

Mr Harry Coulby 1865-1929

From Claypole to “The Tsar of the Great Lakes”

Harry Coulby was born 1865 and raised in Claypole. At the age of 10 the school headmaster told him he ought to leave because “there was nothing more to teach him”. Harry apparently had a prodigious thirst for knowledge. At 14 he worked in the railway signal box at Newark, then Ilkeston and he then moved to the Railway Head Office in Derby. He joined the West Indies Submarine Telegraphic Service and went to South Africa and Jamaica.

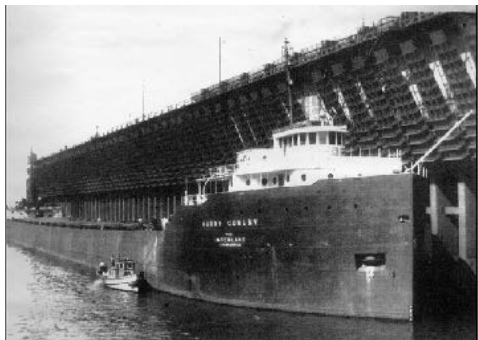


Harry Coulby

At this point he decided his future lay in the United States and he arrived there penniless at the age of 24. He walked the 600 miles to the Great Lakes picking up odd jobs along the way. Having made his way to Cleveland Ohio he started working as a secretary for the President of the Lake Shore Railroad where he taught himself shorthand. After a stint in Washington where he worked on the definitive History of Abraham Lincoln he returned

to Cleveland. There he worked for a shipping company and eventually he became the President of the Great Lakes Shipping Co with over 600 cargo ships many carrying coal and iron ore across the lakes. In spite of having to manage several industrial disputes he was always regarded as a tough manager but a very fair man, becoming known as the Tsar of the Great Lakes.

He built an estate at Wickliffe, Cleveland, Ohio and employed over 100 gardeners.



Wickliffe Estate Ohio

He returned to Claypole often and used his wealth for the benefit of the community.

The house next to St Peters is Coulallenby which was Mr Coulby's home in Claypole. This is American in design and was built on the site of a previous house. He funded the Village Hall, the Village School and he built the Nurses Home in Newark.



Coulallenby Claypole

and radiators still in use. and in September 1916 he paid for a new organ for the church which is still regularly played at Church Services.

On January 19th 1929 Mr Coulby was returning from a visit to Claypole and stopped overnight as was usual at the Ritz Hotel in London when he died in his sleep. So great was he regarded in America that his funeral service in Claypole was broadcast across the Atlantic.



St Peters Churchyard

Wickliffe Estate and Coulby Close were named in remembrance of Mr Harry Coulby.

At the opening of the village hall on 24th May 1923, an album of photographs was prepared and presented to Harry Coulby by the inhabitants of Claypole to mark the occasion. Later this year a Coffee Shop will be opened in the village hall and that 1923 album has been reproduced as part of Claypole History and to mark this stage of the village hall life. It is hoped that copies will be available for purchase, with proceeds to Village Hall Funds. Also planned to be available at the opening will be copies of the Claypole Village Trail booklet.

If you have memories or artefacts that you think will be interesting for Claypole History, please get in touch.

Robert Prabucki