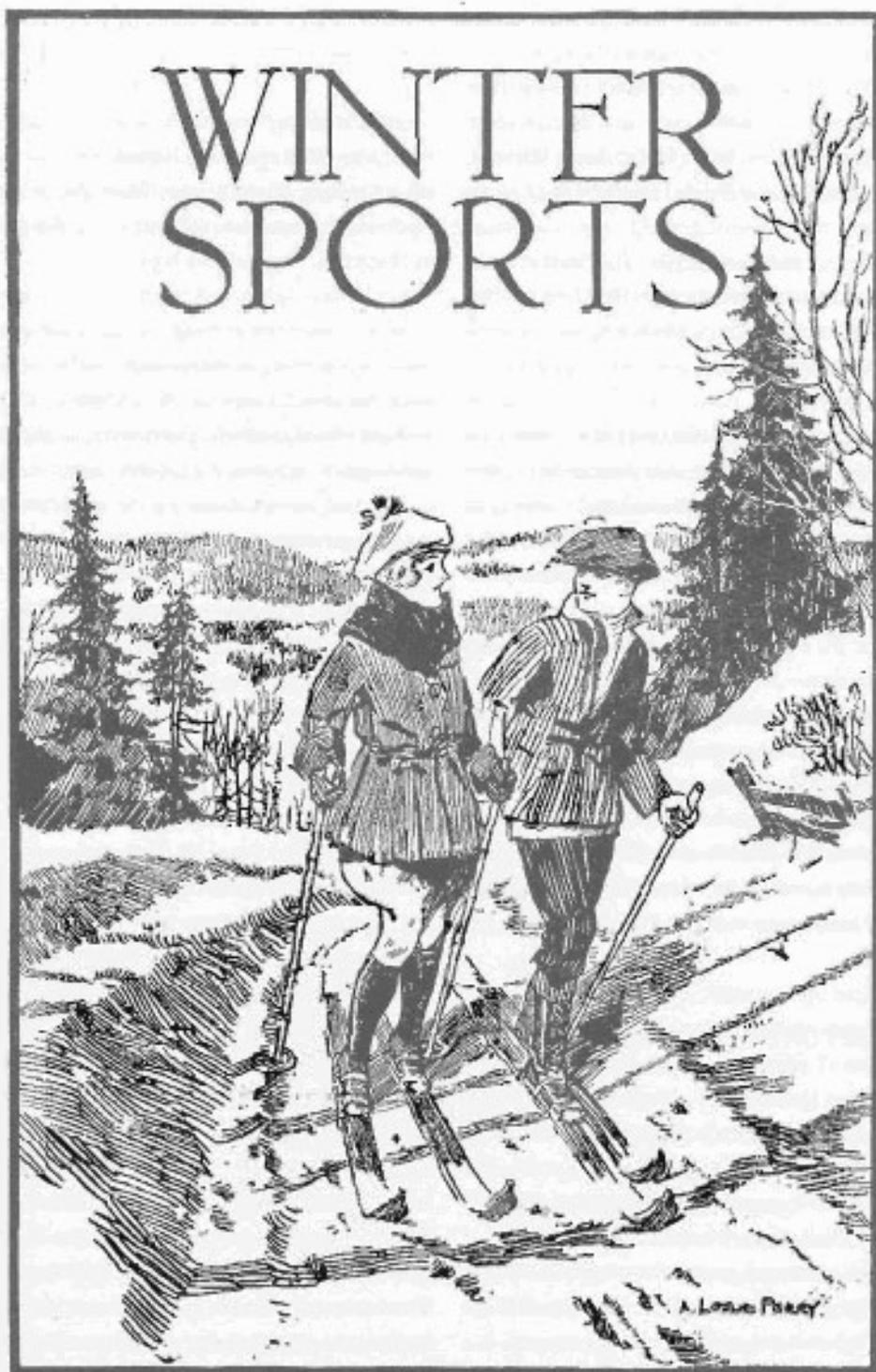


Figure 13. *Winter laid determined siege to the land...
The transportation companies advertized special excursion trains
up north.* Drawing by A.L. Perry, Arch. 1923.

hair, baggy clothes, tortoise-shell glasses and lightning repartee possibly because his subject was not one in which he was particularly interested. He would have liked it better if it had been more exclusively literary, though there were many references to Wells, Shaw, Barry, Bennett, Galsworthy, Walpole and Huxley. (pp.67-68)

For a while, Peter switches allegiance from American to British novelists, lured by their greater sophistication and their ancient society, where families had lived on the same land for centuries:

They seemed to know so much more than the American writers he had been reading and to be surer of themselves (with the possible exception of Dreiser). But it was difficult for him to identify himself with their world. He tried to analyse the trouble and came to the conclusion that it was because the families they wrote about had lived a long time in the same place. Their backgrounds were firm, fixed and secure. In Canada, as in the United States, it was unusual to find a family that had lived in the same house for more than one generation. The children grew up, the boys went to the big cities or to another place where business opportunities were better, and the girls married and adopted their husbands' domiciles. There wasn't much in them [British novels] either about the struggle to make a living; their battles were mostly in the mind. (pp.67-68)

SPRING: BEYOND THE GATES

Winter recedes. Having played football, adapted to his fraternity, drunk tea at the Union and beer at the Pig, and read more novels, Peter further explores the city beyond the campus. Through his fraternity brother and team mate, Don Horwill, Peter meets Neil Richards, visiting from his New England boarding school. Peter is invited to Neil's family house on Upper Drummond Street. It is another step in his education: how the rich live.

The house was enormous . . . Peter was impressed by everything he saw: the rich rugs, the period furniture, the books

in the library, the oil paintings under their individual lights and the quiet efficiency of the servants. (p.70)

Neil looks up to Don as a role model, and tells Peter how Don once had leaped into Lac St-Louis to save a power plant worker from drowning. While Neil talks about Don, Peter, too, muses about Don as the solid, dependable type:

... he was remembering things about Don during the past year: his enthusiasm for football and his utter fearlessness; his concern over his own [Peter's] failure in the mid-term examinations; Don joining in the chorus of a lewd song at the house one Saturday night in such a spirit of fun that the viciousness of the words was somehow neutralized.... the secret of his charm, of course, lay in his abundant good health, his natural optimism and his total lack of affectation.... He doubted if Don had even the average amount of imagination, or if he ever took time for reflection. He was first and foremost a man of action, whereas Peter was not at all sure that he fell even remotely into that classification. (p.71)

Neil is different from both the forthright Don and the cautious Peter. He is more elegant than most Canadians, privately tutored, and reads French novels. His American father had married a French Canadian Montrealer and become a broker in Montreal. Peter is impressed by Neil, the upper class boy, as he had been by Eric's Britishness and Tony's sophistication. Neil regales Peter with his travels: getting tight in Paris when he was fourteen and the like. Peter thinks that Neil's upbringing sounds like something out of a novel. He guesses that Neil is no stranger to sexual adventure: *The French all seemed precocious that way, which probably accounted for it since he was French on his mother's side (p.73).* (Peter wrongly assumes French Canadian attitudes are the same as those of Paris.) At Neil's house, Peter notices numerous French novels. Peter knew little about French literature *but he understood that the French treated sex as of no more importance than food, clothing, or any other feature of day to day*

existence. In that case, early familiarity with it was not so shocking (p.73).

Peter, Neil and Don attend a new McGill tradition, the Red and White Revue. The boys have prepared by having a well-lubricated dinner at the Ritz-Carleton Hotel. Tony Dodds conducts the overture:

It was medley of many things, half-recognizable suggestions of college airs... Scene followed scene – sketch, chorus, blackout – with bewildering rapidity.... The star comedian that year had genius. He ambled all over the stage, over the footlights, on to the piano and into the body of the theatre, ad-libbing his way with a Broadway virtuosity. The co-eds were comely and the wit plentiful.... (Fig. 14). The writers played no favourites: the weaknesses of the Prime Minister at Ottawa, the Mayor of the city, the Principal and the professors were lampooned in satirical sketches; but the satire was kindly and the kidding had a merciful quality. There were occasional bright spots that momentarily stopped the show, as when the Principal, irate, rang for a certain professor, a mathematical wizard with a well-known taste for nut-brown ale, who was momentarily not to be found.

'Find out where he is!' the Principal thundered into the phone. A moment later the instrument tinkled.

'Hello,' he said gruffly.

'Where?' His voice took on a dulcet quality. 'With the Prince of Wales?'

More words on the other end of the wire and the Principal's perceptibly changing expression.

'Oh!' he said frigidly. 'AT the Prince of Wales'. (pp.74-75)

Carroll may have invented this skit, but Principal Sir Arthur Currie and many professors indeed attended McGill Theatre Nights. In March 1923 (Carroll's graduation year), the *Montreal Herald* reported that the audience, including the Principal

and most of the staff, were kept in convulsions of laughter and applauded every act enthusiastically.¹⁹

After two hours, the Revue winds up with "Hail Alma Mater" and the University cheer. Peter, Don and Neil drive in Neil's Cadillac to the cabaret sequel at the Mount Royal Hotel. To keep damages by unruly students down, it is performed in a lower level room with stucco walls, not in the ballrooms. The crockery is solid here. Even the champagne glasses were durable enough to hold ice-cream sundaes. The crowd swelled rapidly, smoke hovered thickly under the low ceiling and the heavy fragrance of perfume and powder mingled with the scent of tobacco (Fig. 15) [p.76]. People order champagne, others drink from bottles and flasks discreetly hidden under tables. A second bottle of Mumm's is deftly substituted for the empty in the wine-bucket under their table. Girls are at a premium; stags look for vulnerable mixed parties. Between the cabaret pieces, there is dancing:

Suddenly Don, who had been searching the crowd with speculative eyes, bounded precipitately to his feet and bore down on a couple dancing in a corner. The girl was smiling encouragement, unknown to her partner, whose back was to the intruder. The cut-in was accomplished with easy dexterity; her crestfallen ex-partner looked dumbly after them... (p.77)

Don does not return. Neil must go back to Groton soon. He complains that it's no fun without girls and tells Peter they'll go somewhere else. Peter asks where. Neil tells him to get in the car and leave it to him. Peter had had a lot to drink and his judgment had waned with the evening; he goes along. Neil drives south of the Mount Royal Hotel and turns west on Dorchester to a decayed, once elegant neighbourhood, between Guy and Atwater Streets. *A few decades previous this had been the most elegant section of the city, before fashion had pushed on seeking the heights [up the Mountain]. Some old families still dwelt in the vicin-*

19 *The Montreal Herald*, 23 March 1923.



Figure 14. It was a medley of many things...
The co-eds were comely and the wit plentiful.

ity, in those huge, dark houses well back from the street (p.77). [One of them, the Shaughnessy house, would survive to become part of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in 1989]. A row of smaller houses stood nearer the sidewalk and Neil leads them to one with a rounded facade. They knock and Neil flicks his cigarette lighter to show his face. The madam recognizes him, opens the door, and complains he should have telephoned ahead.

She was a rather stout middle-aged woman, with an ugly face and a kitten in her arms. She had a great deal of hair, not too tidily done; but when she smiled her fleshy features were momentarily transformed and you did not think of her as being ugly. Peter was reminded of certain photographs of celebrated French women he had seen: Bernhardt or Colette or somebody. (p.78)

Neil introduces Peter. They order champagne, brought by a maid. The madam leaves to telephone some girls. At this point, Peter realizes he is in a brothel. Before he can get upset, Neil assures him that it is the most exclusive house in town. While they wait, Peter admires their respectable surroundings:

It was a generously proportioned room and the upright piano, the victrola, the chesterfields back to back, the comfortable chairs and the rich rug might have decorated any bougeoise living room. For a brothel it was on an elaborate scale, vastly different from the houses in the old segregated district [further east, visited earlier by Peter and Tony Dodds]. 'This is where the big shots have their fun,' Neil continued. 'She's very particular and she knows everybody. She doesn't even let the girls stay here. She telephones.'

While they wait, Peter enjoys his champagne: *As the new wine sent its giddy vapours spiralling up into his head, Peter experienced a simultaneous volte-face of spirit. Now I'm beginning to see life, he thought, developing enthusiasm for the adventure. This is life. This is why I came to a large city. This is experience. I don't have to go all the way and yet I can learn something.* (p.80)

The girls arrive. Both are French Canadian. Neil has met Anette before; she sits on his knee and they talk in French. The second girl is dark-haired, quietly dressed, pretty, like the office girls Peter sees in the trams. Her girl-next-door attractiveness is fatal to Peter's resolve merely to window shop. They warm up on champagne. Neil and his girl disappear upstairs. Peter's girl is named Jeanne. They speak English. She asks:

'You like me?' Her soft dark eyes regarded him anxiously. His blood was in a tumult. He tried to answer, but his heart beat hollowly in his throat and he didn't dare speak. As he nodded his head, she gave a little sigh of satisfaction and laid her dark head on his shoulder Only half-protestingly, he allowed her to lead him by the hand, like a small boy, up the stairs. He stood in the darkness just inside the door, shaken by the fierceness of his own desire, as she fumbled for the lamp on the bed table. When she turned up the light, he lay down shivering on the bed. She lay down beside him, laughing a little, and put solicitous arms around him.... Years of repressed emotions welled up in him, shaking him like a reed in a strong breeze. A long sigh escaped him and his arms tightened around her. He was gone now. He couldn't think coherently in the grip of something stronger than reason. It was delicious to yield. (pp.81-82)

Peter wakes up in the house alone, hungover, filled with loathing ... for everything that had happened (p.82). He creeps out of the silent house, terrified he may have caught a venereal disease. Fortunately, he has not.²⁰ The episode amounts to a critique, however unconscious, of society's consignment of sex to the extremes of marriage, illicit affairs and brothels. The consequent division of women into respectable and loose in turn fostered the attitudes which Peter had noticed among his fraternity brothers. They pursued (or pretended to pursue) women of uncertain reputation, but scorned (or at least pretended to scorn) encounters with respectable girls from their own milieu.



Figure 15. The heavy fragrance of perfume and powder mingled with the scent of tobacco.

There was a tradition around the house against 'softing.' Going to debutante dances or to social affairs of any kind that were eminently respectable came under this general heading. Rho Delta was the only fraternity on the campus that did not give an annual dance, and it took pride in its reputation of never having had a female cross its threshold. Other fraternities were ridiculed on this score. 'Fancy guys,' the Rho Delts said in disgust.... Let a man put on evening clothes and he was immediately the target for catcalls and raspberries. But the fact remained that they did put on evening clothes.

Reluctantly, they accepted invitations to dances, but always proclaimed they had no choice; the hostess was a family friend, or married to a business associate of their fathers or summered in the same place.

However, let it be known that one of their number had been seen with the dancer from the Venetian Gardens, or some other girl of racy reputation or such status in life that his intentions could not be mistaken, then his conduct was generally commended (Figs. 16,17). He was a 'smooth performer', 'a card', or 'a terrible man.' It was pose clear through, yet some of the younger and more impressionable lads were taken in by it. It was, too, the kind of pose that was very easy to adopt after being exposed to it every day for months, as Peter discovered.... Later, he found that decent girls were attracted by men who were known to cultivate questionable women. That was a problem that constantly stumped him.... he could never quite make up his mind whether it was because they offered a certain amount of danger and were therefore exciting companions, or because they were almost always men with easy, pleasant manners who knew how to be agreeable and entertaining. (pp.50-51)

These contemporary attitudes, with their contradictions, were about to change, to some extent. This change is reflected in novels after 1940, including some set in Montreal, which drop the double standard. Brothel episodes give way to premarital sexual relations between equal partners, who usually plan to marry eventually. For example, in the best seller *Earth and High Heaven* (1944), Gwethalyn Graham's heroine (incidentally, a McGill graduate) slips up north to the Laurentian mountains (the preferred getaway spot for such encounters) for a romantic interlude with the man she intends to marry.²¹ This evolution may reflect the uncertainties of the Second World War, spurring people to experience life to the full while they could.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, the snow runs off the mountain; April rains are over and spring exams await. Students occupy every chair in the Redpath Library (its stacks expanded in 1922 to hold an ever-growing collection). The students are distracted by a thousand sounds and smells which float *through the open windows to distract the brain-straining seekers after knowledge and degrees. A fife-and-drum corps passing on Sherbrooke Street lifted weary eyes from the printed pages, and the medley of automobile klaxons, snatches of laughter under the windows and shouted conversation across McTavish Street broke in on three hundred reveries.... Spring is not the best time of the year for mental concentration.* (pp.85-86)

The fraternity studies and sunbathes. Peter and his English roommate Eric wake to steamship whistles in the harbour. Ever ready for a break from studying, Peter walks with Eric down Beaver Hall Hill

20 Hume Cronyn's description of his first experience closely resembles Peter's. Cronyn, *A Terrible Liar*, 79-80.

21 Gwethalyn Graham, *Earth and High Heaven*, (Philadelphia & New York: J.P. Lippincott Company 1944) in which a Montreal couple, Gentile and Jew, successfully confront anti-Semitism.



Figure 16. *Seen with the dancer from the Venetian Gardens...*
 Drawing by R.A. Montgomery, Arch. 1931.

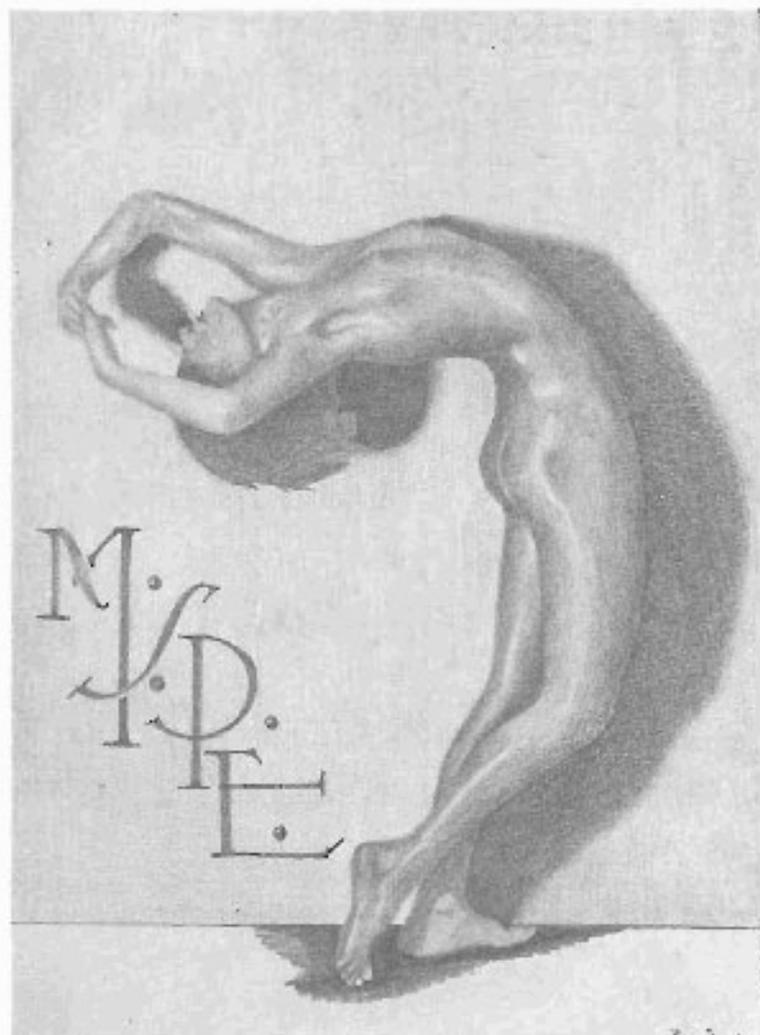


Figure 17. *... or some other girl of racy reputation.*
 Drawing by Pic Ross, late 1920's.

to the heart of the city to the port to see the newly arrived ships. In the 1920s, Montreal was still the main shipping and commercial city of Canada. It is Peter's first visit to the old mercantile part of the city, by the St. Lawrence River, a mile or so from McGill.

He was amazed by its solidity and compactness. It was like another city entirely. The streets were narrow and the traffic all flowed in one direction. The imposing structures of banks rose sheer from the sidewalks. Flat-topped limousines, businessmen's cars, were drawn up along the curbs. (p.86)

They walk from Place d'Armes towards the waterfront. They can smell the spices in the warehouses:

Heavy trays bumped noisily along the cobblestones on Common Street [rue de la Commune]. Men stood in knots before the taverns and cafes and a crowd swarmed in front of the Sailors' Institute. They heard overseas dialects on all sides. Above the cement wall that cut off the wharves from the street were the shipping companies' signs: Cunard Line, White Star Line, Canadian Pacific Steamships. (p. 87)

Eric suggests going to the Canadian Pacific ship dock, where he had landed last fall. They cross through the tracks with their freight cars, go around massive concrete grain elevators and into a long shed.

The place was a hive of activity. A passenger liner and two small freighters were in and men were busy unloading cargo. Boxes slid smoothly down chutes and were arranged in neat piles along the walls. Winches dipped suddenly like gulls into holds and came up with their catch. The stevedores shouted and sweated... Eric and Peter slowed down and peered at the printing on the casings. Crockery and textiles from England. Matches from Sweden. Anchovies from Norway. Soap from France. They sauntered on to a pile of domestic freight waiting to be taken aboard. Automotive parts and breakfast cereals from Ontario. Cheese and aluminum products from Quebec.

Peter felt his economics course coming magically to life (Fig. 18). [p.87]

Eric sees the ship, The Montcalm, on which he had crossed to Montreal. They go aboard. The purser, Murdoch, remembers Eric and lets him show Peter over the ship. Murdoch pours them gins and bitters and spouts on international affairs with all the confidence of the literate seaman.

Murdoch... discussed the world as if it were his own backyard, while they sat and marvelled. To him, Africa was the fascinating continent. It was so big it presented every imaginable phase of life. Europe, he said, was finished. It was over-crowded, its countries too self-conscious and its politicians too unscrupulous. Ghandi was going to make a mess of trouble for the British in India. Australia was wonderful, but the people were lazy and luxury loving. China was a hellhole. Disease and ignorance were rampant, you never knew when you were going to find yourself in the middle of an earthquake or a flood, and the interior was flooded with bandits. The Japs were clean and progressive, though not always trustworthy. Their main object now was to replace their old civilization with a western one and they aped the Americans in everything. That was funny when you considered how much Japan hated the United States. Canada, he thought, was a fine young country with a great future – the exact antithesis, so to speak, of European countries. South Africa, Canada and the Argentine were the three countries that impressed him as having the most promise. (pp. 89-90)

Peter asks Murdoch what he reads and Murdoch declares for Pope, Kipling, Masefield and W.W. Jacobs; he feels that Conrad *doesn't write about the sea as I know it* (p.91). Afterwards, Peter and Eric look longingly at a Cunarder making dock, its band playing, while passengers crowd the rails.

Peter thought if he ever made any money he'd stop work, pack his bag and go on a non-stop journey that would take him in and out of strange ports forever, preferably

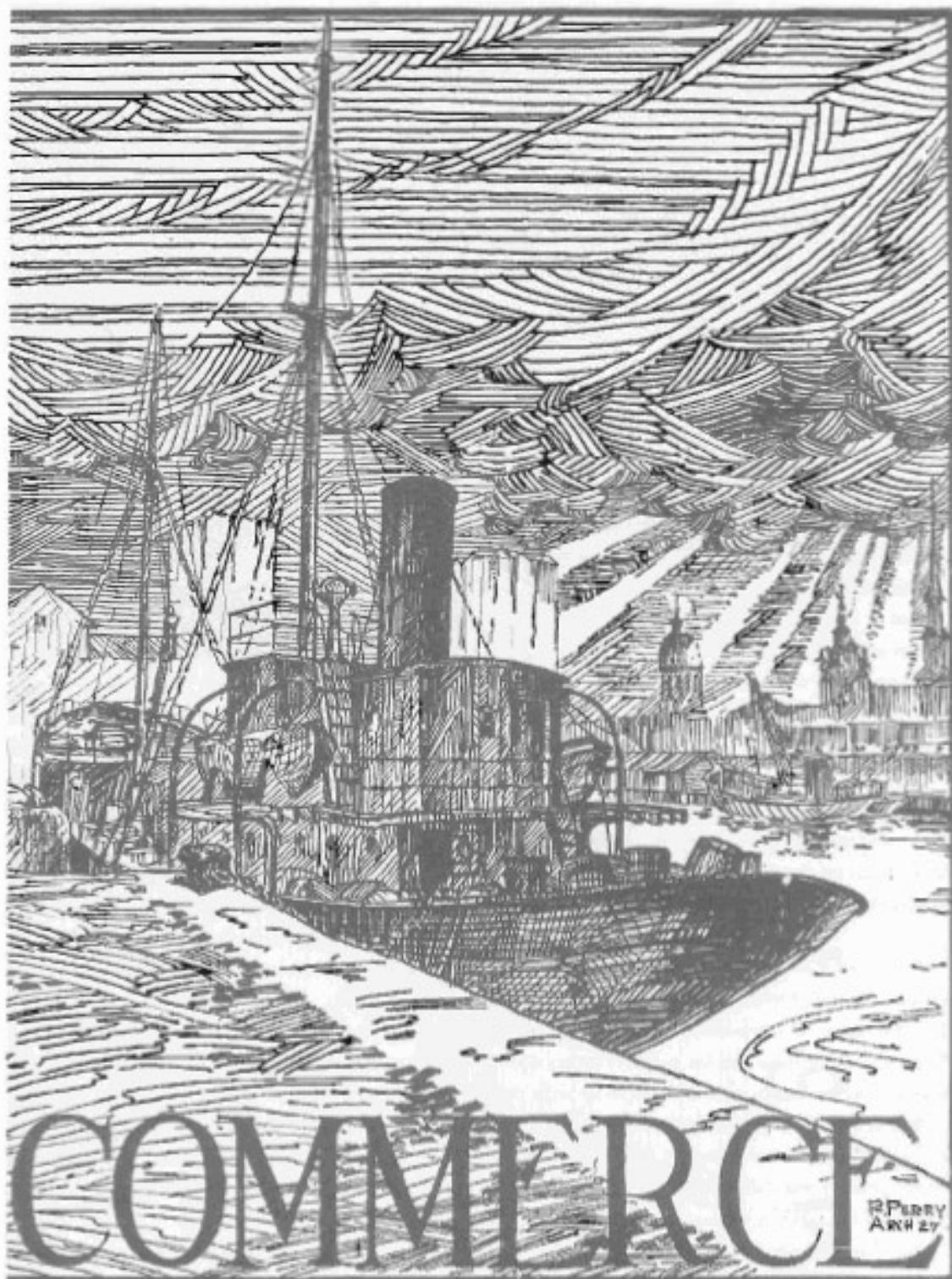


Figure 18. Peter felt his economics course coming magically to life.
Drawing by R. Perry, Arch. 1927.

in the company of a man like Mr. Murdoch, from whom the world withheld few secrets. It was the most pleasing method of acquiring an education and was, at the same time, a clean and satisfying way of spending money. It was a wonderful world, packed with beauty and adventure for the imaginative; only the dull found it humdrum and oppressive. The spirit of spring was like wine in his blood, giving a lift to his imagination and colour to anything his mind played upon. (p.92)

Murdoch's ship will return soon and Eric plans to take it back to Europe for the summer break. Peter and Eric drop into the Neptune Cafe, full of sailors and riffraff out of a Dos Passos novel who, Peter thinks, have more fun than people chained to a desk. What does Peter want to do this summer? *I don't know. Travel – or fall in love – anything but lie in a hammock with a book all summer.* Peter wonders if reading is a poor substitute for living. *A woman would be preferable, of course,* Eric agrees dryly (p.93). Eric and Peter agree to move into digs together next year; they have had enough fraternity regimentation.

A little later, sure he's done adequately on his exams, Peter drops into the Pig and ends up drinking with Tim Manson, the fraternity brother from the Canadian West, who had been dumped in the freezing tub for suggesting that new men be treated better. Tim is fed up with the east, McGill, the Rho Deltas and the whole snobby outfit.... *'I come from a part of the country where people are honest and straight-forward – at least I think they are. They don't say one thing and think another.... I understand now,'* Tim went on with an extravagant gesture, *'why our public men out there are so bitter against the east. The bastards are so slick you never know where you stand with them. Promises mean nothing. If you take them seriously the joke's on you. Look at the fraternity's initiation ceremony. Do you know I was fool enough to be impressed by it?'* (p.96)

In spite of Tim's disillusionment, when Tim parts for the West, they use the fraternity's secret handshake. Peter contemplates this outburst of Canadian regionalism; he realizes Tim hates the lack of ideal-

ism as well as the competitiveness and opportunism students pick up at McGill and pursue for success in later life. Tim reinforces Peter's scepticism towards his world at McGill yet, at the same time, he is annoyed at Tim for disturbing his complacency. Peter admits to himself that he wants to join the successful crowd, whatever their faults may be.

Celebrating the end of exams, Peter is picked up by Don Horwill and some girls in a car. Among them is Anne Somers, whose table at the Ritz-Carlton he had crashed after the football dinner. She is to marry the next week, but meanwhile is bent on a good time and specially asked Don to bring Peter. She says, laughing at his surprise, *'I ordered you, Mr. Rice, so you'd better ride with me.'* Peter asks where the groom is. *'In Atlantic City – resting.'* They drive to the rather passé Venetian Gardens rather than a fashionable hotel where Anne's crowd might recognize her partying sans fiancé. They have a bottle of wine. Don was



Figure 19.

Peter confined his attentions almost exclusively to Anne...

Drawing by R.C. Bettes, B.Arch. 1928.

giving the girl with him a mild rush. They were friends of long standing, and she had come up from Toronto to be one of Anne's bridesmaids. Peter confined his attentions almost exclusively to Anne (p.100) [Fig. 19]. On this elusive note the story of Peter's first year ends.

SEQUEL: PETER'S SECOND YEAR

The novel continues with a fragment of Peter's second year, mainly his date with a beautiful American college girl. Peter and Eric have moved into a flat. The sequel hints that Peter's life will be less McGill- and fraternity-oriented, possibly romantic. It is already November; Peter can relax now that football and training tables have ended. Peter has time to read, loaf and have fun. He continues the successful strategy he adopted after his disaster in his exams the previous year. By spending two hours a day in the library, he can pass his courses and keep his evenings free to read or go out.

A friend, Bill Bjalkie, invites him to a charity ball, preceded by dinner at the Blakies' grand house. It is a last minute thing; an extra man is needed to escort a visiting American girl to the ball. Peter asks what she looks like; Blakie does not know. Peter recalls that most American girls he has met have been attractive and accepts. Luckily, Eric has gone out to a film so Peter helps himself to Eric's evening clothes, making a mental note to have them copied by his own tailor. His girl, Betty Parker, turns out to be a real beauty: *She combined, with startling effect, dark skin and yellow brown eyes with her fair hair. It gave her a peculiar and erotic distinction. Her face was oval and when she smiled he caught glimpses of flashing, even teeth.* There follows an elegant meal of soup, oysters and chablis, chicken and white burgundy, a salad and champagne, and cheese.... *In the shadowy candle-lit room, the light gleamed brightly on their starched shirt fronts, the bare arms and shoulders of the girls and the shining silver* (sequel, p.4). Peter decides there is a lot to be said for the formal side of gentility.

Betty pleases Peter by saying she has heard that he is not only a football hero, but intelligent as well.

After they have discussed modern writers, Peter flatters Betty by telling her she is not only beautiful, but so intelligent she is almost a blue stocking. They depart for the ball at ten. Peter feels strongly attracted to Betty. *She has brains and beauty. They dance:*

Like other American girls he had known, she was an extremely competent dancer.... She was slim and almost his own height and their movements synchronized perfectly. He was conscious of the strange, illusive scent she used, and the occasional touch of her temple on his cheek as she looked about. Their immediate intimacy, legitimized by the modern dance forms, almost took his breath away (Fig. 20). [sequel, pp.7-8]

Betty enjoys being Peter's date. She is gratified by how many people greet Peter—and then notice her. After the ball, at midnight supper at an unnamed hotel, she discovers that Peter would like to write some day. He learns she is nineteen, goes to Smith College in Massachusetts, and is interested in books, the theatre and travel. She thinks Canadians speak



Figure 20. *Their immediate intimacy, legitimized by the modern dance forms, almost took his breath away.*
Drawing by S.E. Root.

with an English accent and that the men are more mature than their American counterparts – more like Englishmen:

Back home all the men seemed to be interested in was finishing everything that was in the bottle, driving fast cars and reducing their golf scores. Every party was spoiled because the men all gathered in a room and drank, and talked about golf or the stock market. She guessed that prohibition [still in effect in the States until 1933] might have had something to do with it. Civilized society seemed to have disappeared with the introduction of the Eighteenth Amendment. (sequel, pp.8-9)

Looking at the other supper tables, she asks Peter to point out the celebrities. The Governor General, who is also the Visitor of McGill, is there [Viscount Willingdon, G.G., 1926-1931]. Betty says, *He's a knockout, isn't he? He looks awfully distinguished (Fig 21)*. She thinks the McGill Chancellor [Edward Beatty] has a nice, strong face (Fig. 22). Peter points out equestrians on the Governor General's staff: *Some of them have titles and enterprising young Canadian girls often marry them. Betty hopes Canadian society is based on titles or at least something more glamorous than money making: In Boston or New York it's always Mr. So and So, the Buckwheat King, or the Steel Magnate or the Motor Manufacturer. Peter disillusiones her; money runs Canada as much as it does the United States. Betty persists: That may be true, but when I'm anywhere in the British Empire I can't help but think of its traditions. I can feel the difference. Tell me, what's Quebec City like? (Sequel, pp. 9-10)*

Betty is headed to Quebec City the next day. The manuscript ends here. Had it been completed, a romance might have budded or Peter might have met some of McGill's women students on the steps of the Arts Building, a popular gathering place. We leave Peter, one hopes, with a life as long as his creator's, the Depression and war ahead, but good times too, in the vibrant city of Montreal.



Figure 21. *He's a knockout isn't he?
He looks awfully distinguished.*
Viscount Willingdon, Visitor of McGill,
by Kathleen Shackleton, late 1920s.

.....

While Carroll excelled at short pieces, he may have found a novel too long or did not know where he wanted his story to go. Still, he serves as McGill's Scott Fitzgerald, its chronicler of football, fraternities and student social life in the 1920s. Carroll touches on most other traditional college novel themes: studies and ideas, student diversity, yearning for travel, and exposure to sex and wealth. While some college novels avoid identifiable settings in an attempt to

be universal, the best-known ones are set in real places and times. Peter Rice's story is inextricable from its snapshots of the McGill campus, Montreal's port, the Student Union (Fig. 23), the Pig and Whistle and the Red and White Revue. His enthusiasm for Montreal reminds us that students choose McGill partly for its location. The story touches specifically Canadian themes: Montreal's importance as a port and its nightlife, Toronto's dowdiness, Canadian regional alienation, Montreal's French-English chasm, British and American misconceptions of Canada, and the Anglophone belief that the French were experts in matters sexual. And in its unique fictional portrayal of Coach Shaughnessy and football practices and matches, the novel foreshadows Carroll's nonfiction writing about sports and sports characters.

Peter's friends were McGill types of the 1920s: Don Howell – football player, fraternity man, regular guy and role model; Tony Dodds – subversive intellectual and tempter; and Eric Mowat – British, amiable, with an outsider's view of Canada. While Tony was Canadian, the three other characters symbolizing sophistication, Eric, Neil and Betty were brought up outside Canada. The deepest study is of Peter himself – very Canadian, the easy-going, enigmatic observer, athlete, partygoer, and aspiring writer. Peter and his friends disprove the idea, found in many college novels, that college makes the man. McGill offers learning, experience and Montreal, without the lifelong molding attributed to Harvard and Oxford. While Peter loves McGill, he criticizes its weakness in literature and the arts and his fraternity's hazing and contempt for dances.

Carroll's novel reveals both the American influences on old Scots-inspired McGill and the growing similarities of college culture across the continent at the time. By the 1920s, McGill aspired to a huge, American-style physical plant, extending beyond basic classrooms and labs to all aspects of student life – gymnasiums and stadiums, theatres, convo-



Figure 22. Betty says McGill Chancellor Sir Edward Beatty has a nice strong face.

cation halls and grand residential quads. Percy Nobbs, McGill Architecture professor, unsuccessfully proposed plans to transform the haphazard campus of the 1920s into a Shangri-La of collegiate monumentality. (Instead, it would be the French-speaking Université de Montréal on the other side of the Mountain which would build the city's utopian campus, designed in yellow brick Deco by Ernest Cormier.) Like American universities, McGill expanded its curriculum of courses in arts and science and the traditional professions, law and medicine, in response to utilitarian demands for training in such developing professions as commerce, nursing, librarianship, teaching, home economics, and scientific



Figure 23. The McGill Union (now the McCord Museum of Canadian History) in the mid 20s.

agriculture. The most obvious American influence was McGill's American Greek letter fraternity system. McGill also had adopted the American football ethos as good for alumni relations, fund-raising, and for the players themselves. Carroll noted of football's spokesman, Shaughnessy: "Many of the young men he coached at McGill went on to become leaders in their chosen fields: industry, finance and the professions. He never forgot any of them and it's safe to say that none of them ever forgot him."²²

Traditionally, university experiences have been similar the world over; students attend lectures in specific places, whether surrounded by meadows or taverns. Democratically, distance learning and night school extended the university beyond its old constituency of youth and the leisured or wealthy. Now the Internet seems poised to compete with, even replace, the university (which is a geographically and physically defined place with its storehouse of books and professors) with quick, free knowledge from everywhere on earth. If economics can be learned electronically, anytime, anyplace, will there still be a need for a Leacock in his tattered gown in room such-and-such in the Arts Building at 11 A.M.? Technology may threaten traditional campus-based learning but the university coming-of-age experience celebrated in college novels and by Carroll will probably survive – not only in front of computer screens, but also inside the old grey buildings of McGill, where Peter, Eric, and Tony went to classes and dreamed of their lives to come.

POSTSCRIPT: DINK CARROLL

Carroll put his passion for sport, literature and quiet

observation into Peter Rice. The novel was unfinished, but Carroll's life offers a denouement to Peter's literary ambitions, the life Peter might have led had he existed. Austen Joseph Carroll (nicknamed "Dink") was born in Guelph, Ontario on 12 November 1899 and died in Montreal on 8 April 1991. His father was a teacher and lawyer from County Cork, Ireland. As a youth, Carroll played golf, baseball, football and boxed. He played backfield for the Guelph Collegiate Institute in the Dominion Finals in 1918 against the University of Toronto. After a year at Toronto, he came to McGill in 1920, right after McGill under Shaughnessy won the Canadian university football championship (Fig. 24). In 1987 Carroll recalled this 1919 team which opened Molson Stadium as "unbeaten, untied, and its goal line never crossed." Though McGill teams did not win the championship during his own years, Carroll was a star player. The *McGill Daily* (7 Nov. 1922) described Carroll, who played, as required, quarterback and halfback: "by far the outstanding player on the McGill team.... His punting was steady, and his return of kicks nothing short of sensational at times, but the department in which he excelled was in running through broken fields for long gains...." Carroll's football episodes at McGill were long remembered; in 1969 Judge Hank Gaboury suggested: "Have Dink relate how he saved the day for Old McGill back in 1924 [1922?] when he made a running catch of a 75 yard boot by Warren Snyder that would make Hal Patterson look like a rookie." Quiet, Carroll was called the "Whispering quarterback" and a "phlegmatic phenomenon." He was light for a player, weighing so little (140 pounds) that "If I was going anywhere, I had to get there in a hurry. I needed acceleration."²³ After graduating in Law in

23 Dink Carroll, "McGill win stirs ghosts of 1919 team," *The Montreal Gazette*, 31 Dec. 1987 (on McGill's winning the 1987 collegiate championship Vanier Cup, coached by Charlie Baillie, whose father Don was on the 1919 team). On Carroll's playing, see also *McGill Daily*, 28 April 1923, 3; Gaboury to Mr. Moss, undated, file of letters on the occasion of Gazette retirement dinner for Carroll, 16 Dec. 1969, Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C.4. A third-year law student, M. Gaboury, wrote a skit for the 1925 Red and White Revue; *Old McGill* 1923, 93; Tim Burke's column, *The Montreal Gazette*, 7 Nov. 1980.

24 Letter from Victor F. Obeck to Carroll, 10 Sept. 1949, Correspondence, 1945-1949, Carroll Papers, McGill University Archives, MG 4151, C.5; Zeta Psi House Account bill, 27 May 1937, Correspondence 1935-1939, Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C.5

1923, Carroll kept in touch with McGill and occasionally boarded at Zeta Psi's elegant new house, opened in 1925, designed by A.T. Galt Durnford. He helped Vic Obeck get the job of McGill's Director of Athletics in 1949 (and with other journalists) promoted Obeck's program.²⁴

Instead of practising law, Carroll worked in sports organizations, including, apparently, the Toronto Maple Leafs Baseball Club, and possibly in advertising and investing as well; his early working life is not documented in his archive. According to his author's blurb in *Esquire* for his story "The Amateur," (January 1936, p.14), following graduation, he had worked in the publicity department of the Canadian Pacific Railway, then for an advertising agency, and more recently as a sports journalist. (The McGill novel includes a dig at the CPR's Indians-and-cowboys advertising of Canada, swallowed by Eric; Carroll also wrote unpublished fiction set in advertising.) *Montreal Gazette* sportswriter Tim Burke recalled that Carroll had always been lured by the romance of writing: "I guess if you read a lot, like I did, you want to start putting something down yourself" (said Carroll). According to Burke, until the Depression, Carroll led a carefree life in Montreal, writing advertising copy "and having a roaring good time around town with his pals from McGill." Carroll observed that he found the Depression traumatic but educational, uprooting him, delaying his marriage, and teaching him that almost everyone needs help some time or another. At the Depression, Carroll set out for Toronto and wrote freelance.²⁵

Carroll came into his own as sports editor at the *Montreal Gazette* from 1942 to 1969; he contributed articles until 1987. In his maiden column on 13 July

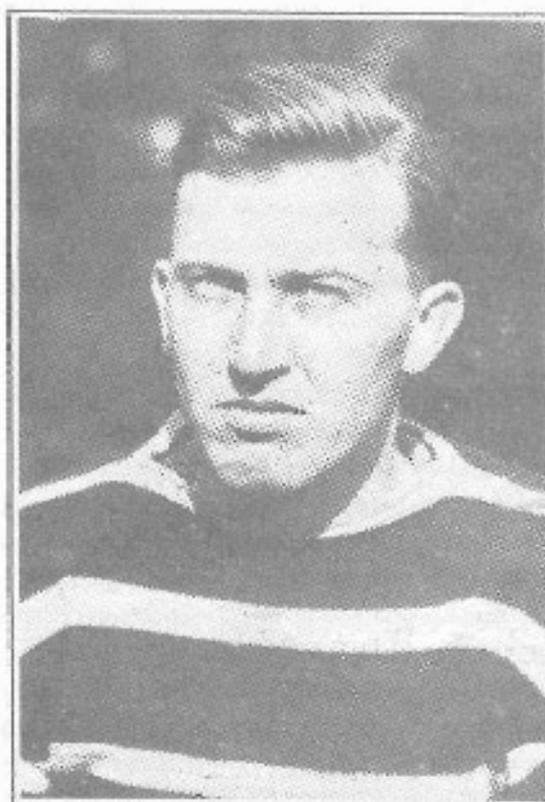


Figure 24. Dink Carroll, McGill Football Team, ca. 1921.

1942, Carroll told how right after graduating from McGill, he had nearly gotten a job on the *Gazette*—until he was asked if he had worked on the *McGill Daily*. Carroll replied, no, he'd been too busy, once football seasons were over, trying to catch up with his class work. So a *McGill Daily* alumnus got the job instead. Carroll added that despite this setback, he never strayed far from the sports field, which fascinated him: "The sports world is an exact replica of the great world, only smaller."²⁶ As *Gazette* sports editor,

25 *Esquire*, Jan. 1936, 14. Biographical information is from the columns of Tim Burke, *The Montreal Gazette*, 7 Nov. 1980; Paul Rimstead, *The Toronto Sun*, 10 Nov. 1980; and Bob Morrissey, *The Montreal Gazette*, 12 Nov. 1989; Mark Thibault, *The Montreal Daily News*, 11 Nov. 1988. The 1980 articles arise from an 80th birthday party for Carroll, when he was really 81; Morrissey's for the 90th birthday. David Sherman, "Sports scribe Dink Carroll 'rediscovered' at age 80," *The Montreal Gazette*, 10 Nov. 1980, notes that Carroll acquired the nickname "Dink" when as a child he could not pronounce it and asked for a "dink" of water. Coincidentally, G.M. Johnson's *Stover at Yale* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1912) has as protagonist a football player nicknamed "Dink," who critiques Yale's curriculum and its clubs and social customs as Peter does at McGill.

26 Carroll's column, *The Montreal Gazette*, 13 July 1942.

Carroll flourished in the Montreal of the 1940s and 1950s, eloquently exhumed by William Weintraub in *City Unique* (1996), who describes late-night dining after hockey games at Slitkin's and Slotkin's, a sports and journalists' hangout where "Morley Callaghan, in town from Toronto, would sit for hours, drinking with his pal Dink Carroll ... and avidly absorbing local colour for use in the novel he was writing about Montreal."²⁷ Carroll and Callaghan talked about their writing; perhaps they discussed Carroll's McGill story or Callaghan's own university novel, set at Toronto (*The Varsity Story*, 1948).

Carroll's colleagues admired not only his clear writing but his gentlemanly attitudes. His obituary calls him "a warm-hearted columnist who wrote with clarity and avoided embarrassing a fumbling athlete." It had an anecdote from Brodie Snyder about one of the few times Carroll's column caused offence – something about wrestling. Two "huge and ugly" wrestlers showed up in the sports department of the *Montreal Gazette*, late in the day when Dink was working alone: "One of the guys inquired: 'Dink Carroll?' Dink sized up the situation in a moment and said: 'Sorry, he left for Florida on vacation this morning.'"²⁸

Carroll married Margaret (Peggy) Porter, from Fredericton, N.B. She would later be a reference librarian at McGill, guiding generations of students (including the present writer) through mazes of catalogues and bibliographical aids. Carroll's letters to her in 1935, before they married, mentioned that he had been writing articles and stories and showing them to Morley Callaghan: "Do you realize that, at the rate I'm going, I'm doing almost a piece a week,

either an article or a story?"²⁹ Peggy Carroll wrote about her husband and his sportswriting methods in 1991, not long after his death:

"He had a fantastic memory... the athletes, their managers, etc. spoke freely before Dink & he did not take notes. For example usually on Saturdays when teams arrived for the weekend games and often stayed at the Mount Royal Hotel, they talked to Dink quite freely. No tape recorders then. He was often alerted to their comings & goings by a character 'Jockey Fleming' who loved the athletes because they often gave him a tip. He in turn would alert Dink (no tipping there). I can remember him interviewing such memorable characters as Jack Adams, the Manager of the Detroit Red Wings – and many others. These interviews would be used in his daily columns. When Dink covered baseball for the Royals International League team in Montreal, he sat up in the box & kept the official score.... Dink was naturally a wit & a story teller & there were so many odd characters around Montreal in those days. That was one reason Morley Callaghan loved Montreal.... He and Dink were friends in Toronto of course & Dink used to read Morley's stories over before he sent them out & sometimes made suggestions for alterations." As did his fellow journalists, she notes that her husband had the same literary spirit as the authors in his library: Graham Greene, Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, Dos Passos and Fitzgerald.³⁰

David Sherman's account in 1980 of Carroll complements Peggy Carroll's. Besides noting that

27 William Weintraub, *City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996), 133. Callaghan's Montreal novels were *The Loved and the Lost* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1951) and *The Many Colored Coat* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1960); the latter depicts Slitkins and Slotkins, about which see also Al Palmer, *Montreal Confidential*, 33-34; and Ken Johnstone, "Slotkin Rides Again," *The Montrealer*, 37, no. 5 (May 1963): 24-8.

28 Dick Bacon, "Clarity, fairness Carroll's fortes" (obituary), *The Montreal Gazette*, 9 April 1991.

29 Letter from Carroll to Margaret Porter, postmarked 28 Aug. 1935; letter from Carroll to Margaret Porter (undated); and correspondence with Peggy Carroll née Porter, Carroll Papers, McGill University Archives, MG 4151, C.4.

30 Letter from Peggy Carroll to Robert Michel (then archivist for historical records, McGill), ca. 3 July 1991, in McGill University Archives Accession file 91-028. Jockey Fleming's exploits as a Montreal character, who sang at stags and inveigled himself into most sports events, are described in Al Palmer, *Montreal Confidential*, 19-21.

Hugh MacLennan and Mordecai Richler admired Carroll's style and literacy, he pointed out that Carroll turned down the usual sportswriter's perks:

"What set him apart from many of his colleagues was his rejection of the little brown envelopes and the out-and-out pay cheques many teams routinely issued to keep the reporters happy.... Athletes and coaches sought him out as a drinking buddy and confidant, knowing if something compromising slipped out between the fifth and sixth round of drinks at a hangout like Slitkins & Slotkins on Dorchester Blvd., Dink could be trusted not to print it. 'Sometimes I tried to protect the players from themselves,' he says. Sherman noted that Canadiens coach Toe Blake called Carroll 'the most honest newspaperman I've ever seen.' He avoided office politics and the office – 'You can't learn anything at the office,' he says."³¹

Carroll may have been inspired to start a novel about McGill by Fitzgerald's example. But during his later career of nonfictional writing, he admired Hemingway for his natural style which turned sports into literature. For both men, sports, like writing, meant overcoming obstacles with skill and valour. Carroll's papers include several Hemingway short stories, including "Cat in the rain" and "Big Two-Hearted River" torn out of Hemingway's 1925 collection *In Our Time*, as well as *Life* and *Time* issues with cover stories on Hemingway. When Hemingway died in 1962, Carroll wrote admiringly of Hemingway's "fresh and original" style as well as his interest in sports. Carroll remarked that: "We met him only

once and that in the Cafe Floridita in Havana four or five years ago. It was disappointing because it was three in the morning, he was tired after an evening with some U.S. naval officers and was on his way home. It's a matter of even greater regret that we can no longer look forward to reading more of his work, which gave us so much enjoyment."³²

Carroll was the rare sports writer who could hold forth on literature. A.J.M. Smith (one of the McGill "Aesthetes") congratulated him for his articles on Hemingway and Faulkner "as among the very best of the many things written on the deaths of those guys." Carroll's colleagues still recall his casual confidence; Gazette columnist L. Ian Macdonald recently referred to Carroll's "gift of the gentle putdown." Once Macdonald had argued "the case for Fitzgerald v. Ernest Hemingway" and Carroll pointed out he had discussed this subject with Hemingway himself, in Havana.³³ Carroll's lifestyle may have had a touch of Hemingway's: a correspondent in 1940 asks "Who is the chap you knocked down in Toronto and made him call quits?" Carroll boxed in his youth and continued in a Montreal athletic club after graduation. When covering Canadiens vs. Rangers hockey in New York, Carroll would stop by Stillman's Gym and talk to the characters who hung about, sometimes putting them in his columns.³⁴

At Carroll's eightieth birthday, columnist Paul Rimstead pointed out that unlike many sportswriters, who are frustrated athletes, Carroll would have liked to be a novelist like MacLennan or Richler. MacLennan praised Carroll's *Gazette* columns to his students for their concise, clear style and thanked Carroll for praising him in a column in April 1950

31 David Sherman, "Sports scribe Dink Carroll 'rediscovered' at age 80," *The Montreal Gazette*, 10 Nov. 1980.

32 Carroll's *Montreal Gazette* column "The Playing Field," subtitled "The Late Ernest Hemingway" (clipping, no date, ca. 1962); Hemingway stories: Carroll Papers, MG4151, C.2 file 5.

33 Carroll Papers, MG4151, C.6, Correspondence 1960-1964; L. Ian Macdonald's column, *The Montreal Gazette*, 5 May 2000.

34 Letter from Theo (no surname) to Carroll, 10 Sept. 1940, Correspondence 1940-1945, Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C.5. Rimstead, *The Montreal Gazette*, 12 Nov. 1989.

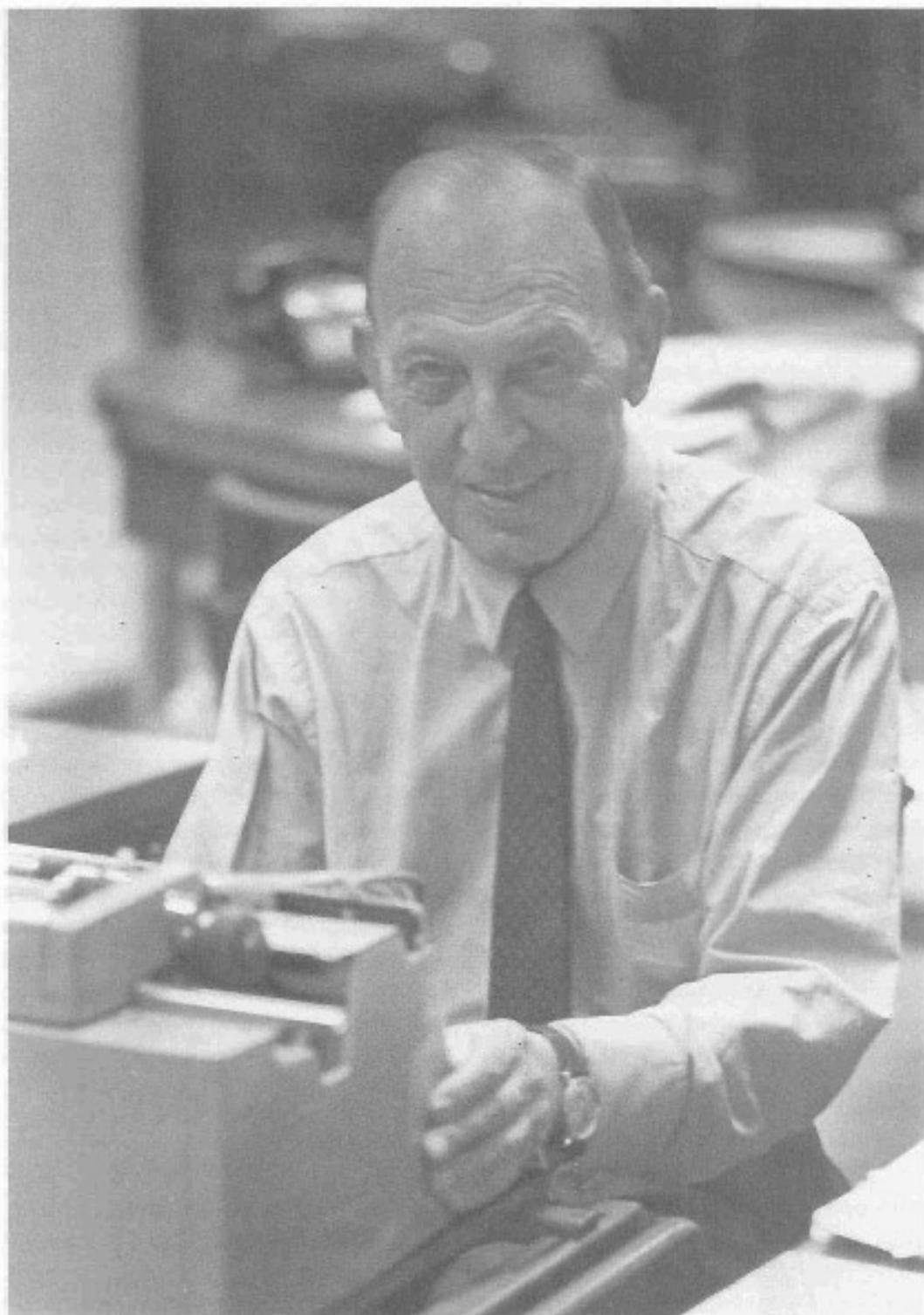


Figure 25. Carroll at his desk at the Montreal Gazette, late 1950s.

(Fig. 25). Once in a while, Carroll got MacLennan hockey tickets. Another McGill friend, Professor Raymond Boyer, wrote asking him to resolve a question about baseball rules. When Carroll retired as sports editor in 1969, a reader praised his "informative articles; your tolerant outlook; your comfortable English," which avoided the emotional verbosity of most sports writers.³⁵

Carroll's avocations of journalism, fiction and sports fused in his McGill novel, particularly in Coach Connelly, the only important character obviously drawn from life, based on Shag Shaughnessy. Carroll immortalized Shaughnessy nonfictionally as well. In 1951 he tabulated Shaughnessy's contributions to Canadian and McGill football: how Shaughnessy had taught McGill players organized line play instead of haphazard blocking to open a hole for the ball carrier; taught two on one blocking; established a two man secondary defence line; and introduced the split buck, and formations which were "simple devices for putting

into effect Napoleon's theory of winning battles: 'Get the most men at the right place at the right time.'³⁶ At Shaughnessy's death in 1969, Carroll summed up his profound influence on Canadian football: "He was the first coach in Canada to use linebackers, the huddle and the unbalanced line. He persuaded the rule makers to drop the side-scrims and reduce the number of players on a team from 14 to 12, to adopt the direct pass from centre instead of heeling the ball out, and to open up the game by extending the blocking zone ... 'Football is a team game and any rule that prevents a player from helping a teammate advance the ball is a bad rule, he [Shaughnessy] pointed out Any rule that opens up the game and reduces the risk of injury is a good rule.'³⁷

In Carroll's love of football and impressions of Shaughnessy lie the beginnings of this McGill novel and Carroll's sports writing career. Carroll might have liked the idea that his life imitated his fiction and vice versa.

35 Paul Rimstead's column, *The Toronto Sun*, 10 Nov. 1980, 5; several items, 1950s, file 10, "MacLennan", Carroll Papers, MG4151, C4 – MacLennan mentions, 15 April 1950, that he is busy finishing a novel, but suggests lunch in a few weeks; undated letter, file 12, "Boyer", MG 4151, C4; letter from E.B. Anderson to Carroll, 11 November 1969, Correspondence, MG4151, C.6.

36 Dink Carroll, "Frank Shaughnessy – Football Pioneer," *The McGill News* (Fall 1951), 18-19, 21. Cameo real characters in Carroll's novel include Major Forbes, Leacock, and perhaps the waiters at the Pig; and – unnamed – Currie, Beatty, and Willingdon.

37 Carroll, Obituary for Shaughnessy, *The McGill News*, July 1969, 32. Besides inventing new strategies, Shaughnessy wanted a controlled environment for players during the season. During Carroll's McGill days, Shaughnessy advocated not only a training table but also a team residence. Writing about the 1922 season (in *Old McGill* 1924, 79) Shaughnessy lamented: "We have no dormitories at McGill. Therefore a college spirit brought about by constant association is lost. The greatest incentive to development of college spirit is to have men eat and sleep together.... A fighting Won't-be-beaten football team is a wonderful inspiration to any college. We can have that team at McGill and it is worth every sacrifice to obtain it." By the 1923 season, just after Carroll left, Shaughnessy established a "Dormitory" for the football squad in the new addition to the field house and declared: "It was apparent that there was a better feeling in the squad than had existed in a long time. The men slept and ate together, played together, were able to talk football at all times, and I know would have fought for each other" (*Old McGill* 1925, 221). Their duties on the football field done, his players would go on to win the battles of life.

NOTES ON THE MANUSCRIPT OF CARROLL'S MCGILL NOVEL

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

This untitled, undated, unfinished, unpublished typescript novel set at McGill is held by the McGill University Archives in the Austin "Dink" Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C2. It was received from Carroll's widow Peggy Carroll with other papers of Carroll's, including correspondence from Morley Callaghan, in 1991, under the Archives' mandate to acquire private records from McGill's staff, graduates and English-Montreal milieu. While extensive (114 pages), the novel is incomplete with no denouement. It was more likely unfinished than partly lost, as Carroll saved his unpublished fiction. In the brief prologue and sequel, Carroll called his protagonist Peter Rush; the protagonist of the 100 page main body is called Peter Rice. The sequential order of the manuscript is as follows. The prologue "Chapter 1" describes protagonist "Peter Rush" at school in Ontario, hoping to attend McGill; it consists of 4 pages paginated 1 to 4. "Chapter 2" (with the protagonist's name changed to Peter Rice) begins with a new page 1. At page 6, there begins chapter "II." Thence pagination continues consecutively from page 6 to page 100, which concludes chapter "XII" and the narrative of Peter Rice's first year at McGill. There follows an additional 10 pages, paginated 1 to 10, of a second year sequel (with the protagonist's name back to Peter Rush). The prologue and sequel fragments may have been written together to flesh out the narrative of Peter's first year.

The manuscript at McGill Archives is typed (original, top copy), apparently a first draft, with handwritten revisions, on one side of standard 28 X 22.5 cm paper, 114 pages in total. There seems little or no variation in the typeface so presumably the typescript was not typed over long intervals. Carroll composed it with his other work at a typewriter. Excusing a handwritten letter, ca. 1935, to Peggy Porter, he notes it is the first time he's used a pen in

months – "the typewriter has a way of making long-hand a painful exercise." (undated, Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C.5). Carroll inscribed about 300 minor handwritten revisions, changing words or phrases but rarely the purport and never the plot. In the few quotations where a choice had to be made between the original or the amended phrase, I chose the version which best expressed Carroll's direct style. This article quotes about 18 to 20 per cent of the manuscript.

DATE OF PLOT AND DATE OF WRITING

The typescript and story itself contain no dates. Internal evidence places the plot over either the academic year September 1927 to May 1928 or 1928 to 1929. This is later than 1920-1923, when Carroll attended McGill. The main clues for the date are that Peter Rice, arriving at McGill, sees the Roddick Gates (not put up until 1925). A 1927-1928 date is suggested by Peter's reference to the "talkies" in the cinema as just introduced (1927); either 1927-1928 or 1928-1929 are indicated by the McGill Centennial of 1921 having been "six or seven years" earlier; but 1928-1929 is indicated if emphasis is given to Peter's team winning the championship, which McGill actually won in 1928 (pp.3, 67,41-43).

Consequently, the novel could not have been written until after 1927. More likely, Carroll wrote it in the mid-1930s when he wrote much of his other fiction. To hazard a guess, it may have been written before most of his other surviving fiction; while perhaps more ambitious, the style is less succinct and confident than that of his short stories. The Carroll archive includes a few short fiction typescripts that appear to have been sent to publications or agents (Maxim Lieber, for one, in 1935) and later stored in envelopes, mostly with 1930s postmarks. In letters in 1935 to his future wife Margaret Porter, Carroll mentioned that he was writing stories and articles and showing some of them to Morley Callaghan. Carroll may have been thinking of his own college novel when he suggested (ca. 1935?) that an acquaint-

tance who wants to be a writer might profit by going to university: "he might even write undergraduate stories." (Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C4, file 9: several letters lacking year-dates, preserved in envelopes post-marked 1935). The attitudes expressed in the novel seem to date from no later than the 1930s. The world affairs discussion about the Empire, Canada's youthfulness, and Japan's hatred of the U.S. sound like they predate the Second World War – as does Tony Dodds's longing for the food and women of Germany and Austria (p.61). The simplest explanation for Carroll's setting his novel in 1927 or 1928 may be that he wrote it about then. In any event, it was almost certainly written before the outbreak of war in 1939, given the rest of the indications.

Carroll had several reasons to shift the date from his own early 1920s at McGill to the later 1920s. Like many writers, he may have wanted to distance his own experiences from his protagonist's invented ones. As well, McGill itself became more imposing after the reconstruction in 1925 of the Arts Building and the building of the Roddick Gates (and a few other buildings as well as Zeta Psi's new house). More important, a later time let Carroll introduce his current ideas rather than remembered ones. He also could use the "Aesthetes," modelled on the McGill Group, active from 1925 to 1927. In sum, the late 1920s may have looked like a richer, more interesting time, as McGill absorbed the Fitzgerald college ethos of parties and prosperity, before the Crash and Depression hit in 1929.

SOURCES OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. *Old McGill* 1930: 3. Another image of the Gates of McGill – the Roddick Gates – appears on the cover of this issue of *Fontanus*: by A. Cloutier, for the cover of *The Passing Show* (Montreal), 3, no. 12, September 1929.

Figure 2. Published McGill football programme, undated, with Sir Arthur Currie's photograph on the cover. Artist: Percy Nobbs? Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C3, file 8: booklets.

Figure 3. *Old McGill* 1928: 103.

Figure 4. Published McGill football programme, undated, with Sir Arthur Currie's photograph on the cover. Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C3, file 8: booklets.

Figure 5. McGill University Archives Photograph Collection, PR008963, cropped, photographer unknown, ca. 1921. Published in *Old McGill* 1924: 176; a published print is also in the Carroll Papers, MG4151, C5, file: correspondence 1950-54.

Figure 6. Published photograph, provenance unclear. Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C3, file 6: clippings.

Figure 7. *Old McGill* 1927: 301.

Figure 8. Published photograph (twinned with that of Figure 6), provenance unclear. Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C3, file 6: clippings.

Figure 9. *The Listening Post* (Montreal), 1, no. 1, February 1923: 7.

Figure 10. Wilfrid Bovey, "McGill and her Builders", *Canadian Magazine*, 63, no. 7, November 1924: 388.

Figure 11. McGill Centennial Endowment brochures, ca. 1921. Artist unknown, McGill University Archives, RG 49, C111.

Figure 12. *Old McGill* 1928: 23.

Figure 13. *Old McGill* 1923: 155.

Figure 14. Programme cover, *Red and White Revue*, 1926. Artist unknown, McGill University Archives, RG 75, C91.

Figure 15. Programme cover, Mount Royal Hotel/McGill Night at the St. Denis Theatre, 1924. Artist unknown, McGill University Archives, RG 75, C91.

Figure 16. *Old McGill* 1931: facing 166.

Figure 17. *Old McGill* 1929: 163.

Figure 18. *Old McGill* 1928: 47.

Figure 19. *Old McGill* 1923: 109.

Figure 20. *Old McGill* 1921: 284.

Figure 21. *Old McGill* 1928: 6.

Figure 22. *Old McGill: a Year Book of Undergraduate Activities at the University*, Vol. XXXII, MCMXXIX: frontispiece. Photographer's name illegible (Jas. Bacon?). This book is not to be confused with *Old McGill* 1929, published by the Junior Year, MCMXXVIII, Vol. XXXI.

Figure 23. *Old McGill* 1928: 252.

Figure 24. Published McGill football programme with Currie's photograph on the cover, Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C3, file 6: clippings.

Figure 25. B&W photograph, photographer unknown, Carroll Papers, MG 4151, C2, file 8: photos.

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