

pretty drunk when we got there. He waved me into a room that was connected to the barroom.

The room was filled with bookcases and shelves with dozens and dozens of boats, big and small. Some like the ones in my dad's workshop: some fancier, some weirder. I took them down one at a time and tried to see which parts would move, which parts were familiar and which parts made the coolest boats.

Whenever I could, I took the opportunity to play with those boats. But as soon as I was a little older I forgot all about them. Mr. Rodman and his wife had no children of their own and they weren't particularly friendly to us kids in the neighborhood. In fact I was a little frightened of them. Their house bordered the park where my friends and I played baseball and hide'n'go seek. They had a massive hedge that formed our foul line and we lost many a baseballs in its green depths. Mrs. Rodman often chased us away. Probably because we weren't being too kind to their hedge.

A few years ago I was visiting my parents and had taken my two little girls to play at the same park I played at as a kid. Mrs. Rodman came down her driveway and waved us over. Her husband had died just recently and my father and mother were still doing favors for her. She asked me if I was Mr. Roach's son and I introduced myself and my daughters to her. She was a very prim and proper woman who carried herself very tall and strong, even in her 80's.

"I have been cleaning up the house as I will be moving soon," she told us. "I was wondering if you would like to have the boats."

It had been years since I had thought about those wonderful boats and suddenly I wasn't too sure we were on the same page.

"Your husband's boats?" I asked.

"No, no" she shook her head firmly. "My cousin's boats."

Briefly, I wondered if it was her cousin that was living with her all these years, that I might have mistook for her husband. But I quickly shook off my confusion to make sure we were talking about the same boats.

"Yes. Yes, the boats in the basement. Come in, and you can take what you want."

This is how I discovered the boats and how I learned about the man who created them. His name was Nedland "Flasker" Graham, a character of the town he loved.



*Grimsby Beach Steamship Service* 39x14x4 acrylics, assemblage on board