

[Page 54 - From George MacEachern's Autobiography](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 45](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1987/6/1

barest necessities. Socks and underwear • when they were gone, you had to wait for years to replace them; at least it seemed like years and I have no doubt that it was quite a long while. You could ad? just to these things. Somehow or other, the whole thing didn't strike fear into us as much as pros? perity does. We didn't go and rob any place be? cause the way we were brought up we just never con? sidered that this was the thing that had to be done. The rent, light and phone bills continued to build up. Fuel was no problem as I lived about one hun? dred yards from a banking station of at least half a million tons of coal and soon became very adept at keeping the house warm without getting caught. Once the light and power company threatened to dis? connect. I managed to get two dollars, I don't re? member just where, and took it to the company of? fice. I told the clerk that I had only two dollars to pay on my bill and asked if they would still disconnect. The clerk said they would. I refused to part with the two dollars, saying that I could find a better use for it. I guess this called for a high level conference. The clerk asked me to wait while she talked to the boss. On returning, she said if I paid the two dollars it would show that I was trying and the lights would not be cut off. I parted with the two-spot and wasn't both? ered by that company anymore. We did have to show up at that bloody place down on Charlotte Street--the relief office. As far as I remember it was weekly. Those that took \$1.00 worth, they just took a bag and went down there and got \$1.00 worth. They weren't given any vouch? ers. They hauled that home. There was just certain things they could have. I had two old friends and they would get a quart of milk one week and the next week they would get a h pound of butter, some? thing like that and they had \$1.00 each. Well, we had one child at the time and we got \$3.00 a week and they were worrying that we'd get luxuries. During the month of February, we didn't have to work for relief because of the weather. So we had to work in March and it was the worst month we had in the whole year. It was really cold. And the kind of work we were doing was work that was debas- ing because it had no purpose or social value at all. I didn't do very much outside. What little I did was digging the ice out of the ditches along St. Peter's Road at the lower end towards Welton Street. There were no houses around at all. The road at that time was hardly used but there were other projects that I didn't go to at all. I got the Canadian Labour Defender and the odd copy of the Worker and I found these to be a great aid in getting out of doing this stupid work that the ci? ty would insist that we do for \$3.00 a week relief. We'd be cleaning out ditches on streets. In one case the street didn't even have houses on it, but it was thought to be good for our souls, I guess, to dig in ditches. I arrived on the job one day--I didn't do it deliberately, I'm not that smart--and there was a copy of the Canadian Labour Defender and instead of digging ditches, I read in the loud? est voice I could command, several of the doings in the rest of Canada and the boss came along and said, "What have you got there?" and I told him "A paper." He said, "I think Tom Edwards wants a helper, go down and help Tom Edwards sharpen picks." Now Tom didn't want a helper, the helper would only be in his way and Tom



had a little blacksmith shop in his backyard, he sharpened picks for the city. He was right across the road from where I lived and Tom would just tell me when I arrived on the scene, "Oh, go home and take it easy." I didn't feel at all comfortable that I was the only one that would escape so I struck on another idea. I generally found things to keep me busy. I had a little bit of a garden and the funniest part of it was that I didn't know what I had planted. I planted mainly seeds that Tom Edwards gave me and I had stuff like watercress and brussel sprouts that I had never seen before. I thought they must have been tubercular cabbages when they came up. I had all kinds of things popping up here and there. I can remember one time they had a special conces- 'sion. If people were making community gardens, you were exempt from working for relief. So I called a Debbie's Hair Shop 156 Fulton Ave. . WESTMOUNT 539-0756 Hairstylist: Debbie Doyle Best Western Clapmore Inn and Conference Centre ANTIGONISH, N. S. (902)863-1050 Indoor & Outdoor Pools / Sauna / Hot Tub / Licensed Dining Room & Golf & Tennis Courts: 5 Minutes \* Adjacent to Antigonish Shopping Louisbourg Craft Workshops p. 0. Box 83, Louisbourg, N. S. (902) 733-3233 BOA IMO Handcrafts Produced in Our Workshops: Screenprinting, Metal Moulding Local Handcrafts Other Maritime Items Refreshment' Available No Admission Fee OPEN MAY 1 TO OCTOBER 31 May 1 - Mid June, Mid Sep. - Oct. 31: Guided Tours! Weekdays: 9-6, Sat & Sun: 10-6 of workshop' • " ,...\_ \_ • ' \_ , ' \_ . M' Mid June - Mid Sep.: Weekdays: 9-9 Sat & Sun: 9-9 (54) WHERE IS YOUR FUELWOOD? Is it still in the Forest, Uncut? Or is it Cut, Split, Stacked, starting to dry out and season? To burn your wood more safely, and for more heat value, you should have your firewood supply now. Properly seasoned wood should contain no more than 18% moisture. Remember that dry wood may be hard to get in the Fall. FOR SERVICE, DEPENDABILITY AND HONESTY, PHONE: I 562-8400 or 562-1784 | Caribou Marsh j Fuelwood Co. ' Supplying Firewood Is Our Profession-Not Our Sideline!