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ISSUE : [Issue 67](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1994/8/1

ly wore away, an unusual change for a mature man. He must have been pleased at his conquest of an aUen idiom. Neverthe? less, in his later years, there were times when he felt that what he had left behind was more precious, and belonged to his very blood and bone, and also that no substitute, however worthy, would ever replace it. WHEN I WAS PAST MIDDLE AGE, I leamed a startUng bit of family history. I have already related the origin of the name Iron- viUe: there were iron ore deposits beneath the soil of our farm. The govemment had done some exploratory work and then de? sisted. In leaving the area, the officials explained that they were retaining a fifty-foot driveway up to the mines on the edge of my grandfather's property. This fifty-foot driveway extended all the way up to the hinterland of the farm and was in actual fact a part of ihe farm. It could be used but it could not be owned. The years passed by and the dubious nature of my grandfa? ther's title to that driveway was forgotten. Then the blow fell. The neighbor who owned the next farm remembered how the driveway slumbered like a wild animal ready to be seized by the first claimant. He reasoned that it belonged to the first man who claimed it, not to the man who had managed, apparently who had owned, it in the past. He went to the county clerk, paid some kind of tax, and the land was his • at least on paper. My grandfather must have been completely stunned by the news when it came. Nothing of that sort had been envisaged. The land was behind his fence, he and his father had cultivated it, they had walked over it often. How could it be anyone else's? As he engaged a lawyer and fought for his land, the farm went steadily down hill. Cattle and lambs were sold to pay the lawyer and the grandfather saw his hard work going for nothing. Finally it was decided that the driveway was his • but a hard price had been paid, and ill-will was a permanent ingre? dient in the air. The two families were like tiny armies waiting for open warfare to break out. It seemed that they were present at the beginning of one of those famous mral feuds which start with violence and end up in myth and legend. That year, at Midnight Mass, the parish priest spoke of the peace that Christ brought to earth, and he ended by saying that two families in the parish were behaving as enemies and that they should come together during the Christmas season. That day, after their Christmas meal, my grandfather declared that he was going over to the neighbors' house and he wanted his brother (Uncle Mick whom I dimly remember) to come with him. They spent some time putting on their heavy winter cloth- GILLIS 'ibmecare • ?iBUILDING CENTRE"" wmmwi I CALL us FOR AN ESTIMATE FLOOR & ROOF TRUSSES KINGS ROAD, SYDNEY RIVER 539-0738 GLENWODD HOMES ' Complete Home Packages Cottages • Garages Contact Darren Wilcox: 539-0738 ing and, while they were thus engaged, the door opened and the neighbor appeared. He fell on his knees before my grandfather and begged his pardon, admitting that he himself was totally to blame. My grandfather raised him to his feet and forgave him. Then followed a time of laughing and rejoicing in which (al? most) all joined. When the neighbors had left amid a choms of good wishes, all agreed that he was an innocent "who did not know what he was doing"



and that he was a good man at heart. But then spoke up the great Dissenter, my father, at that tune (I guess) about twelve years of age. "He knew what he was doing. He was old enough to know. Nobody can teU me that he did not know!" I don't know how he was answered. I'm sure that any at? tempt to change him would have ended in failure. There was a streak in him of uncompromising honesty that refused to be de? terred by fear or be confused by sophistry. This streak must have caused difficulty, but because of it I was always proud of him.... Many years later, I found myself in conversation with a slender white-haired man of about sixty years of age. He said he was originaUy from Boisdale and his name was MacMuUin. (He was the father of Mrs. Effie Duggan, the Heights.) "Did you know my father...?" "I was walking along the railroad • as we used to do in those days • when I saw your father coming towards me. You know, we never passed anyone without stopping to chat. It would have been an insult to simply waUc by." "And what did you chat about?" I asked. He said, "He had a dol? lar bUl in his hand and he showed it to me. He said that he had found it on the road and he was taking it to the parish priest who would announce the finding on Sunday." He looked at me know? ingly, proud of his little anecdote. And I was proud too, proud of that streak in my father that may have made him difficult but that certainly made him honorable and admired. Our thanks to Ken and Stewart Donovan who first brought Fr. Rod MacSween to our attention. And to Kathleen MacKenzie, Ar? chivist, St. Francis Xavier University, who provided most of the texts. Thanks for help with photos to Stewart Donovan and to Dr. Pat Walsh, St. F. X. (Pat took the photo on page 17.) Our thanks to Donald Gillis, Editor of the Antigonish Casket, for permission to reprint this material. And to George and Gertrude Sanderson, literary executors, for their permissions. Fr. Rod MacSween, professor at St. F. X. and founder of The An? tigonish Review, died in 1990. A special double issue of The An? tigonish Review {#87-BB) is devoted to writing by and about him. There is also an article by Ken Donovan in Vol. 13, No. 2 (1993) of the Nova Scotia Historical Review. Stewart Donovan is now at work on Fr. MacSween's biography. Cedar House Bakery and Restaurant 674-2929 OPEN DAILY FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER bread • scones • oatcakes • cookies • pies TFIANS-CANADA HWY NEAR SEAL ISUND BRIDGE "'U'- SUPERIOR OPTICAL LIMITED COMPLETE OPTICAL SERVICE ' n l Shirley Sparling Optician Owned & Operated JAMES DEAN Optician and Pair FREE R/lon, ' Tues, ' Sat 10 am - 6 pm Wed. - Thors. ' Ptl 10 am > \$ pm S64-8486 Mayflower Mall **'3