

RED NECK

Another letter-writing memory Albert gets a "charge" out of was when he collaborated with one of the editors at *The Star* and wrote letters using the pseudonym, Mike Mallet. Mallet was a red-necked good ol' boy who responded to Albert's letter by telling him he was "full of hay." Readers took sides and real rivalry began, he says.

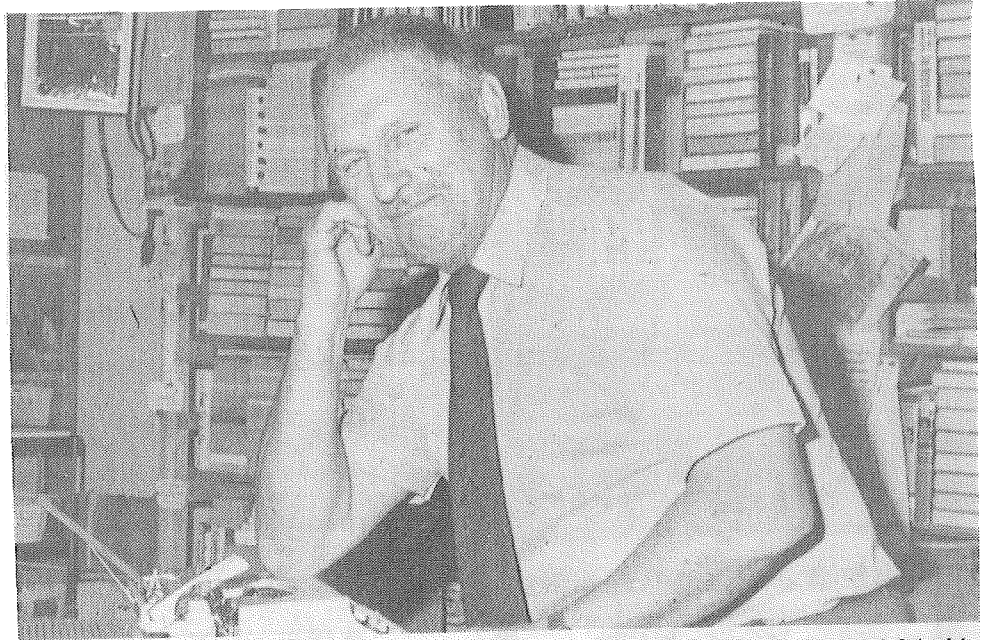
Even Albert's friends would say to him, "Hey Al, that guy really put you in your place, eh?" Albert kept his secret and had a lot of laughs.

Albert also wrote for *Canadian Road Knight* (a now defunct trucking magazine) using the pseudonyms C.O. Strong (Come On Strong), Man Tinkum (pidgin English for Man Thinks) and Quoami Hurabi (a fictitious postmaster for Whiskey Junction, Northwest Territories). He was doing the bulk of the writing for the magazine so changed his style and name so others wouldn't realize it, he explains.

He also started up a newspaper at the distillery, and created a union paper when he served as a union representative in Hamilton.

"When I'm writing I'm alive. That's when I'm really alive. Most of the time I'm writing in my head."

There are other projects Albert has worked on and continues to work on. And he'll keep at it because he says, "I've got a passion inside of me that I can't quite get out, and if I ever did it would kill me."



Albert Atkins breaks from his brainstorming and displays three things crucial to his character. First of all, his faithful typewriter, which has produced hundreds of letters to newspapers in the region; second, his books that he must read in order to keep his sanity; and third, the grin on his face. (Photo by Joanne Lovering)