

BY DAVID JOHNSTON

Though the mechanics of newspaper production have changed drastically in the 30 years Roy Cornish has been in the business, the philosophy behind newspapering remains the same.

"A community newspaper has to be just that—covering the community from the least to the greatest news. The community newspaper chronicles the area's history through its people and all that they do. It provides them with a forum for opinion, stands up for the rights and freedoms of all men, and tries to stimulate thought."

And since coming to the Trentonian March 4, 1958, after a few years with its then local rival Courier-Advocate, Roy Cornish has devoted the second half of his life to keeping the traditions of a community newspaper alive.

"My goal has always been to write clearly, factually, fairly and informatively—to inform the mind and move the heart. Readers are kind enough to say I have achieved it. On the whole, I've been doing what I wanted to do, and nobody could really ask for more."

Roy Cornish began preparing for his journalistic career long before he had ever been to Trenton, or even dreamed of a newspaper job.

As a boy who frequented the then-clean waters of streams near Toronto in the latter days of the 1920s depression, Roy spent many happy hours with his father as the pair dangled lines from willow-branch fishing poles.

Still an avid fisherman today, Roy was first "hooked" on the sport from enjoyable childhood days on the shores of the Mimico Creek.

Always an excellent student, Roy's interest in reading was nurtured by his father who taught him to read at four years of age. He still has the copy of Treasure Island he was awarded in 1929 for language skills.

The eldest of six children of Christopher Thomas Cornish and Kathleen Mabel (Payne) Cornish, Roy was "put through the mill early" because of family hardships brought on by depression.

Hard times eventually caused the demise of his family and Roy found himself supporting the clan as a teenager fresh from high school.

And though Roy maintained a keen ability for the English language during his years as a student, the realities of earning a wage led him to work wherever he could, and he took up a post on Canada's gritty railroad.

As the country worked toward a second world war, Roy found himself yearning to do something that would serve the betterment of humanity. He met a man named Douglas Wood, who through his own deep religious convictions, eventually influenced Roy to join the Baptist seminary.

PREPARING FOR LIFE

Roy studied hard at seminary school, feeling for the first time the cherished sense of purpose beginning to take shape in his life. Little did he know how the ministry would later change his life.

After graduation, Roy began his life as a Baptist minister in a small parish near Napanee in 1947. At 29 years of age, it was the first time Roy had permanently moved from his Toronto family home, though he worked as a minister in training for a couple of seasons near Kimberly, Ontario, in 1945-46.

Unfortunately, much of the administrative duties of the ministry did not match up with Roy's desire to communicate with people and he finally left the Church in 1953, somewhat dejected and without an immediate sense of direction.

"I came to Trenton in 1953 and was introduced to J. Nolan Sisson, the publisher of the Courier-Advocate. He suggested that I give the news business a try. He had a job open and I needed one so I took him up on it."

Since Roy had always been good at writing, and inwardly had

always wanted an opportunity to express himself; this new challenge seemed like it might fit his bill.

His first assignment was to cover a local election, on his first day on the job.

"I walked in to the office, and before I knew what I was doing, I was out covering an election. It was both exciting and terrifying."

Before long, Roy's natural ability to weave written words into stories began to shine and he progressed rapidly at the Courier.

When Senator Fraser opened the Trentonian in 1956, Roy Cornish was one of the first employees sought for the new company. But he held on to his loyalty for the Courier until it came close to folding in 1958.

Roy credits a lot of his early training in journalism to the guidance of James (Jimmie) Gunn.

And before long, Roy began to enjoy the comfort of knowing he had found his place in life. He had always wanted to serve and the newspaper would provide him with a vehicle by which he could serve a great many people's interests.

"It was funny. Once I was in it, it felt so right, it seemed like it I was always to do this."

So the young man who had crammed his mind with knowledge from the deep-rooted philosophies of traditional religion to the far-reaching scientific articles of science magazines of the 1930s, began a career that over the years would allow him numerous opportunities for self-expression.



R.C. CORNISH AT HOME--One of Roy Cornish's long-time hobbies has been playing the organ. He has both an organ and a piano in his home and has literally thousands of organ records as well.

He began playing in the later 1930s and often played for hymns in church and at weddings. Photos by David Johnston

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