

We Wouldn't Surprise This Old-timer at All

By John Dash

A few weeks ago, Bill Davis, the Rochester promoter of Discover the River Days, got to wondering what it would be like for certain figures out of Rochester's past to return to the city and describe the changes.

He explained that since the area is celebrating 150 years of European settlement next year, his Discover the River Day recently could be thought of as a rehearsal for next summer's events.

To that end he started assigning historical characters to a variety of people, and he gave this writer Henry O'Reilly, editor of the area's first daily newspaper, and promoter, in later years, of the telegraph.

A photograph of O'Reilly taken after his Rochester days is a startling document. Even though seated, the man looks short, wiry and vigorous; and even across the

century since that picture was taken, a slightly mischievous, maybe nicely demented, glint shines from his eyes.

It strikes one that should he ever return to this city, he would find the changes in life and culture here not all that remarkable.

He would, one thinks, fit right in, perhaps be impatient that life isn't further along than it is.

This story, for instance, is being composed at a computer terminal, keys are struck and the text appears instantly on a television screen. When the story is completed, a special key will be hit, the text will be sent through an intricate process of type selection, justification, and hyphenization, will race through a special camera and within minutes will be back in the hands of the author, ready for proofreading or being shipped to the printer.

This writer is in awe of the

process and its speed. Henry O'Reilly, we think, might ask, "What took you so long to develop that?"

In the space of the first 20 years of his life, he had learned Latin, immigrated to the United States, got a job as a printer's devil, and wound up editor of a daily newspaper. In the second 20 years he had linked all corners of the U.S. by telegraph.

And in the meantime he became the beloved father to a whole brood of O'Reillys, that love so great one daughter entered the convent to pray for her parent's return to the Roman Catholic Church.

O'Reilly is best known in Rochester as the author of Sketches of Rochester with Incidental Notices of Western New York, an historian's gold-mine and a municipal public relations agent's idea of heaven.

That book, readily available at the public library, is a compendium of essays and accounts of life in the Genesee Valley, obviously designed to lure pioneers to the developing area.

A chapter proving with "scientific" data that the Rochester climate is actually better and healthier than the climate of most other cities in the country is a classic of that hyperbole fondly employed by politicians, salesmen and obituary writers.

Henry O'Reilly was born Feb. 6, 1806 in

Carrickmacross, Ireland. He was learning Latin at 7, and migrating at 10.

The circumstances of that crossing were to remain with him for the remainder of his life. An enemy of his father had his father arrested and imprisoned for a bad debt just as the boat was about to sail for the new world. O'Reilly pledged himself to the abolition of laws sanctioning imprisonment for debt.

On arriving in New York, he fiercely crossed his uncle and patron by retaining the O' to his name, and throwing his uncle's derision of "paddyism" back in his teeth.

He took a job as a printers devil, an apprentice in the days before computer cables carried all the information to and fro in a print shop, and quickly demonstrated his Latin mastery of the likes of Cicero as translated to English, by polishing and rewriting the texts of writers at the newspaper by which he was employed merely to set type, in such fancy clauses and fine sounding periods that he was eventually given the job of editor.

That last sentence is a good example of what a Latin education can do to an English writer.

He arrived in Rochester as editor of the Daily Advertiser, Oct. 25, 1826. The paper was founded out of New York City.

Through its manifold permutations, the Gannett USA Today can find him in its blood.

While here, O'Reilly got involved in not a few controversies and enthusiasms, starting one or two himself. His most lasting contribution perhaps, besides the text of "Sketches" was his encouragement of cultural facilities and his enthusiastic promotion of pluralism.

He left Rochester for a second time, and for ever, in 1843. Two years later he laid claim to linking in one New York City office all corners of the country by telegraph.

He died in New York at the age of 70, and was buried from the Church.

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Viewpoint Sisters Reflect



By Sister Dorothy Schlueter, RSM

Humility Restores Peace

She thoroughly dislikes me. "Friends" tell me that she mocks me when, with unconscious egoism, I speak authoritatively. They say she ridicules my mannerisms, corrects my inaccuracies, complains about my faults. Conscientious efforts to cultivate her friendship, or at least her tolerance, in our enforced relationship have proved fruitless.

Lately, everything I do sets up an irritation which she no longer tries to hide. She is becoming such an annoyance in my life that I secretly long to reduce her to smithereens: a) In the coward's fashion, behind her back, in conversation with the significant others in our lives; b) In one-to-one confrontation; or c) By ignoring her: look but don't see, listen but don't hear, speak but don't communicate.

Exclusion is the ultimate rejection. Some people can "give ice" with exquisite refinement of cruelty. Dante cakes Lucifer in ice, plunged headfirst at the pit of hell. He who sought adulation from all is frozen in complete isolation.

The last option appeals to me least, any denial of reality being a step away from mental health. She is present in my life and I do have to deal with her.

Turning the other cheek, as Christ advises, is, of course, a more virtuous option, but He expects us to be realistic. Struck a sharp blow in the face Himself, He said, "If I speak the truth, why do you hit me?"

What is happening here? Why am I in such an impasse over a disquieting relationship? Saint Thomas Aquinas defines peace as "inner repose, the tranquility of order,

an outcome of love for one's fellowmen." When the order is disturbed, someone has been getting an excess of gratification, to his or someone else's detriment.

Humility is the saving virtue that restores peace. A humble person is always peaceful. Humility is fundamentally a matter of truth. A sincere facing up to my little problem reveals that my pride has been hurt by this rejection and I've been seeking balm to quell my own discomfort, rather than that of my wounded companion. Small wonder that my attempts at the social amenities, complimenting or consulting her, were recognized for what they were, self-serving attempts to ingratiate, control cloaked as benevolence.

I need to get inside her thought processes, try to understand why and how I antagonize her, and avoid these things. I need to heed St. John of the Cross: "Where there is no love, put love, and you will find love." I need to pray for her. It's hard to dislike someone for whom you are praying. You keep looking for results.

Less than two months before Pope John XXIII died, he gave us a beautiful message: "Every believer in this world must be a spark of the light of Peace. It will shine forth when we understand others, cherish the bonds of mutual charity, overcome the barriers that divide, and pardon those who have done us wrong."

"Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."

Sister Dorothy Schlueter, RSM, is a certified clinical psychologist, a consultant to the diocesan Tribunal, and a panelist for the state Bureau of Disability Determination.

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