



# Testimonies and Secrets: The Story of a Nova Scotia Family, 1844-1977

*Robert Mennel*

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This compelling history is drawn from the papers of the Crouse-Eikle family, discovered in their ancestral home in Crousetown on Nova Scotia's South Shore. Millwright John Will Crouse (1844–1914) kept a meticulous diary spanning five decades. Reflective by nature, he recorded the challenges of work, pondered the intricacies of communal life, and wrote movingly of his personal and spiritual struggles. His daughter Elvira Crouse Eikle reported on village events for local newspapers, and her son, Harold Eikle (1912–1977), a gifted teacher and musician, wrote letters and family history. Harold's correspondence celebrated the social liberations of the 1930s and beyond, but also showed their limits in the suffering he experienced as a gay man in a heterosexual world.

Using the family papers, other unpublished documents and oral history, Robert M. Mennel connects the experiences of the Crouse-Eikle family and their community to larger themes of social and cultural change in North America. A story of vivid personalities and episodes, by turns sad, conflicted, joyful, bitter, funny and reflective, *Testimonies and Secrets* will be read with pleasure by scholars and general readers alike.

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