

# CANADIAN SOUVENIR POST CARD

**Marina Fathalla**

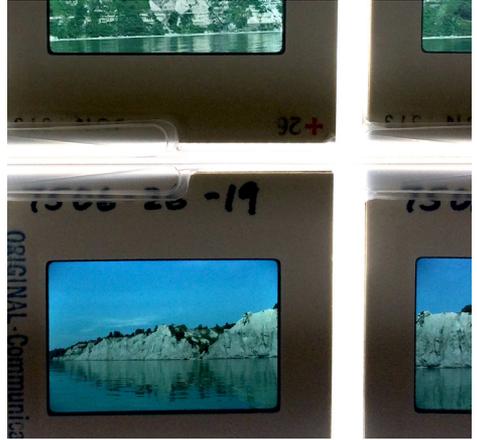
## **The diagrammatic motif of the**

**V-Cliff view:** the appearance of two glaciers incrementally moving into one another, is depicted in a 1918 post card from “The House of Plenty.” The watercolor image is very fluid, with painterly gestures, like water melting, trickling, and flowing down the soft edges.

The image is granular, scanned and copied, the colors gentle to the eye. Shades of pastel blue-ish purple. Billows of greenery in a beautiful array from light to dark underside green, cradled by the folds of the escarpment. Found at the meeting point of the V, are two shadows or outlines of figures in red and black. This is a rare postcard of the Bluffs that depicts any human trace in its limited frame, positioned at the dot in the V. A feeling of calm still water, with slow, small waves in the background of the V, has different imprints of blue, purple, and an overlay of light yellow.

**The glacier melts into a pool;  
bodies of water collect alluvial  
deposits.**

**Erosion led directly to the  
birth of the city itself.**



## **Major geological components of the Bluffs**

Scarborough clay,  
Scarborough sand  
Sunnybrook till

## **Causes of erosion**

Wave action  
Surface runoff  
Lake levels  
Lake current  
Littoral drift  
Ice action

Geomorphic process in shoreline dynamics  
Subsurface water movement

**“The end of a perfect day**—Dinner at the Walker House, Toronto, after a trip to “V-Cliff,” Scarborough bluffs. One has but to visit this spot to understand why tourists rave about its beauty and solemn grandeur. *This card is issued with the compliments of Toronto’s famous Hotel, the Walker House—The House of Plenty.*”

**“Scarborough Heights”** depicts a scene this time from the beach, at water level. You can imagine the sound of waves crashing into the rock;

**the solid mineral material forming part of the surface of the earth and other similar planets, exposed on the surface or underlying the soil or oceans.**

however, the image contains a certain stillness, in a nighttime scene. The cliffs appear to occupy a mysterious monumentality, wherein the top half is lit by the moonlight, and bottom darkened in shadow. To the right, at the water's edge in the distance is a single tree, with a painted aura surrounding its boundary, almost like it was glowing. Rocky pebbles are at your feet, evidenced in the framing of the image from the ground. In the distance are lightly shaded outlines of rocks;

**a large piece of rock that has become detached from a cliff or mountain; a boulder. The boulder is later used to describe being weighed down, unhappy.**

in the starry night sky. The postcard itself has a lot of creases in its corners from what appears to be an overextended use of its narrative, as an imaginary kept and re-figured over time.

**“Lookout Point,”** is another V-Cliff watercolour postcard; this time the cliff appears much more threatening to human life than the previous image. No silhouettes are painted at the mouth of the cliff, which has pointed, rough edges, and harder lines, to define its steep texture, and concave quality. Traces of yellow morning sun, lightly layered in the shadow of the right / of the V, and at the point of the V, as well as alongside the water. In the distance, you see a sailboat. Indeed, this perspective is a “lookout point,” as it can only assume to be observed from a steep cliffpoint, itself. The water color at the mouth of the cliff is light blue, with soft waves.



Scarborough Bluffs (1975), City of Scarborough Fonds, (7506-26), Box 621909, Folder 17, City of Toronto Archives, Toronto, ON.

**“Lovers of nature** will respond to the call of the rugged cliffs at “Lookout Point,” and the winding stream trickling far below among the boulders on its journey to the lake. Only a short trip by boat or auto from Toronto’s famous Hotel—the Walker House. *This card is issued with the compliments of Toronto’s famous Hotel, the Walker House—The House of Plenty.*”

**An image in landscape format,** traces how the rocks might meet the water, in a sectional view. In the foreground, trees align like the opening of a dance, blocking the point where the cliff meets the water. A small segment of flat land is revealed at the top of the cliff. An outline traces the edge of the cliff, gradually drops down to the right side of the image, defining the line of its erosion over time. Like chipping away extremely slowly at a boulder.

**This colorful, collage-like image of the “Bluffs Eastern Entrance”** depicts the rocks in gray-scale. A moss grows up the cliff in shadow-like shapes. Again, the perspective is from ground level, looking up at the cliff’s monumentality. Here the rocks seem to have a density to them, a weight, sedimentary layers.

**Before being deposited, sediments are formed by weathering of earlier rocks by erosion in a source area and then transported to the place of deposition by water, wind, ice, mass movement or glaciers (agents of denudation).**

They move across the frame in perspective, lines converging at a point in the distance, outside of the frame. The water is depicted more realistically here, in dark blue, while the sky, lighter blue. The clouds in the sky are shaped like fluffs of cotton; they are caricaturish, rendering the image in a fictional and whimsical tone. There are vibrant hues of pink, yellow and blue at the base of the cliff, with splashes of greenery crawling up, while the rest of the rock looks dry and quite hard in texture.

**“Scarboro Heights”** landscape layout depicts the cliffs at a macro scale, a bird’s eye view looking over the landscape. The lines of topography are much less defined, as we are looking down, in plan view. The lines of the rock trickle down and are a dense gray. However most of the cliff surface is covered in dark green foliage. The shoreline edge circles around, to meet the left edge of the paper. In the distance can be seen a line of well-defined tree figures, across a seemingly flat land atop the cliff. Water in this depiction is an even, light blue color. An array of clouds moves across the landscape of the page, but do not have individual personas like in the other image, instead blend into white. There is a noticeable crease in the left corner of the card, cutting across about a fifth of the image diagonally.

**“Near Toronto ON, Scarborough Bluffs,”** post-card is courtesy of Canadian National Railways. This portrait of the Bluffs, Cliffside, is deep-clay earth red in tone, quite opposite to the subdued, black and white, or pastel watercolor in other depictions. As if hand-sculpted, the cliff appears malleable and soft, akin to sand easily coming apart between fingers. Trees appear alongside half of the Bluffs, and two are upright atop the rock as if in a lonely embrace. A pathway of steps is hidden behind trees, and is revealed through a clearing of greenery appearing into perspective at the top of the rock;

**To cause to sway back and forth, in or as if in a cradle**

**August 19, 2018**

If you close your eyes, the sound of the waves

**Wave energy variables cause shoreline changes**

is immersive, Encircling you in a spatial surround, reverberating off the Bluffs, and muffles any voice into a lull. I'm in the water and my feet push my body off of the bottom as I catch each wave, up to the surface to float atop the water in a star shape. The weight of the boulder is less heavy.

A wave approaches and in the distance is large but always lovingly subsides as it reaches my body.

**One of the contributing factors of erosion is that of the subsurface water movement. This movement is through the geological formation of the deltaic beds (Scarborough clay), on top of which are four layers of glacial deposits separated by layers of stratified clay and sand.**

It's late August, and the water is a perfect temperature on a leisurely Sunday. A slowed looking that happens only when on vacation. I take note of the preparations for a full-day at the beach, seeing this as a destination, a location, and not just a way to pass time, or in passing.

**Slow. Incremental recession rates**

**380,000 yd<sup>3</sup> of material was lost. The waves tore off debris from the Scarborough Cliffs, and piled them up to form a gravelly hook, exactly like the present "island"**

I'm delighted to note that the majority of people are immigrants. I combed through trees and middle to upper-class homes at the top of the Bluffs, down a steep part of the cliff, as well as several yachts, to make my way to the shoreline.

As I'm wading around in the water, looking back at the density of the cliffs, I'm reminded of sediment transport, littoral drift, movement, wave refraction and energy. The water is so much wiser than any of the flat, unidimensional material of suburban settlement I've been moving through most of my life. Grounding agents of the material of the rock;

Broadens and lengthens the narrow time of the postcard depictions into a felt and embodied, magical and reverberating, material of geological time.

**"Visit the "Causeway" at Scarboro Bluffs on your wedding tour to Toronto. The Walker House—the house of plenty—suggests a trip to this beautiful spot in a canoe, where, gently rocked by the waves, gliding slowly past the towering cliffs, and looking out from between half shut eyelids at their stately grandeur—what a picture of perfect contentment. This card is issued with the compliments of Toronto's famous Hotel, the Walker House—The House of Plenty."**