

JCM

and
family

by JCM

PREFACE

To provide a record of a family's history should no doubt be the duty of each generation. It is a responsibility which, on the part of the Merretts, I seem to have inherited, but which I might easily have overlooked had it not been for Tim's request for some account of each of his parents and their respective backgrounds.

That was several years ago, and, being still occupied in earning a living, I thought to postpone a serious effort to comply by issuing a hasty and rather facetious outline, in chart form, of my life theretofore. When, sometime later, Hazel began work on her own painstaking and thorough family history I was reminded of my obligation. By then, being retired from daily work, I found that I had the time and even the enthusiasm to tackle my part of the job.

My sources however were limited. Evidently neither of my parents had been very interested to keep any ordered records of their forebears. My two sisters, ^{jointly} half a generation my seniors, and my deceased brother were well beyond helping with family facts or memories. However, a cousin on Mother's side, in England, had researched and prepared a reasonable table of the Campbell genealogy, and sent me a copy. Father's parents had started a quite inadequate collection of photographs (in the "Family" album) related to the Merretts, but had failed to attach any information about them, even identities and dates. Otherwise, a few names and dates in Bible fly-leaves, some photo-portraits and snapshots and occasional printed excerpts, all scattered among Mother's and Dad's effects, completed the material available.

To this diverse collection I could but add my own lifetime memories of persons, events and circumstances,

Some dimly remembered hearsay, and a good many of my snapshots taken from childhood on. As a result, the recording of the data, while providing a pleasant nostalgic pastime, did inevitably become primarily an autobiography rather than a rounded family history. Obviously, if one admits this predominant character, one must also accept the risks of self-conceit, dullness of the tale, and loquacity—even pomposity—in the telling!

Thus one tends to set down what may seem to be amusing, interesting or even significant items, only to realize, on re-reading, that they can offer little humour and less meaning to anyone else, especially when considering a generation gap and consequent broad changes in viewpoints and conventions. So I trust that any reader who may venture beyond this introduction (or apologia?), hoping for at least a glimpse of the times, circumstances and people involved, will generously overlook all such failings. Without such trust, I could only decide to chuck the whole thing.

But having decided "Stet", I must still ask indulgence for the overall format: profusion of footnotes and addenda (the result of sporadic and non-sequitur recall and need for amplification); disorderliness, and erratic writing. I had hoped to enliven the pages with "clever and amusing" sketches but that skill, too, failed me. The "Family" album, which complements this volume, and other memorabilia listed in Appendix A IX offer still more pictures and tiresome reading for anyone interested. Finally, if there appears, not only in this preface but also in the ensuing pages, a hint of tongue-in-cheek, I excuse myself on the grounds that one was entitled to get some fun out of it. I hope that you may too.

Senneville, Que.
J.M. ± January 1989

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