

A TALK WITH WALKER C. CAUGHELL TOWNSHIP CLERK YORMOUTH

BY A. S. PARAGUS

"There are two family peculiarities that have come down through the ramifications of the Caughell generations", says Walker C. Caughell, township clerk of Yarmouth for thirty years. "One is that Caughells always were, and still are, United Empire Loyalist to the backbone."

"THE other is that they favor the names of John, Peter and George. When these run out, they generally ring the changes on Jacob and Alexander, with frequently a David. From ocean to ocean you find these names among the Caughell's.

Mr. Caughell might have added two other characteristics: That Caughells are proverbially Conserative. And that they have shown a predilection for discovering homesites destined to a future. Upon which if fate had allowed them to stay, more than one Caughell would now be a near millionaire.

For instance, John Caughell, the great-grandfather of Walker C. Caughell whose farm was confiscated after the American Revolution, had taken this farm on the site of what is now the City of Schenectady, New York. The same unkind fate pursued this progenitor to the Niagra peninsula, where he finally settled in the vicinity of the "Twenty". His farm here was so wet as to be at that period almost useless. Therefore he exchanged it with a man by the name of John Rittenhaus for a vest pattern! And the writer happens to know that not only is that land now some of the finest in the country, but the name of Rittenhaus in that locality has become synonmous with great wealth, not to say notalbe public munifici-
ence. Moreover, James the son of this same John the Baptist treked into the west, selected a farm, in the spot where Chicago now sends up her skyscrapers, and died there, unmarried at the age of thirty-two.

JOKE WITH JUDGE COLTER

Concerning the Conservative politics of the Caughells, the late Judge Colter, and Walker C. Caughell, who were the best of friends, used to have a joke. "Ah, Walker, "the Judge would say, "down in Haldimand where I came from, the Caughells used to be fine Liberals--some of my best supporters. How does it come I find you over in the camp of the enemy" "Judge", Mr. Caughell would reply in the tones of deep and sacred feeling, "My great grandfather, John and his Loyalists brothers Peter fought in a line on the field of Lundy's Lane. George was killed in that battle. His brothers carried him over to St. David's and buried him. Ah Ah, yes, we Caughells are Loyalists to the last ditch. And were proud of it. "But", and here a twinkle would falsh up in the Caughell aftermath of battles fought for home and country, some of them should wander over the hill into Haldimand, get into bad company, and come out Grits?" Upon which the two firends would laugh seriously shake hands, better firends than ever.

But though the family laughed long at John, sometimes there came his turn back again. Grandfather John the ancient Loyalist, would be reciting by the fireside the harrowing days of the War. The time when

ARE OF DUTCH DESCENT

The Caughells are of Dutch Descent. About 1766 one Reuben Caughell with his wife and the first trio of John, Peter and George came from Holland and settled along the Mohawk River, here the parents died. The sons, after the Revolution sought liberty in the Niagara Falls peninsula, as we have seen. There Peter and his family remained permanently, settling in the fine position between Queenston Heights and Niagara Falls. George met death in the war of 1872; and John, who had met and married Elizabeth Coley, from Hartford, Conn., the first schoolmaster in the Niagra district, finally moved up, with his six sons and five daughters to the Talbot Settlement in 1815.

Doubtless this removal was to take advantage of the land given as war reparation. The six sons of the Loyalist drew a block of 1,200 acres in Yarmouth, the deeds bearing the seal of George IV. Walker C. Caughell known the number of each lot by heart. "George A., Lot 10, Concession 8; James, Lot II, Con. 8; John, Lot 12, Con. 9; David, Lot 13, Con 8; Peter (Taht's old Deacon Caughell of Mapleton, you remember) Lot 19. and Benjamin, Lot 20, both of Con. 8."

"My father who was one of the junior Johns", says Walker C. Caughell, "Owned Lot 13. He was born there in 1822." I was born there seventy years ago. My grandfather, John the Loyalist, died there at the great age of ninety-two. Do you wonder that that old farm is one of the greatest spots on earth to me?

RECALLS EARLY DAYS

And Mr. Caughell will go on with animation to tell of the days when the old homestead was full of fine timber and wolves, when his father one lovely May day, rode out of the forest with Mary Wismer, his bride-to-be, and their groomsman and bridesmaid, a cavalcade of four on horseback on their way to Fort Talbot for David and Mary to be married by the old Irish Colonel.

Of how his father (John Junior) and his elder sister Maria (who later on was to become Maria Grobb, the mother of the Portage La Prairie connections) were surprised by the wolves in the sugar camp one time, and had only time to run their kettles over the sugar and run home for their lives! There was another story the family all enjoyed telling about their father. Young John was the Pacifist among the war-brave Caughells. Didn't care for hunting or fighting. One night, when he was a little fellow they sent him for the cows, lured by the cow-bell, he was swinging down the trail when suddenly a fallen tree barred his way. And as little John stood on tiptoe to explore beyond its branches, the form of a great animal reared itself on hid feet there to examine himself in return.

Desperation seized the lad who cared not for hunting. It was a case of do or die. Grasping a stick, he aimed as with a gun at the enemy. "Run!" he shouted. "Run, or I'll shoot you. Run. I say Run". Thus adjured the animal turned tail and departed precipitously. It was a fine deer.

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Uncle George was killed at Lundy's Lane. The worst was coming to the worst, men and bullets falling in every direction, sickening carnage underfoot everywhere. Grandfather John spied an old Ditch oven and dived therein for safety. No sooner inside than off flew the roof with a cannon ball. "Johnny, my boy, by boy" "but wasn't I out of dat oven!" he would exclaim. And young John would reply slyly, "But Grandfather, was that entirely brave, D'ye think?" Johnny, my boy, you were not dare, "he defended the ancient soldier. "And more dan dat, a live dog is braver dan a dead lion."

HISTORIC AND LOVED SPOT

Young John, Walker Caughell's father, went up to Union when he was young and learned the dyeing trade at the factory. Also he met Walker's mother there and married her. "It was when my grandfather died that father came home to take over the old homestead."

"Yes," says Mr. Caughell, "I owned that historic and loved spot. Nothing would have hired me to part with it if there had been any boys in the family to take it over. For years after I took this clerkship, I held on to the old land, renting it." Another prized home is the one on Regent Street where Mr. Caughell now lives. It is another old family home. His father died there. There is a thrid piece of land dear to his heart - and which may not be sold - the plot in the old English cemetery in St. Thomas, where John, the Loyalist, with Elizabeth, his wife, and Walker C. Caughell's grandfather, David, with Mary, his wife, and several other members of the Caughell family are buried.

Also treasured by Walker C. Caughell is a fine picture hanging in his office of the fourteen reeves during whose period of office Mr. Caughell has been municipal clerk. And there has been still another reeve since the picture was presented to Mr. Caughell.

NOW;

The days of spring
are numbered,
So let not one
slip by
Without some glad
song shouted
To greet the
waking sky!

Come sing with each
bright moment,
Each petal on the bough,
Before some fleet
Tomorrow
Has stilled the
Throbbing Now!
David H