

REMINISCENCES OF GEORGETOWN

We continue from our last issue the Reminiscences of Georgetown by C. W. Young, a native son:—

THE CHURCHES

I cannot say that I remember very much about the churches except the Anglican—which my parents attended. Church-going was much more of a duty for children, than it is now. The old St. George's was a frame structure on the site of the present church, with straight, box pews, very uncomfortable. In the centre was a square enclosure, where the choir was installed, with a small melodeon or cabinet organ. The choir roster, I fancy, if it was unearthed, would be found to have been mostly a family affair of Youngs and Phillipses. The first incumbent I remember was Rev. Mr. Marsh, who lived in Norval and whose parish included Georgetown, Norval and Stewarttown. As I recall him he was a kindly, genial gentleman, whose every word was a benediction. On a trip to England he was served by a careless ship steward with a poison of some kind in the place of mineral water and died from the effects on board ship.

Rev. J. G. D. Mackenzie came after Mr. Marsh, and following him Rev. Dr. O'Meara, who had been for many years a missionary to the Indians on Manitoulin Island and the north shore of Lake Superior. He retained many of the mannerisms of the Indians among whom he passed so many years of his long and active life. Dr. O'Meara has three sons, all of whom became clergymen.

A CLERICAL ODDITY

A genuine oddity was a subsequent incumbent of St. George's, Rev. Henry Cowperwatte Webb, and it was not unusual to see him march up the aisle, to the vestry to take the service in a brown holland suit, with a red vest, a monocle, and a bull-dog, which was his constant companion, yet he was a good preacher, a conscientious visitor, and liked in spite of his many eccentricities. He was a public spirited citizen of the village and one of his activities, which is an enduring monument to his memory, was the raising of a considerable amount of money by means of penny readings, which was expended in planting trees on the streets, which are now of large size and have furnished shade to several generations. Contrary to the usual rule Mr. Webb gave a party once at the Rectory, and presented every one with an orange, this fruit being a great luxury in early times.

Mr. Sims, a school teacher at Glen Williams, was fired with missionary zeal by Dr. O'Meara, and studied for the ministry with that gentleman. He used to take the duty occasionally and after his ordination was sent to spread the gospel among the Aborigines. "Faintly as tolls the evening chimes," their drifts through the recesses of one's brain, the face and form of Rev. J. E. Croly, who, if my memory serves me, had been a school teacher, but was studying for the church with Rev. Dr. O'Meara, is ever before me. He was a tall man, with heavy brown beard, but as I remember him, not in the best of health. He had a very cultivated mind, and was a valued contributor as a reader to amateur entertainments. I always feel under a debt of gratitude to him for introducing me to the stately and smooth-flowing hexameters, as exemplified in Tennyson's Enoch Arden and the Princess, and in Longfellow's Evangeline and the Courtship of Miles Standish, from which he very frequently quoted.

A few hundred yards from the centre of the village, on the way to Stewarttown, lived Rev. Joseph Unsworth, perpetual pastor of the Congregational Church, and farming a little. All the land between him and the village was wickily covered with second-growth pine, which had already attained a considerable size. The Roman Catholic church stood on Main Street, near the street which runs down to the old woolen mill, with the Presbyterian on the corner. It was a square wooden structure without any adornment, and as I remember it, unpainted. The congregation was never a large one during my recollection.

ENTERTAINMENTS

The town hall, over the school house was the scene of many entertainments by professionals and occasionally amateurs and very welcome visitors were the Berger Family Bell Ringers, who gave a kind of variety performance. The star of the company was little Annie Berger, who charmed the hearts of all the boys, and left them disconsolate. She afterwards married Mr. Belchamber of the Belchamber House, Garna, and was for years the popular chateleine of that well-known hostelry.

THE HOLMAN OPERA COMPANY

Not so many can now remember the Holman Opera Company, which in the early days gave a somewhat similar performance to the Bergers, without the bells, and afterwards developed into a very meritorious organization, which played all the standard operas throughout Canada and for a number of years was permanently established in the Royal Lyceum, at that time the leading theatre in the Queen City. When they were very little folks, the Holmans made their first visit to Georgetown, and borrowed the only piano in the village, belonging to our family. On this, the three little Holman girls, Sallie, Julia and Jemima played a trio, which was highly appreciated. All the Holmans, I think, are now dead. The father, George Holman, had been a noted opera singer in his younger days, and had a powerful baritone voice. Mrs. Holman had wonderful musical talent. The repertoire of the company was an unusually large one, and besides most of the standard operas, included many that have long been forgotten. Even in the Royal Lyceum Mrs. Holman, at the piano, constituted the entire orchestra and was conductor as well, without a note of music before her.

When the Holmans developed into a full-fledged opera company there were only two daughters, Sallie and Julia, the other had died as a child. Sallie had a fine soprano voice and was a finished actress. Julia was a contralto, and an admirable sourette, with a considerable spice of the devil in her, a jolly little, dumpy piece of femininity who always had a crowd of admirers. One of the favorite operas was the "Grand Duchess," Offenbach's masterpiece, and those who had seen all the queens of opera, Bouffe, Almee, Tostbe, and the rest of the French crowd, who were so popular, used to say that none could hold a candle to our Sallie. George Holman always took the heavy parts, a finer Fra Diavolo never trod any stage, and Alile, a boy in his teens, was a sweet tenor. He died quite recently in London, the last of the immediate family. Uncle Al. was treasurer of the company. W. H. Crana, since become a famous actor, was having his training in the stock and buskin, and was a versatile fellow if ever there was one, equally at home in opera, tragedy and light comedy, and doing a good vaudeville turn when required. Charlie Drew, light tenor, afterwards achieved considerable prominence. William Davidge, scion of a theatrical family, was an all-round comedian. Chatterton was the first tenor, and afterwards, as Signor Perugini, made his mark in Italian Opera, and being the notable in later years of one of the numerous husbands of Lillian Russell.

AN ABORIGINAL CEMETERY
Along in the middle sixties, Georgetown was in an excited state over the discovery, in the vicinity, of an Indian graveyard, which was soon overrun by curiosity seekers, most of whom had no sentiment about rifling the old aboriginal cemetery of its articles of war and household use, and carrying them off as souvenirs. Even the bones were not sacred, and skulls thigh and arm bones were kicking about the village in every direction. Some of the skulls had a complete row of double teeth.

(Continued next week)

CAN I STAY NEUTRAL

By Holger C. Petersen, in Christian Science Monitor

I am beginning to understand how the Czechoslovaks, Poles, and Finns living in the United States must have felt when their native countries were invaded. Of course I had been horrified whenever either the Nazis or Russians had invaded some small country, but Denmark, my native land, had received from the German Government a written guarantee that its neutrality would not be violated. It had been accepted by the Danes in good faith. From an occasional Danish newspaper I could clearly see that Denmark was trying hard not to offend its southern neighbor. I had foolishly believed that my relatives in Denmark were safe from any ruthless aggressors. I came to America in 1912 when I was sixteen years of age. I had shipped from Copenhagen as a cabin boy on a Danish tramp steamer. In New York I left it.

Before a year I had applied for my first papers and eventually became fully naturalized. I consider myself an American; certainly I never thought of myself as a Danish-American.

A trip to Europe in 1936 made me fully realize how deeply attached I was to my adopted land. Then—"Nazis invade Denmark." I was so shocked at the thought of foreign soldiers in my homeland that years of allegiance to another country were forgotten for the moment. I was again a Dane, humiliated and angry. What would happen to my aged mother? How scornful she had been of the Germans for permitting their freedom to slip out of their hands and becoming what she called "serfs." Her own father had been decorated by his king for bravery when fighting the German invasion of 1864. Would my brothers and sisters be able to control their odium for Nazi ideology? What could this possibly mean for them all?

When I was a boy about nine years of age, walking with my mother in a strange section of Copenhagen, I saw what to me was a peculiarly dressed old man. His face was covered with a long beard and on his head was a little black skull cap. To my question as to what type of man that was, my mother told me how Denmark was a sanctuary for oppressed people. There were many refugees in our city. It seemed only yesterday that my mother had told me how Denmark was a free country, happy to help the unfortunates of other lands. Travelling about Denmark in 1938, talking with business men and political leaders, I noticed that they frequently reminded me whenever we discussed the problems of the Jewish people, that Denmark would always remain open to them until they could find another home. Today's newspaper informs me that the Danes are no longer free to offer asylum for Europe's unhappy people.

How forceful are those impressions made upon us during the early years of our lives. During the twenty-eight years I have lived in America I have always lived among Americans. There were many years when I did not hear or speak my native tongue. I married an American girl whose people have been Americans for more than a century. Letters to and from Denmark were the only reminders that I was not born here. However, reading in the newspaper of Denmark's plight, I was emotionally hurried back to the love of my boyhood. I wanted to fight. For a moment how I hated everything pertaining to Nazi Germany. Fortunately, I have been an American too long to encourage hatred.

The paper I recalled that on numerous occasions, when speaking in public, I had made the statement that the United States must remain neutral, regardless of what happened in Europe. Wars are an old story in Europe, and for America to stay out of this war, I thought—and I still think so—is wisdom. So as I continued to read how German soldiers had poured without warning into Copenhagen, I counseled myself not to forget that I was not only an American but also a firm believer in democracy. And the true spirit of democracy is tolerance and understanding, and not hatred of any other people or nation. Native Americans whose ancestors fought the British do not seem to retain any spark of hatred against the enemies of their forefathers. I do believe herein lies one of the significant facts of American democracy. Most European children are not taught to love their neighbors, especially if they speak another tongue. Many Europeans seem to bring this hatred with them to the new world and apparently find some satisfaction

in instilling it in their children. Denmark, as I saw it in 1938, was a living refutation of Nazism. In contrast to Hitler's teaching of self-sufficiency, the Danes have built, by sheer initiative and character, a small, prosperous democracy. To their own satisfaction at least, they have proved that the majority rules better than the individual. I am wondering these days what will happen to Denmark's structure of social legislation. Will my mother be able to get her old age pension for which she and my father have paid over a period of fifty years? While other nations were spending their income for armaments, Denmark was using its money for internal improvement. Denmark was a virtual laboratory for social improvement. The paper I am reading tells how Germany has destroyed its trained labor by sending it to perform other work, such as in the munitions factories. What is going to happen to Danish labor and its factories, which will soon be idle because no raw materials will be available. Will their markets, which they have laboriously built up in spite of tariff walls, be lost forever? Education, not force, has taught

the Danes to live co-operatively; education which teaches students how to make use of what Nature endowed them with and not to covet their neighbors' goods. I am glad I saw Denmark again before this invasion. I may never again see the happy Denmark of my childhood.

As an American I am shocked at Germany's disregard for other people's rights, but as a Dane I am aroused and indignant. Can I remain neutral under the circumstances?

TENNIS NEWS

On Thursday evening, July 4th, the Acton Tennis Club were guests of St. George's Church Tennis Club. The result of games were as follows:

LADIES' DOUBLES
H. Mooney, M. Smith, Acton; M. Feller, H. Walker, Georgetown; score 6 - 1 Georgetown.
J. Coles, J. Smith, Acton; F. Feller, M. Kean, Georgetown; score 6 - 2 Georgetown.
K. Chaplin, M. Young, Acton; N. Thompson, B. Grant, Georgetown; score 6 - 2 Acton.
F. Kelly, D. Blair, Acton; F. Eason, H. Hinton, G. Williams, Acton; J.

Crichton, J. Hall, Georgetown; score 8 - 6 Georgetown.

N. Marlow, M. Reid, Acton; H. King, Y. Adams, Georgetown; 6 - 5 Acton.

MEN'S DOUBLES

N. Marchmont, Georgetown; score 6 - 2 Acton.

Dr. Cullen, J. Ross, Acton; I. McKenzie and R. McKenzie, Georgetown; score 6 - 1 Georgetown.

J. Hurst, B. Arnold, Acton; D. Stone, H. King, Georgetown; score 6 - 3 Georgetown.

MIXED DOUBLES

H. Hinton, H. Mooney, Acton; J. Crichton, H. Walker, Georgetown; score 8 - 5 Georgetown.

G. Williams, M. Smith, Acton; F. Feller, J. Hall, Georgetown; score 6 - 2 Georgetown.

N. Marlow, J. Coles, Acton; M. Feller, H. King, Georgetown; score 6 - 1 Georgetown.

M. Reid, M. Young, Acton; I. McKenzie, M. Kean, Georgetown; score 6 - 4 Georgetown.

B. Arnold, K. Chaplin, Acton; B. Grant, R. McKenzie, Georgetown; score 6 - 4 Acton.

At the conclusion of the tournament refreshments were served, followed by a sing-song, everyone having a very good time.

Regarding Enlisted Men

In order to enable this paper to prepare a complete and accurate list of the men from Georgetown and district who have enlisted with the C.A.S.P., the publisher requests the relatives of members of the Canadian fighting forces in England, and those in training in Canada, to fill in the following form and return it to this office:

Name in full (Print Surname First)

Rank

Unit

Place and date of enlistment

Birthplace and age

Names and address of parents or next of kin

Other particulars

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