

TALES OF THE BLUE-GREEN CLAN

By Frank Green
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INTRODUCTION

Ever since our parents died, I've regretted that I didn't ask them more questions about our family history, in the way that Renfrew writer Joan Finnegan questioned dozens of older Ottawa Valley residents, taped their stories and published them in a number of very interesting books. Our dad was a great story teller and our mother's memory was flawless almost until the day she died just shy of 91 years of age.

So now that I'm well into sudden death overtime territory, I thought it a good time to commit to my computer some of the stories that I remember hearing from my parents, brothers and sister and other relatives. Gormy and Jerome, whose memories are longer than mine, have helped me a lot with this task. I'm doing this in the hope that succeeding generations may find some of these tales of interest if they haven't heard them before. Maybe one or two of them will carry on the tradition.

ANCESTRY - GREEN

Joseph Green was born in the village of L'Amable, which is surrounded by beautiful lakes, near Bancroft, Ontario in September, 1898. His ancestors had come from Ireland at the time of the Great Potato Famine (about 1847). Green was an anglicized name adopted by a number of Irish Septs or Clans in the 17th century. It probably derived from living near the village green. At some point he and his family of four sisters and five brothers moved to Maynooth, Ontario. His father, John Edward Green (Apr. 3, 1863 - Aug. 14, 1923) was, I believe, at times in the logging business, and owned so much land that in his later years he was considered to be "land poor." He also owned a hotel in L'Amable and later in Maynooth. John's wife's maiden name was Catherine Rouse (1863-1941).

There is a good picture of John and Catherine with all their children and four of their spouses in front of their house in Maynooth, Christmas, 1922. (For many years the home of Mick the Barber Flynn, his wife, Joe's sister Cass and family.) Joe's siblings, not necessarily in chronological order, were Philip, Mary, Laura, Cass, Sam, Sim, Jack, Ned and Catherine. (I think Joe's father, a tall man with a mustache, looks a lot like Frank Hickey while his mother and three of her daughters, in the custom of the day for women, look down modestly. But Mary Freeman, the eldest daughter, looks fiercely straight into the camera. Laura's husband, Mike McAlpine, holds a fiddle.)

Joe's grandfather, Phillip J. Green (1836-1886) was born in Ireland and came to Canada during the Great Hunger about 1847. His wife Mary Ann died in 1883. Joe's parents and grandparents are all buried at Maynooth.

ANCESTRY - BLUE

Catharine O’Gorman was born November 18, 1898 in Brougham Township near Renfrew, Ontario and attended church at nearby Mount St. Patrick. (She told how the stern pastor would come into the church an hour before Sunday Mass to hear confessions. 15 minutes before Mass time he would stick his head out of the confessional and say, “only the mortal sins now.” The penitents lined up on either side were faced with a tough choice in full view of their family, neighbours, Uncle Tom Cobley and all.)

Catharine’s ancestors came from County Clare, Ireland about a decade before the Potato Famine. The name O’Gorman and other spellings like Gorman and MacGorman derived from “gorm” which means blue. Among the ancient clan were soldiers, teachers and writers. At one point the clan lost their lands rather than give up their Catholic faith. Catharine’s father was named Sinon and he is the only one of our grandparents that I remember. He had a big mustache and smoked a pipe.

Catharine (called Katie by Joe and Kit by her side of the family) and her three sisters and two brothers were brought up by an aunt after their mother Frances (Gannon) died after giving birth to Francis in her mid thirties. The birth order was Mary, Catharine, Zita, Margaret, Patrick and Francis.

It seems that Mary, as the eldest, assumed a leadership role with her siblings after their mother’s death, which role, I believe, was not always appreciated by some of her siblings, thinking her bossy. However, when Margaret married a man in Ottawa and had two children with him, only to discover that he was already married, she left him but also, perhaps from shame, lost touch with her family. But Mary travelled from Wylie to Ottawa to find Margaret and her children to bring them back into the embrace of the family. When Frank married “outside the church” Mary kept in close touch with him over the years and consoled him when he was overcome with guilt. Eventually Frank made his peace with the Catholic Church and one of his grandsons, Michael Sallows, recalled driving Frank to daily Mass and then over to the Legion for a beer. (Catherine Gleason was the source of this information. She told me that so many visitors came to the Gleason farm in the summers that she and her siblings sometimes felt neglected.)

Katie’s grandfather, James Edward Gannon was born in 1829 in Ireland and his wife, Mary McGovern, in 1832. I believe that Mary’s parents came from the Isle of Mull in Scotland. Katie’s parents and grandparents are all buried at Mount St. Patrick by the Holy Well. (**Do not drink the water, it is stagnant.**)

Katie, Mary and Zita became teachers in one room school houses in small Ontario communities. Margaret worked for the income tax department in Ottawa and once checked Pierre Trudeau’s tax return. Paddy and Frank worked on the farm and sometimes in the bush all winter. Later they worked for INCO in Sudbury (of Stompin’ Tom Saturday night fame). Paddy had to quit working underground due to lung problems, so he moved to Deep River and became a carpenter. Frank stayed at INCO for the rest of his work life.

Katie told me she was teaching in Madawaska, Ontario when she met Joe from nearby Maynooth. They, along with Joseph's sister, Katie and a friend of Joseph's, Ned Flynn, all went to Detroit, Michigan in search of work in the mid-nineteen twenties.

JOE'S WORK HISTORY

One time our sister Jean said to me, "Our Dad just went to grade eight in school, in fact, I'm not sure he even went that far. But he had a pretty impressive career in the world of work." (She also told me that she always felt safe in a canoe if the paddler was our Dad.)

Dad once said to me, "I was in charge of men at work from the time I was fourteen years old."

With these two comments in mind, I've tried to piece together the main parts of Joe's working life as a way of giving some structure to our family's history.

LOGGING. One time while I was helping our Dad move some things in the yard, he picked up a cant hook which is used to move around logs. "I used to work with one of these," he said, "but I was never as good at it as my brothers." This leads me to think that his first job was probably working for his father, who owned a lot of land and, I think, was in the logging business as well as owning a hotel in L'Amable and later in Maynooth. It seems likely that it was his father who first put him in charge of men at work.

GUIDING, HUNTING, FISHING AND PUBLIC SPEAKING. For some period of time when he was young Joe worked as a guide in the Temagami area. This would be an early indication of his skill in finding his way around the bush.

Gormy told me that it was sometime in the 1920s that Joe and his brothers set up a hunting camp on Mackenzie Lake which is not far from Maynooth. Perhaps the land belonged to their father. Succeeding generations of Greens and Flynns have hunted in that area ever since. Gormy went to the camp every year for several decades, (His best day probably was when he shot three deer within a few minutes. It didn't matter who shot the deer as long as the number did not exceed the number of licenses held in the camp.)

Greg heard that Joe could get off shots quicker than anyone else. An old man who lived near the camp, when he heard a burst of shots one year in the twenties, said, "Joe must be back from Detroit." So he was quite an expert hunter. Joe told me that once when the weather wasn't good for hunting deer he switched to hunting partridge and got 28 that day. (My best day I got three birds, and that was in the Park which I had entered... by mistake.)

Once when Joe and I were hunting partridge near Deux Rivere he told me about an overnight trip he had there with a fellow from Chalk River to hunt deer. They got two deer, both shot by the other lad. They slept in the back of his truck and in the morning Joe called Katie to say they would be back to Deep River for lunch. After Katie made them a good lunch, Joe and the lad went outside and he said to Joe, "You can have half of the small deer." Joe said, "Did you enjoy your lunch? Do I owe you anything for gas?" The lad said, "Yes" and "No."

Then Joe said, "If I could buy you for what I think you're worth and sell you for what you think you're worth, I'd be the richest man in Renfrew County."

It would be accurate to say that Joe was not excessively scrupulous about Ontario hunting laws. He believed that a man's duty to feed his family was more important than those rules.

One time he took some venison, perhaps shot out of season and gave it to Katie's sister Zita in Chalk River. Shortly afterwards, game wardens came to Zita's door and demanded to search the house. Zita, neither a shrinking violet nor reluctant to tell you what she thought, said, "You can't search until my husband is here!" While the minions went to get her husband, she placed the venison in the safe, as she managed a bank in part of her house. (After all it was either a buck or doe.) The search proved vain.

Joe and Paddy O'Gorman sometimes teamed up for some after dark hunting, with Paddy as driver and Joe as the rifleman. Once after shooting they saw another pair of eyes. "Damn it I missed," said Joe and shot again. Then they found two deer awaiting them.

Joe was also a successful fisherman and an excellent cook of venison, speckled trout, partridge, johnny cake and stuffing for the turkey. Regarding his pancakes and donuts opinions varied.

I once heard Joe give a public speech which began, "This ain't my trade." Nevertheless, he kept it short and held the interest of the audience.

CARPENTRY. Greg told me that our dad told him that he learned how to do carpentry when he was young by working with an older man building houses for an extended period of time. This experience would have been much like a modern-day apprenticeship.

Jean's husband Billy Owens told me that one time when our dad couldn't find a certain tool where he had left it in the basement of our house on Highway 17 he said, "You might as well look for the pope's shit in the Orangemen's Hall."

WORK IN DETROIT. Back in the 1920s it was very common for Ontario residents in search of work to go to Detroit. Some did so legally, and some did not. (Once in the late 1960s I was in a small village near Stratford, ON. and heard Irish people referring to a local resident as Squawk Kelly. When I asked how he had earned this moniker, I was told, "He reported his neighbour for working in Detroit illegally forty years ago. "It seemed so unusual for the Irish not to forgive and forget instantly. As a guide in Derry said, "Irish Alzheimer's: You forget everything but the grudges!")

When Joe, Katie, his friend Ned Flynn and Joe's youngest sister Katie went to Detroit about 1925, the legality of their move is not known. They did a variety of different jobs in Detroit. Joe worked in a factory where he had to stop smoking and began to chew snuff. (He once told me that when he was a smoker he would never smoke in front of his parents. I don't know about the Copenhagen.)

Joe worked at carpentry in Detroit. According to Ned Flynn (Frank Hickey told me) the two of

them once made renovations in a house of ill repute. (Whether our mother knew the nature of the establishment or not is lost in the mists of history.)

In the mid 1920's the Ambassador Bridge was built, at the time, the longest suspension bridge in the world and to this day, the busiest international commercial crossing in North America. Joe worked there laying the foundations of the bridge. This was probably the first time he worked on such a major construction project. Later he spent more time working on bridges, hydro dams and large buildings than on smaller carpentry projects like house building.

RETURN TO CANADA

Joe and Katie married in Detroit and the three oldest children, Jean, John and Gorman were born there. After the depression began in 1929, with the dearth of work in Detroit and with the arrival of Gorman in 1930, Joe and Katie decided to move back to Maynooth. Earlier Joe had cared for his aging parents, so they gave him their house in Maynooth, but while the family was in Detroit, Mick the Barber Flynn and Joe's sister Cass lived in it and eventually bought the house from Joe. So, the returning family rented a few different houses in Maynooth over time. (As an indication of inflation since that time, I recall after our father died coming across a receipt for monthly rent in one of those houses: \$7.00.)

(Incidentally, Joe's sister Katie stayed in Detroit all her working life. Her romance with Ned Flynn didn't work out. She always used to send us a big box of chocolates for Christmas. After retiring as a housekeeper and cook she came back to live with her widowed sister Mary Freeman in Ajax until she died.)

I have often thought of what it must have been like for our mother to leave Detroit which had all the conveniences that electricity provides and come back to Maynooth and Deep River, both of which did not get electricity until more than 20 years later. Coal oil lamps instead of the flip of a switch. No electric stove or fridge. It would not have been an easy adjustment.

I remember that, while away working, Joe had a Ford car stored in Sam's barn in Maynooth. He had driven it back from Detroit. I was not yet six years old and didn't know the difference at the time between a model A and T. One day some young lads tried to get the car out of the barn for a joy ride. Katie, who was quiet by nature, did not hesitate to go to the barn and say, "Listen here, you young scuts, leave that car alone and go on home!" As an eyewitness, I can testify that she spoke with such authority that the potential delinquents obeyed post haste.

Although Katie was not as much of a storyteller as Joe, she had a good sense of humour. I heard her telling a story to her sister Zita.

"The Black Nuns (sisters of St. Joseph) believed that they should never turn a beggar away from the door without giving him some food, as he might be St. Joseph in disguise testing their charity. One day Mother Superior saw a young nun turn a man away empty handed. 'Why did you do that? He might have been St. Joseph.'

'He wasn't St. Joseph, he was drunk!'

Replied Mother Superior, 'Could a bin St. Patrick!'"

From 1930 to the early forties Joe worked in a variety of construction jobs, mostly away from home, thus Katie was frequently the sole parent of six children. (One baby, Edwin, born between Greg and Jerome, died of Whooping Cough. Then both Jerome and I also had the same disease but survived. My mother once told me I used to cough until I was blue in the face. That must have been a time fraught with worry for our parents.)

Around 1939 or 40 when Joe and Katie were renting a house from one of the Niemans in Maynooth, the house burned down. Fortunately, as Gormy recalls, everyone got out safely.

Jerome remembered that among Joe's jobs was working for McNamara Construction Co on a large building in Toronto for the Parke Davis Pharmaceutical Company. From 1940-42 he was in charge of the building of the reconstructed Bark Lake Dam on the Madawaska River near Barry's Bay. The new dam raised the water level by 8 metres and was important both to control the water level in the river and to produce electricity.

Also, during the 1930s Joe played right field on the Maynooth baseball team. Jean reminded me that other members of the team were Father Tom Brady at second, and George Twa behind the plate. George was a noted Orangeman and Fr. Brady the parish priest. Jean thought that Fr. Brady was way ahead of his time on the ecumenical front. One of the other lads on the team used to run down from Madawaska to Maynooth for the Sunday afternoon games. There is a good picture of the Maynooth Team, date unknown.

Joe and Fr. Brady were good friends. Joe had a dog once that was easily insulted and whenever its feelings were hurt, it would trot up to the rectory and stay with Fr. Brady for a few days. Under his kindly care, the dog would get over its mad and return home to give Joe another chance.

Perhaps Joe picked up some pointers on playing RF from Babe Ruth when he saw the Yankees play in the old Tiger Stadium in Detroit. Joe watched a kid selling popcorn ask the Babe to pick up a dime that had fallen on the field. "Are you sure you're not kidding me?" asked the Babe. "No sir," said the kid. So Babe picked up the dime and threw it to the kid.

On the other hand, Joe said that Ty Cobb of the Tigers was the meanest player he ever saw.

BRIDGE ON THE RIVER LIARD

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour (1941) and their capture of two islands near Alaska, American President FDR decided to build a highway from Dawson's Creek in northern BC to Anchorage, Alaska. The American army built the first road, some 1500 miles long, in an astoundingly fast 8 months considering the difficulty of the terrain. They were aided in finding the best route by pilots with experience in Northern Ontario. (Many of the American soldiers were blacks from places like Georgia and Alabama - imagine how they must have enjoyed the northern winters!)

Then a number of construction companies from Ontario were hired to build permanent bridges

along the route, among them McNamara Co from Toronto for the approaches and concrete foundations for a bridge on the Liard River in Northern BC. McNamara hired Joe to hire 20 men from the Maynooth and Barry's Bay area to do this work, one of them Pat Green, Joe's nephew from L'Amable. They arrived by train in Dawson's Creek in the Fall of 1942. (They had to wait a few weeks in Dawson Creek before going to the job site, about 100 miles south of the Yukon border. While there they did some renovation work pro bono for Redemptorist Fr. CJ McElligott of Eganville at the Catholic church.)

The job at the Liard site took about a year and they were not paid until the job was finished, for fear that earlier pay might have led to workers quitting due to the harsh winter (as low as minus 55 Fahrenheit, ice five feet thick on the river. In warm weather black flies and mosquitos were so bad that they literally drove some men mad.) Caughnawaga natives from Montreal completed the upper steel work on the bridge.

Meanwhile Katie was in Maynooth with six kids. Fortunately, Buckley's General Store was willing to extend credit. Joe sent pictures back and coloured stones he collected along the river which as kids we played with and examined time and again.

(Joe told Jerome that the first thing he did when getting back to Maynooth was to pay Buckley's more than a thousand-dollar grocery bill.)

The bridges at the Liard (near the hot springs and where buffalo roam) and Peace Rivers in BC were the only suspension bridges on the Alaska Highway. The Peace River Bridge collapsed after 14 years, probably because the foundations were resting on ice or frozen earth rather than bedrock. But the bridge across the 700-foot-wide Liard River is still in use today, some 78 years after its completion.

I imagine that if Joe, who lacked neither confidence nor pride in doing a good job, were here today he might say, "we built our bridge to last," just as he said to me back in the 1970s about a water tower he and his crew built at Des Joachim, "they said they wanted it to last 10 years, it's more than 20 now and the tower is still there." (Included in the 9-man crew who built the tower were Katie's brother Paddy O'Gorman, our brother Jack, Paddy Gallagher from Maynooth and Jack O'Brien, a friend of Jack's from Eganville. One day Jack O'Brien had an anxiety attack while he was up a ladder and froze. Joe climbed up, tied a rope around him and slowly talked him down to safety.)

(Re Joe's self-confidence: Uncle Frank O'Gorman told me when I visited him and Irene in Copper Cliff in 1965 that his father Sinon had said, "Kit's young man is awful sure of himself!")

Father Jack, Jerome, Diane and I saw the Liard Bridge on our trip to Alaska in 2004. I think it is a fascinating historical coincidence that the Liard Bridge was built in Canada at roughly the same time as the Bridge on the River Kwai in Thailand halfway round the world. Near it lie the graves of 9000 British, Dutch, Australian and American prisoners of war who died as slave labourers in the construction of that bridge on "the railroad of death." The real bridge was not blown up and is still there, just like the Liard Bridge. It was only the bridge in the movie that was blown up. Also, the real bridge is made of steel, not wood as in the movie.

Jerome remembered that after coming back from the Liard River job, Joe and his brother Sam built houses in Oshawa.

DEEP RIVER

In the summer of 1945, our uncle Joe Robert (married to Katie's sister Zita) drove his big truck to Maynooth and moved us to Deep River. Our first house there was a log house on the Wylie Road owned by Mick Gleason's sister who lived in California. Mick was married to Mary, Katie's sister. Joe soon built a kitchen onto the house which, when we moved to Lizzie Walker's house on the highway above Deep River, was moved down the Wylie Road to Uncle Paddy's house where it is to this day.

One winter when our mother had to go to Pembroke General Hospital for an operation (a hysterectomy, I think) Mick Gleason brought two horses drawing a big sleigh to take Katie out the Wylie Road to Highway 17 where a car was waiting to take her to Pembroke. Jerome and I went along on the sleigh ride. Joe took six weeks off work to look after us and we discovered that he was a good cook but of course were happy when our mother returned.

Our house was a short distance down a lane from Mick's farm and beyond that his brother Billy's farm. Billy and Nora's son Jimmy was just a few weeks older than me. (At Jerome's 80th birthday party in 2017, Jimmy and his wife Maryann were present. Someone produced a picture of Jerome, Jimmy and me in a field when Jimmy and I were 8 and Jerome 10. When a new picture was taken of the three of us, Jerome said, "We've only gained about 400 pounds.")

Gormy, Greg, Jerome and I went to a one room schoolhouse a half a mile or so away on the Wylie Rd where the teacher was our first cousin, Peggy Gleason who at 18 was in her second year of teaching. Paddy's two sons Kenny and Ronnie and Peggy's sisters Noreen, Zita and Catherine as well as her brother Greg were also students there. I think it would be fair to say that Peggy's biggest headaches came from her dear brother Gregory. Two years later, we went to the new separate school, the old church hall converted into three classrooms. Then we had about two miles to walk to school.

One of the three members of the separate school board was our uncle Paddy O'Gorman and the secretary was our aunt Mary Gleason who was a teacher almost all of her life.

Jean had gone to high school at the Grey Nuns Convent in Pembroke and after teaching near Maynooth now taught at Moore Lake while boarding with the Bob Lee family. Jack was in high school in Eganville (where Greg later joined him) boarding with Mrs. St. Louis. The reason was that for some strange reason, the Catholic High School in Eganville was one of only two separate high schools in Ontario receiving financial support from the Ontario Government. (This all changed many years later thanks to Cardinal Carter and his good friend Premier Wm Davis.)

The reason we moved to Deep River was that Joe got a job with Fraser Brace, a large engineering company from Montreal that was charged by the federal government with building the Chalk River Atomic Plant and the new town of Deep River to house the workers at the plant.

At the time this operation was part of the Manhattan Project in the USA which developed the atomic bomb. After World War II was over, the Atomic Plant in Chalk River was dedicated to peaceful uses of the atom such as producing isotopes used in medical testing.

As far as I know, there were two main parts of Joe's job: first he had to organize the construction of foundations in the new town for hundreds of "wartime four" houses that were moved from the northern mining town of Cobalt to Deep River. This accounted for virtually all the living accommodations for the flood of scientific and related workers who came to work at the Atomic Plant. For 15 years the government owned the houses. After that the residents could buy them. The second part of his job involved the construction of larger buildings like the recreation centre, staff hotel, hospital, etc. Deep River had the highest birth rate in Canada for a number of years and eventually grew to contain a little more than 4000 residents.

Jerome and I used to see German Prisoners of War from the detention camp near Petawawa working on larger buildings in Deep River. They wore grey outfits with a large red circle on their back, presumably to provide a handy target should they try to escape. Joe supervised these men at their work and became friends with many of them. He sometimes helped them to get commodities they wanted, like coffee. Once when a prisoner's birthday was on the same day as our mother's, he gave our Dad a finely crafted wooden jewellery box with a pair of black silk stockings inside for Katie. (Don't ask me how he obtained the stockings.) Other prisoners gave him things like mouth organs which we played with but unfortunately, no one became a virtuoso. Once around this time a hobo got off a train further back the Wylie Road from our house. He walked out and knocked on our door and asked our mother, who was alone in the house, for food. She said, "Stay on the porch and I will make you a sandwich." She gave him a sandwich and a glass of milk. After he left, she found that he had peed his pants on the porch while he ate his lunch. I didn't remember this happening, but Jerome did.

As Gormy has often reminded me, there was even a scientist at Deep River who defected to Russia. His name was Bruno Pontecorvo. He had worked with physicist Enrico Fermi in Italy and then at the Chalk River Plant on the first two reactors there from 1945. A communist from his days in Italy, in 1949 he went to Britain and then on to the Soviet Union.

The first Administrator and later Mayor of Deep River was World War II veteran Major Frank Hammond, who, if my memory is correct, was a cousin of our mother.

RAYNER DAM NEAR THESSALON, ON

Joe worked on this hydroelectric dam on the Mississagi River between 1947 and 1950. In his spare time he picked blueberries and sent them to Chalk River in 50 lb wooden butter boxes on the train. After making a good number of pies, Katie preserved the rest for the winter. I think Jack worked there in the summers.

DA SWISHA

The Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario began the construction of a large hydroelectric dam on the Ottawa River at Rapides Des Joachim, 15 miles up the Ottawa River

from Deep River in 1950. For the English speaking workers the site soon became known as Da Swisha or just Swisha. The job would take five years to complete.

Joe went to work there with his carpenter's tools. In less than a week he was made a foreman and it was probably at that time that he and his crew built the water tower mentioned previously. Jerome told me that by the later years of the job Joe was the superintendent of all the carpenters working on the Quebec side of the dam, more than a thousand workers or about one third of all the employees at the site. (I recall our dad often saying, "We had a big pour today." He was referring to large scale pouring of concrete which required a great deal of organization and where something could easily go wrong.)

At that time, I believe that this working situation at Swisha was much like the clan system described in Alistair MacLeod's prize-winning novel No Great Mischieff. It told the story of Scottish and French-Canadian clans working in Northern Ontario mines. So, when Joe got the big job he hired his brother Sam, brother-in-law Paddy O'Gorman, our brother Jack in the summers, Sam's sons Jack, Bill and Lawrence, nephews Eugene, Jack (Tiny Tim) and Pat Flynn, cousins Jack (Perch) and Francis Flynn and a number of others from Maynooth and Barry's Bay. One day Joe heard that one of the big Hydro bosses complained about this. So he went right to him and asked him if he had a problem. The boss said, "Well there seems to be a lot of Greens and Flynns around here."

Joe said, "I'll tell you why. They can do a day's work without hiding behind their mother's skirt." Well sir, the big boss didn't say another word!

Paddy O'Gorman told me how once a fight threatened between Jack Green and another worker in a bunk house. Jack's father Sam said, "If there's going to be any fighting here, I'll do it." In the ensuing fight, Paddy said, "old Sam ended it by jumping up and kicking his opponent under the chin."

While Joe was superintendent another man tried to steal his job so he had to fight (verbally not physically) hard to keep it, and he succeeded. Afterward he said something like this to some of the men from Barry's Bay who were working for him, "I never killed a man... but if I do it will be someone like that S.O.B!" (Reported to Jerome in Barry's Bay by one of those men.)

This may sound like a joke or an exaggeration, but in MacLeod's novel he depicts a vicious fight between the heads of the Cape Breton Scottish and French-Canadian clans at a mine. One of them ends up dead.

MISCELLANEOUS JOBS

Apparently work on the Chenux Generating Station on the Ottawa River near Renfrew on the Ontario side and Portage-du Fort on the Quebec side began 1950 at the same time as Da Swisha. At some time Joe worked there although I'm not sure when or for how long.

Jerome also is sure that Joe worked for Hydro at Niagara for a short time, but we don't know the date.

Gormy worked with Joe on an addition to the Tierney Bros Drugstore in Deep River in the late 1950s.

RYE NECK

Greg told me that Joe had the reputation of being the best fighter in Maynooth when he was young. (Even before seeing Joe Louis in an exhibition fight at the Liard River.) Greg and Joe had a conversation about fighting and Joe said, "I'm not proud of fighting but in those days and in a lot of situations, you had to do it." When Greg told me that, it reminded me of a conversation between our father and a stranger that I heard.

I was working with our dad cleaning up the yard one evening when a stranger came in off the highway to ask for directions. A fairly lengthy conversation ensued between the two of them. At some point, the stranger said, "If you don't mind my asking, what happened to your neck?"

As far as I can remember, at that time my impression was that Dad's neck, which was bent somewhat to the right, was the result of an accident. So I was quite surprised to hear him say, "I was born like this. My parents took me to the Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto, but they said there was nothing they could do for it. Of course, nowadays they could probably do something to help a young baby with the problem. But it never bothered me."

I believe this last statement was true, in the sense that Joe never let his neck prevent him from doing whatever he wanted to do. On the other hand, I believe the condition of his neck probably contributed to his being the best fighter in Maynooth when he was young. It would not be a good idea to make fun of him because of his neck.

A story that Jerome heard from eyewitnesses in Barry's Bay illustrates the point.

Once there was a baseball game in Barry's Bay and Joe was the umpire, standing behind the pitcher calling balls and strikes. After one call a man in the stands, a local hockey player, cried, "You're as crooked as your neck!"

Joe held up his arm and said, "Time!" Then he went into the stands and taught the heckler a strong lesson in politeness.

At that point Joe returned to his post behind the pitcher and said, "Play ball!"

No one present had any doubts about who was in charge that day.

The last time I was in Barry's Bay I asked Diane what the name was for the neck condition that Joe had. She said, "It's called a 'rye neck.' There is a more technical term for it too. Our Billy had it when he was born." She was talking about their oldest son, who died just two years ago. Diane went on to tell me that when she noticed their baby's neck was crooked, she found out what to do to correct it. By helping Billy do some exercises every day, she cured the condition in three months.

GORMY'S SWISHA STORY

One last story about Swisha, compliments of Gormy. After Fr. Jack's wake a bunch of us were over at Jerome and Diane's and Gormy told us about his first job after leaving school. He was part of a gang of thirty young lads hired to dismantle all the buildings when construction of the dam was finished. So, they tore down the bunk houses, cafeteria building, carpenter shop, offices, etc. took the nails out of the lumber, sorted the lumber and even straightened and sorted the nails. It took all summer. When the job was finished, they watched as the lumber was burnt and the nails were buried in the ground.

"It was my first experience with a government job," said Gormy

NEW HOUSE

While Joe was working at Da Swisha he and Katie decided to build a house. So they purchased five acres of wooded land from Joe Robert's mother about a mile east of the main entrance to Deep River on Highway 17, next to Hughie McPharland's property. (By the way, Hughie was related to Pierre Trudeau's mother.) Joe designed the house from an idea he got from the picture of a house in a magazine. The building took shape over many weekends and evenings of work, often with the help of Greens and Flynns who worked at Da Swisha.

Originally the new house was heated by a wood burning furnace, but not well, given that it was a large house with four bedrooms upstairs. Finally, one day Katie said, "By the Powers, if we don't get an oil furnace here, I'm moving out." She did not specify where she was going, but Joe heard her loud and clear and we got an oil furnace. In the winter, Katie turned the thermostat up about as often as Joe turned it down, so much so that Billy Owens said he was going to get them another thermostat for Christmas so each of them could have their own.

I remember one time when there was a "Forty Hours" service starting at the parish church, Joe came home from Benediction Sunday evening and said, "They have a lot of visiting priests so I told Fr. Alphie Harrington he could sleep here tonight to make more room at the rectory."

This sent Katie into a bit of a tizzy, "must clean the room, change the sheets, etc."

"It's just Fr. Harrington the curate," said Joe, "it ain't the Pope!"

I mentioned that the family was burned out of a house in Maynooth. Sometime after we were living in the new house in Deep River, Jean and Billie Owens had a fire in their house in Chalk River. So they moved in with us for some time. Our aunt Mary Gleason had a fire in her house on the Wylie Road and some of the Gleason girls lived with Joe and Katie for a while too. Paddy O'Gorman was repairing Mary's house in the summer of 1958 and I worked for Mary helping Paddy.

NRU, CHALK RIVER

I worked at NRU (National Research Reactor) Chalk River in the summer of 1956 sweeping up stray atoms. Joe was then in charge of the carpenters in the building, Gormy was working with

the painters and Jerome was a carpenter's helper. The reactor was ten times more powerful than the older NRX reactor, produced isotopes for medical purposes and was used for research (Canadian physicist Bertram Brockhouse, who worked at the Chalk River plant, was the co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1994.) As well, NRU was the test bed for Atomic Energy of Canada to develop fuels and materials for Candu Reactors.

Working in the carpenter's shop Jerome saw first hand Joe's expertise at reading complex blueprints and helping engineers to solve practical problems involved in the construction.

I'm not sure exactly when Joe started working at NRU for the contractor Foundation of Canada or when he finished at this job.

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

Canada and the United States built the St. Lawrence Seaway between 1954 and 1959. Through a system of locks, canals and channels from Montreal to Lake Erie, including the Welland Canal, it allowed oceangoing ships to sail from the Atlantic Ocean, up the St. Lawrence River and through the Great Lakes to Duluth, Minnesota. The project cost \$470 million dollars and employed 22,000 workers. Senator John F. Kennedy's reputation for political courage was enhanced when he voted for the project thus putting the economic good of the country ahead of that of some of his constituents since the Seaway would take some shipping business away from the port of Boston.

Joe worked on this project for at least a couple of years. One of the jobs he had was to supervise the moving of houses when whole towns were moved to make way for the different flow of the river. In this case the houses were larger than the wartime fours of Deep River and often made of brick.

What his other duties were I do not know. At that time I was a student at St. Mary's College in Brockville and one Sunday he came to visit and took me on boat tour of the Thousand Islands.

I once heard Joe tell how he got into trouble with the union on this job. He was not accused of being too hard or unfair with the workers. His offence was that he sometimes joined in to help the workers with the task at hand... a manager doing union work! He chuckled while telling the story, thinking it quite funny.

When the Seaway was finished Queen Elizabeth steered her royal yacht over for a ceremonial sail with President Eisenhower to mark the official opening. Joe didn't get an invitation to join them. However, he might have been present for what Peter Gzowski called the best Canadian joke of all time. In one of the newly located towns, Prince Phillip was the guest of honour at a dinner to celebrate the successful move. As he finished the main course, the lady serving his table said, **"SAVE YOUR FORK, DUKE, THERE'S PIE!"**

(When a waitress gave the same advice at Myles and Cassie's wedding, Myles said, "That's nice, we're getting the royal treatment.")

BUILDING INSPECTOR, DEEP RIVER

This was the last job Joe had and he began it sometime after the Seaway Job. He held this job for more than ten years. The last time Jerome, Diane and I saw Catherine Masterson in Deep River, she told us how Joe had kept a close eye on the building of their house and made sure the contractor did everything properly for her and Jimmy. Joe was required to retire at the age of 70 (1968). He did not want to retire and was somewhat depressed for a while afterward.

One time after Joe's retirement, Eddie Hogue's son was building a house in the Wylie Road and got Joe to come and solve a construction problem on the house. Joe found it tiring, saying, "I can't do enough work in a month of Sundays to break the Sabbath."

Jackie Owens told me that Joe took him as a consultant when he went to Pembroke to buy a car. Jackie said, "Every time we looked at a car, Grandpa would say, 'Do you think Grandma will like it?'"

After our father died, I came across an article, I think in the North Renfrew Times, where the reporter interviewed Joe about his many interesting jobs in far flung places. Joe made it clear that he would not have been able to do all of that except for the fact the Katie was able to take care of the family so well when he was away.

REST IN PEACE

Joseph died in the hospital in Deep River on June 9, 1975, after a number of small strokes. He had previously had two operations for prostate cancer. He is buried in the new Catholic cemetery in Deep River. Paddy O'Gorman said to me, "he had a good, full life."

After Joe's death, Catharine sold the house in Deep River and for a number of years lived with Fr. Jack at the rectory in Barry's Bay, then moved to the Valley Manor in Barry's Bay. After some time in the General Hospital in Pembroke she died of cancer September 9, 1989. Her funeral was in Deep River and she is buried there beside Joe. I remember how glad I was to see Paddy when he walked into the wake in Barry's Bay. (For many years our neighbours on Highway 17 were Cecil and Gloria Brown who were Anglicans. Cecil had worked for Joe on a couple of jobs. When Katie died, Gloria said to Jean, "Catharine was the best friend I ever had.")

Greg lived in Renfrew from the time he finished school and started a TV business there with Urban Agnew just at the time when TVs were coming to the Valley. With his wife Joan he had four boys. He died of cancer on May 29, 1999 and is buried in Renfrew. My favourite story about Greg was: Once when a doctor phoned Greg late in the evening to complain that his TV wasn't working, Greg said, "Take two aspirins and call me in the morning."

Jean died of a stroke suddenly February 18, 2000, in the Valley Manor, Barry's Bay about 11 years after her husband Billy Owens died. (After one treatment for lung cancer, Billy went home to die, saying "I have no g.d. quality of life at all.") Their oldest son, Michael died at the age of 14 in a tragic hunting accident. Their daughters Mary and Catherine died in recent years. Mary worked as an office manager at Queen's University Nursing School. Catherine, like her sister

Colleen, worked with adults with developmental disabilities. When Jean turned 70, her children gave her a surprise birthday party in Barry's Bay with many relatives and friends attending. It was nice to see something special for Jean who so often did things for others.

Father Jack died suddenly May 19, 2010, at Marianhill in Pembroke. He is buried in the cemetery beside St. Lawrence O'Toole Church in Barry's Bay where he was the pastor for many years. Jerome and Diane's oldest son, Bill died suddenly on June 9, 2019. He was well known in the Ottawa Valley for his work with adults with developmental disabilities and organizing hockey for young people. He is buried in the St. Lawrence O'Toole Cemetery beside Fr. Jack.

Both Jean's daughter Catherine and Jerome's daughter Tracey lost young babies to crib death.

Jerome died November 1, 2023 after a short stay in the hospital in Barry's Bay. At his funeral his six grand children honoured his wish to wear the sweaters of the six original NHL teams. His one-and-a-half-year-old great grandson Talon wore the sweater of the St Pat's jersey (Leaf Predecessors).