

SEPTEMBER 10, 1987

When I got back from the trip with the Mohair Council to Scotland, I left my suitcase and other traveling gear in the garage to sell as soon as jet lag receded. After being under the spell of all those successful goat herders, I was determined to stop wasting my money traveling and rather invest in something worthwhile like a flock of hair goats.

Well, no one came by that was interested in my equipment. So I awakened this morning in Halifax, Nova Scotia with the same suitcase and the same cameras and junk and not a hoof of a goat back in Texas.

The portable alarm clock was sounding off on the table; upstairs, an old boy was either filling the municipal reservoir, or conducting an experiment for the Royal Canadian Navy, because he'd started drawing his tub at 3:30 and still wasn't through when I surrendered at 6:30.

Halifax, I've found, is a comfortable English and French speaking city. The walks and streets are clean and absolutely free of graffiti. Unlike the rest of the globe, oil chalk and spray paints aren't big sellers. The citizens I met on my first walk of the day seem to be quelling their urge to deface blank walls by saying, "Good morning, sir." or, "I beg your pardon, sir."

Up on a hill overlooking the city and the ship harbor is a British fort that was built in the old days in case a French ship wanted to come in range and pick a fight. More soldiers were to die of boredom in these emplacements than from shot and shell. Nevertheless, today these relics are giving a fine return in the volume of postcards and plastic souvenirs that are sold in the compound's gift shops.

The room clerks and the newspapers claim that Halifax is having a heat wave. But it's hard to get an interview from a Canadian about the temperature. They are so cold natured that whenever the mercury rises above 80 degrees, they can't concentrate for swabbing the moisture off their brows and panting about like our sheep do before they are sheared.

One thing I advise against is asking the citizens how deep the snow gets in the winter. As long as visitors keep asking questions that are that hard to document, they are just encouraging the local people to be untruthful.

Close to 300,000 of these well behaved folks live in Halifax. Once I make a big score in the goat business, I may spend part of my summers up here spending my mohair check. I have a sky cap down at Boston air terminal who's agreed to handling the dispersal of my traveling paraphernalia on consignment.