

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! - CORK TOWN

TUCKED AWAY AT THE EXTREME SOUTH EAST CORNER OF COBOURG, IS A SECTION KNOWN AS CORK TOWN, DERIVING ITS NAME FROM THE NUMBER OF IRISH IMMIGRANTS WHO SETTLED THERE IN 1847 AND WHO CAME FROM COUNTY CORK IN IRELAND.

MY ANCESTORS, THE ROONEYS, SETTLED IN CORK TOWN, NOT BECAUSE THEY CAME FROM CORK, BUT BECAUSE THEY WERE SAILORS, AND NATURALLY SOUGHT THAT PART OF TOWN NEAR THE LAKE.

I WAS BORN ON PERRY STREET AND STILL LIVE IN THE FAMILY HOME THERE.

MY GRAND-FATHER, PATRICK ROONEY CAME FROM ANTRIM, NORTH IRELAND AND BUILT A HOUSE ON BAY STREET, JUST BELOW PERRY STREET, AND THERE MY FATHER WAS BORN. HE, IN TURN, WHEN HE MARRIED BUILT THE HOUSE ON PERRY STREET.

FATHER REPRESENTED THREE GENERATIONS OF ROONEYS WHO FOLLOWED THE WATER, AS DID HIS UNCLES, CAPTAIN DAN AND CAPTAIN HUGH. FATHER WAS KNOWN AS CAPTAIN DAN, JUNIOR.

DURING HIS SAILING YEARS HE CAPTAINED MANY VESSELS INCLUDING THE "HANNAH BUTLER", THE "ANNIE FALCONER", THE "ANNADALE" AND THE "CHARLES MARSHALL" - THAT BEING THE LAST VESSEL HE CAPTAINED.

THE "CHARLES MARSHALL" WAS A 3-MASTED SCHOONER, REGISTERED 500 TONS, 122 FEET LONG, 26½ FEET TO BEAM AND 9 FEET DEEP. SHE CARRIED COAL TO COBOURG AND KINGSTON BY CONTRACT WITH LOCAL DEALERS FROM OSWEGO, U.S.A. MOST OF THE CARGO CAME TO COBOURG AS THE PLUNKETT COAL COMPANY SITUATED WHERE TOM HAWKE'S PROPERTY IS TODAY, HAD A VESTED INTEREST IN THE VESSEL.

ONE ROUND TRIP INCLUDING LOADING IN OSWEGO, AND UNLOADING HERE TOOK ONE WEEK WITH GOOD WEATHER AND A STIFF WIND.

THE COAL WAS UNLOADED FROM THE HOLD AND RAISED TO THE

UPPER DECK BY A WINCH-DRIVEN BUCKET, THEN IT WAS DROPPED ONTO A SMALL HORSE-DRAWN DUMPY CART, DRIVEN UP DIVISION STREET TO PLUNKETT'S YARD AND DELIVERED THERE.

WHEN THE "CHARLIE MARSHALL" WAS DUE MY BROTHER AND I WOULD WATCH THE HORIZON FOR HER, THEN WE RAN TO REPORT HER ARRIVAL TO OUR MOTHER AND RAN BACK TO THE WHARF TO AWAIT HER DOCKING SAFELY AT HOME AGAIN.

CORK TOWN IS BOUNDED ON THE EAST BY DONEGAN PARK, NAMED FOR MR. DONEGAN WHO GAVE THE PARK TO THE TOWN WHEN HE MOVED TO CALIFORNIA. SINCE THEN IT HAS BEEN KNOWN AS HORSE SHOW PARK, McCLELLAND PARK AND KIWANIS' PARK, AND REVERTED BACK TO DONEGAN PARK DURING MY REGIME ON THE PARKS BOARD.

HERE, AS CHILDREN, WE PLAYED BALL, SKATED, AND IN THE FALL GATHERED BEECHNUTS FROM THE HUGE TREES IN THE PARK. QUITE OFTEN WE WENT THROUGH THE NORTH END FENCE INTO THE FITZHUGH PROPERTY WHERE WE THOUGHT THE BEECHNUTS WERE BIGGER, AND WHEN WE WERE CHASED BY THE CARETAKER AND AGAIN IN THE SAFETY OF THE PARK WE WOULD CHANT "PINNER FITZHUGH CUT A BEECHNUT IN TWO".

WE ALSO TOBOGANNED DOWN BOULTON'S HILL, WHICH WAS ALONGSIDE THE PARK TO THE PUMP HOUSE ON THE SHORE LINE. IT WAS A LONG WAY TO WALK BACK, BUT WE WERE YOUNG THEN.

IT WAS IN DONEGAN PARK IN 1911 I HEARD SIR WILFRED LAURIER SPEAK, AND SAW LENA FIELD PRESENT HIM WITH A BOUQUET.

FROM 1905 to 1914 THE FAMOUS COBOURG HORSE SHOW WAS HELD IN DONEGAN PARK. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ATTENDED AND THE TOWN AND HOMES WERE DECORATED WITH FLAGS AND BUNTING. DAILY EXCURSIONS WERE RUN ON THE RAILWAYS AND FERRIES AND THE AMERICAN COLONY HELD GAY DINNERS AND DANCES, CONCERTS, PARADES AND FIREWORK DISPLAYS.

WORLD WAR I INTERRUPTED THIS EVENT AND ALTHOUGH REVIVED

IN 1921 THE GOLDEN AGE OF HORSES WAS PAST AND MECHANISATION TOOK OVER AND SO THAT EVENT LAPSED.

TO THE SOUTH OF CORK TOWN IS LAKE ONTARIO WITH ITS BEAUTIFUL SANDY BEACH. HERE, AS CHILDREN, WE LEARNED TO SWIM IN CRYSTAL CLEAR WATER AND WE WATCHED THE DAILY STEAMERS, "THE NORTH KING", "THE CASPIAN", AND "THE ARGYLE" AS THEY DOCKED AT THE EAST PIER WHERE THEY UNLOADED AND THEN LOADED THEIR PACKAGE FREIGHT AND BOUND FOR TORONTO. MY UNCLE DAN ROONEY WAS HARBOUR MASTER AT THAT TIME.

IN WINTER, WE CHILDREN, CLIMBED THE ICE-BERGS, WHICH WERE VERY LARGE IN THOSE DAYS AND WE SKATED ALONG THE SHORELINE.

IN 1912 THE CAR FERRY I WAS STARTED AND IN 1915 CAR FERRY II. THESE MADE DAILY TRIPS WITH COAL AND A SMALL NUMBER OF PASSENGERS FROM ROCHESTER TO COBOURG. THERE WERE EXCURSIONS WHEN 500-600 PEOPLE WOULD COME OVER FROM THE STATES WITH A BAND FOR A DAY AND SHOPPED IN COBOURG.

AT THE WEST END OF THE BEACH WAS LAVIS' BOATHOUSE RENTAL, AND A HUGE WATER SLIDE. MR. LAVIS WAS A FISHERMAN AND WE OFTEN BOUGHT A ⁴⁻⁵~~5~~ POUND WHITEFISH FOR 40 CENTS. HE ALSO HAD A SHANTY WHERE HE SMOKED CISCO'S AND SALTED HERRING.

VICTORIA PARK TO THE WEST WAS COMMON LAND WHERE WE PLAYED BALL IN SUMMER AND SKATED IN WINTER. IN 1911 WE SAW HALEY'S COMET AND THOUGHT THE END OF THE WORLD HAD COME. LITTLE DID I THINK I WOULD SEE IT AGAIN 75 YEARS LATER IN 1986.

THE COBOURG PAVILION WAS BUILT IN 1918, AND THERE WE TAXI-DANCED AT 10 CENTS PER DANCE WITH AN ENCORE. UNABLE TO ATTEND ITS CLOSING IN THE SEVENTIES, I STOOD AT MY WINDOW AT HOME AND SAID FAREWELL TO MANY HAPPY HOURS. THE ARLINGTON HOTEL, FREQUENTED BY THE AMERICANS WAS ALSO IN VICTORIA PARK.

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THE CORK TOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL, LATER KNOWN AS HASKELLS, AND LATER STILL OWNED BY JOHN FUNNELL, WAS OFTEN DISRUPTED IN MY INFANT YEARS AS I FREQUENTLY ESCAPED FROM HOME AND WALKED IN ON CLASSES AND HAD TO BE TAKEN HOME AGAIN. JIMMY DUFFY LIVED OPPOSITE THE SCHOOL AND WHEN WE ASKED HIM WHAT HE HAD DONE IN IRELAND HE USED TO REPLY "MANY A TIME I JUMPED THE SHANNON RIVER WITH WEE JOEY (HIS SON) IN MY ARMS".

ON THE NORTH OF CORK TOWN IS QUEEN STREET WITH ITS MORE PRETENTIOUS HOUSES. I WAS ALWAYS MUCH TAKEN WITH LIZZIE WELLER'S TEA ROOM (LIZZIE WAS THE GREAT-GRAND-DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM WELLER, FIRST MAYOR OF COBOURG IN 1850. IN FRONT OF THE TEA ROOM WAS A HUGE BRASS KETTLE ON A HIGH STANDARD.

CAPTAIN WALKER OWNED THE HOME WHERE JAMES IRVINE NOW LIVES. HE USED TO RIDE HIS BICYCLE DAILY FROM TOWN AND WE SCHOOL CHILDREN ^{could} USED ~~TO~~ GREET HIM POLITELY WITH "GOOD AFTERNOON, CAPTAIN WALKER" AND HE WOULD GENEROUSLY REWARD US WITH A HANDFUL OF SHINING NEW COPPERS.

IN CLOSING I'LL TELL YOU BRIEFLY ABOUT THE SAILING SCHOONER "JESSIE DRUMMOND" WHICH MADE HER FINAL VOYAGE ON 2nd DECEMBER 1902 FROM OSWEGO. MURKY WEATHER AND HIGH SEAS CONFUSED THE VERY MEAGRE LIGHTING AT THE HARBOUR (NO HYDRO THEN - ONLY GASLIGHT AND COAL OIL LAMPS).

HER CAPTAIN AND MATE MISJUDGED THE HARBOUR LIGHT AND SHE FOUNDERED ON THE {AST...AND WRONG...SIDE OF THE HARBOUR ENTRANCE. DAYLIGHT SHOWED HER 38 YEAR OLD IRON STRAPPED HULL BUCKLING, AND THREE MASTS CANTERED TO DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, AND ALREADY COAL WAS BEING WASHED FROM HER HOLD TO THE SHORE. THE PEOPLE OF CORK TOWN GOT THEIR WINTER'S SUPPLY OF COAL CHEAPLY THAT YEAR, BUT THE "JESSIE DRUMMOND" BROKE UP AND WAS NO MORE.

Source: Miss Madeline Rooney
Perry St, Cobourg