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Forman H. Craton - 1934 - 1935 - Diary

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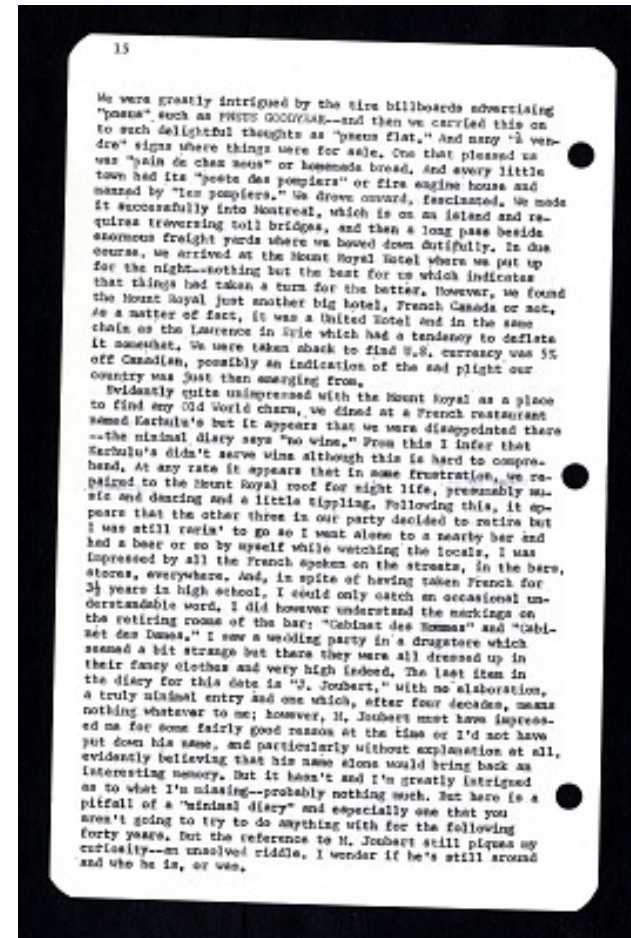
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We were greatly intrigued by the tire billboards advertising "pneus" such as PNEUS GOODYEAR--and then we carried this on to such delightful thoughts as "pneus flat." And many "à vendre" signs where things were for sale. One that pleased us was "pain de chez nous" or homemade bread. And every little town had its "poste des pompiers" or fire engine house and manned by "les pompiers." We drove onward, fascinated. We made it successfully into Montreal, which is on an island and requires traversing toll bridges, and then a long pass beside enormous freight yards where we bowed down dutifully. In due course, we arrived at Mount Royal Hotel where we put up for the night--nothing but the best for us which indicates that things had taken a turn for the better. However, we found the Mount Royal just another big hotel, French Canada or not. As a matter of fact, it was a United Hotel and in the same chain as the Lawrence in Erie which had a tendency to deflate it somewhat. We were taken aback to find U.S. currency was 5% off Canadian, possibly an indication of the sad plight our country was just then emerging from.

Evidently quite unimpressed with the Mount Royal as a place to find any Old World charm, we dined at a French restaurant named Kerhulu's but it appears that we were disappointed there--the minimal diary says "no wine." From this I infer that Kerhulu's didn't serve wine although this is hard to comprehend. At any rate it appears that in some frustration, we repaired to the Mount Royal roof for night life, presumably music and dancing and a little tippling. Following this, it appears that the other three in our party decided to retire but I was still rarin' to go so I went alone to a nearby bar and had a beer or so by myself while watching the locals. I was impressed by all the French spoken on the streets, in the bars, stores, everywhere. And, in spite of having taken French for 3 1/2 years in high school, I could only catch an occasional understandable word. I did however understand the markings on the retiring rooms of the bar: "Cabinet des Hommes" and "Cabinet des Dames." I saw a wedding party in a drugstore which seemed a bit strange but there they were all dressed up in their fancy clothes and very high indeed. The last item in the diary for this date is "J. Joubert," with no elaboration, a truly minimal entry and one which, after four decades, means nothing whatever to me; however, M. Joubert must have impressed me for some fairly good reason at the time or I'd not have put down his name, and particularly without explanation at all, evidently believing that his name alone would bring back an interesting memory. But it hasn't and I'm greatly intrigued as to what I'm missing--probably nothing much. But here is a pitfall of a "minimal diary" and especially one that you aren't going to try to do anything with for the following forty years. But the reference to M. Joubert still piques my curiosity--an unsolved riddle. I wonder if he's still around and who he is, or was.



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