



Newell Brothers Reunited After Many Years Through Efforts of Mounted Police

When the Mounties get their was insistent.

man, as they invariably do, the result usually is tinged with bitterness for their quarry.

But recently when the force got its man in Belleville the result was one of the happiest on record. It ended Saturday, the life-long quest of a man for his brother, and united another man with a brother he didn't even know existed.

Seated in brilliant sunshine on the steps of his home on 94 Yeomans Street, John Newell, 61, looked across at his 60-year-old brother Tom and told reporters:

"It is Corporal Bob Hunter of the local Mounties we have got to thank for bringing us together. If it had not been for his insistency we might never have met."

When Corporal Robert Hunter of the local RCMP detachment came knocking on the door of 94 Yeomans Street it was the end of a systematic search by the force; a life-long quest of Tom Newell and probably the greatest surprise in the life of his brother, John.

But the story of the reunion of the Newell brothers goes back further than that, much further. In fact it reaches back into the last century.

"Why, I can take you to England now and show you place where I was with him."

Last year came the final chapter in the story. Tom's wife died last year, and he was left alone, without any family. Or the other hand John by now has a married daughter, a grandson Rodney, and two other sons, John 19, and Will, 15, all sharing the big, bright home on Yeomans St.

Left by himself, Tom decided to push his enquiries for his long-missing brother further afield and with renewed energy.

"I had been looking for him for a long time, but could make no connections," Tom recounted. "Then after my wife died, I figured I was going to be alone. Last winter I started making more enquiries."

"More enquiries" took the form of a tentative letter he mailed in Detroit to the Parliament buildings in Ottawa, addressed negatively "to whom it may concern."

Not long afterwards he received a letter from the RCMP headquarters with a request to fill up a missing persons form and return it. He did so and enquiries were at once set afoot in Canada.

It begins on the Rock of Gibraltar in 1894 when John was born to a British soldier of the First Middlesex regiment, then garrisoning the fortress. The following year the garrison was recalled home and in November that year, Tom was born. The lads' mother, however, died shortly afterward, and then came the parting of the family. Both lads were boarded with separate relations, and were not to see each other again for nearly sixty years.

CAME TO CANADA

About 1908 young John Newell came to Canada under the auspices of an immigrant association, who boarded him in the house of a lady in Ottawa. Shortly afterward she died and the young Englishman took himself off to Perth, Ont., to stay with "the McKians," friends of the old lady.

Meanwhile, the first coincidence in the story of the two brothers was taking place. Tom Newell, who, unlike John, was aware he had a brother somewhere in the western world, also had come to Canada. He started life in the new world by farming, then began wandering around. Eventually he was to end up in Detroit, where he now is, working in the restaurant business. But before that the second coincidence in the brothers' lives was to be played out.

In the summer of 1914, World War I flared up. John enlisted with the Twenty-First Battalion at Kingston. Tom took up arms with the Eighteenth Battalion at London. Along with the 19th and 20th Battalions, the 21st and 18th were sent overseas as the First Brigade of the Second Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Throughout the four war years both men served under the same divisional banner, unaware that each had a brother somewhere along the line. The war ended, both men were discharged and returned to Canada, the slim chance of a possible meeting postponed for another quarter century.

Both men married, Tom settling in Detroit, John in Belleville, where he took up employment with the Shell Oil Company.

John settled down to rearing a family, still unaware that he ever had a brother. Across the border, Tom continued at the restaurant business, often thinking of the brother he could barely remember from early childhood, recalling flickers of times they spent together.

CANNOT REMEMBER

John, the elder of the two, yet the younger-looking, looked up from his seat on the porch and interpolated into the narrative:

"He can remember me, but I can never remember him."

But, seated beside him, Tom

Finally, a letter, dated April 1st, dropped through the mailbox of his Detroit home. Tom opened it and in the first paragraph was written the end of his long search:

"Further to previous correspondence in this regard, please be informed that we have been successful in locating a John Basil Henry Newell, who resides at 94 Yeomans Street, Belleville, Ont."

REFUSED TO BELIEVE STORY

Meanwhile, in Belleville, RCMP Corporal Robert Hunter, handling the official investigation from the local end, had hit a slight snag. John, who for so many years had lived in ignorance of his younger brother's existence, refused to believe the corporal's story.

"I figured it was just someone pulling a smart gag," John said.

However, the corporal's persistence that John write to the stranger in Detroit, finally wore down his resistance. He wrote to the man asking proof. There was a slight delay since Tom had lost his birth certificate over the years. However, he eventually secured one from the British authorities and when compared with that of John Newell's it tallied.

"Otherwise he'd still be trying to prove to me he was my brother," John said.

The last page was turned last Saturday when, all discrepancies clarified, John fully convinced, Tom arrived at Yeomans Street from Detroit.

And with the final reunion

others intend starting a new apter in each of their lives.

"We are going to see a lot of ch other from now on," Tom said.

"Yes," rejoined his brother, "we have got quite a long time catch up on."