

MANY A TREE, TO ME, IS WORTHY OF NOTE

by Evelyn Meader, Keppoch

At the February meeting of the Natural History Society, Geoff Hogan mentioned that this May would mark the one hundredth year on P.E.I. of the celebration of Arbor Day. He suggested that perhaps some of us could write on "trees" for the next newsletter. Thus this amateur scribe has decided to branch out in subject matter, even go out on a limb and do a little arboreal reminiscing.

One could say that the glorious giants of the flora family have had a tremendous influence on my life. What is at the top of our house hunting list when moving means finding a new home? "Trees!" (mature - not that we're prejudiced against youth, we just want the comforts of age). What arboreous delights came with our new Kinlock Road homestead? - two sentinel spruce, from the tops of which many a crow gives "caws" to complain, a granddaddy horse chestnut whose shade is a cool sanctuary from occasional blazing summer sun and an orchard of plum and pear, apple and cherry who have two new siblings, Jimmie (James Bond), a northern Spy and Goldie, a golden delicious. We have high hopes for the fruits of our labour from this tree family.

Once we had a home on Commercial St. in Middleton. N.S. where large sugar maples grew along the sidewalk. We tapped four of our own and four of our neighbours' trees. Then began the great sap deluge! One morning I was collecting the cool clear harvest when I slipped off the snowbank and fell with a clatter of buckets right at the feet of a pedestrian who was heading for downtown. He didn't bat an eye or say a word. He just calmly walked around prone and embarrassed me, sap personified, and carried on. I wondered if he even knew what I was doing. His friends were probably regaled with the tale of a crazy dame who dived with two pails of water at him off a snowbank. His wooden reaction didn't "spile" my fun, even though I did complete my collecting a little more "syroptitiously".

In the same town, different house, one of my fondest memories is of my two year old daughter sitting in her stroller during a daily visit to our sweet cherry tree. The deep red juice dripped off her chin and off her ever reaching fingers. Mom was equally branded with the delicious sun warmed delicacy. Our feathered friends were feasting too even though this party was definitely not for the birds. Reluctantly we gave them more than the pip.

Far from our Maritime haunts I once lived on Canada's west coast island, another beauty spot for tree lovers. Clearly I remember my first drive up Vancouver Island through stands of towering fir. The highway led through a drive-in natural cathedral. -All this majesty of growth and mountains too! Worshippers of the west, I know what wins your hearts.

In Germany we walked in a far different woods than the western wilderness. Here the famed Black Forest with neatly measured rows of neatly uniform evergreen is like a giant's garden. The Germans treasure their trees and guard with governmental regulation against felling. Could tree cutting be a "felloony" there?

Back home, where saints have lived and still do, we claim, our Christmas tree of '83, rather than a discard, has been tied up to our pear tree to provide a little more shelter for birds at the nearby Meader feeder. One day a quick pre-refill check seemed to indicate our partridge had finished munching and moved on to seedier pastures. I was about to replenish our avian cafeteria. Another careful perusal revealed six rotund feathered balls snuggled under the branches of our recycled fir, which was supported by our newly pruned pear. And I sang as I savoured Mother Nature's latest "tree-t", and six partridge un-der pear tree