



Each of Us Can Make A Difference

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Lucy Maud Montgomery was born in Clifton Prince Edward Island (now called New London) in 1874. When she was twenty-one months of age, her mother died of tuberculosis. Her father arranged for her to be raised by her strict maternal grandparents in Cavendish and subsequently moved west where he remarried and had other children.

Maud, as she was called, was not a happy child and even though she was surrounded by cousins and other extended family members, she did not seem to "fit in". Her physical needs were met but her unmet emotional needs often led her into a state where she would let her imagination rule the day.

When Maud was a teenager she decided to move to the prairies to be with her father but that only lasted a year because she didn't get along with his wife. She returned to Prince Edward Island and eventually went to college and became a school teacher.

By the time that she died in 1942, Maud had written many novels, short-stories, poetry as well as journals, essays and letters. The most famous was "Anne of Green Gables" which is the fictional story of an unmarried brother and sister who decide to request an orphan boy to help with the farm work. An error was made and instead of a boy they received a lively red-headed girl who brought both trouble and joy to their lives.

In June I travelled to Prince Edward Island where I attended both the "Anne of Green Gables" and "Anne and Gilbert" musicals. I then travelled to the north shore of the island to visit the "Green Gables Heritage" site, "Avonlea Boardwalk", "Lucy Maud Montgomery Birthplace" and "Anne of Green Gables Museum" all of which are several miles from each other. Each, of course, had admission, food concessions and souvenir options for the throngs of tourists to consider.

Lucy Maud Montgomery was presented with numerous awards, decorations, medals and orders not just in Canada but in England. Her work has been translated into several languages and is enjoyed throughout the world.

What I think is most interesting, however, is the fact that according to 2016-2017 Tourism PEI Annual Report there were approximately 1.5 million visitors with estimated expenditures of \$430 million who travelled to the island. And the numbers are increasing every year. The work of Ms. Montgomery is definitely not the only reason that tourists visit Prince Edward Island, but it certainly has contributed to the figures.

It is easy to slip into a state of believing that our lives are not important or that our influence is limited. The story of Lucy Maud Montgomery, however, provides evidence that one person can make a very concrete difference in the world.

Maud was a lonely child who despite her isolation and unmet emotional needs created fiction that continues to touch the hearts of each of us. It has opened our wallets to the benefit of her home province of Prince Edward Island and will continue to do so for decades to come. If you ever have a time when you think that your life isn't important, think of the Lucy Maud Montgomery story. It will inspire and motivate you!