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CAMPOBELLO: AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

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Содержание

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For those who are desirous of exact knowledge concerning thep "Story of the Boundary Line," and the political history of Eastport and its vicinity, there is no more comprehensive work than that by William Henry Kilby, Esq., entitled, "Eastport and Passamaquoddy." To him, and also to two friends who kindly gave me the names of a few of the Island flowers, do I express my gratitude.

Campobello

THE mysterious charms of ancestry and yellow parchment, of petitions to the admiralty and royal grants of land, of wild scenery and feudal loyalty, of rough living and knightly etiquette, have long clustered round a little island off the coast of Maine, called on the charts Passamaquoddy Outer Island, but better known under the more pleasing name of Campobello.

Its Discovery. It belongs to the region first discovered by the French, who, under Sieur De Monts, in the spring of 1604, sailed along the shores of Nova Scotia, and gave the name of Isle of Margos (magpies) to the four perilous islands now called The Wolves; beheld Manthane (now Grand Manan); sailed up the St. Croix; and established themselves on one of its islands, which they called the Isle of St. Croix. The severity of the winter drove them in the following summer to Annapolis, and for more than a hundred and fifty years little was known of this part of the country, though the River St. Croix first formed the boundary between Acadia and New England, and later the boundary between the Provinces of Nova Scotia and Massachusetts Bay.

Campobello itself could scarcely be said to have a history till towards the end of the eighteenth century. Moose roamed over the swamps and looked down from the bold headlands; Indians crossed from the mainland and shot them; straggling Frenchmen, dressing in skins, built huts along the northern and

southern shores, till civilization dawned through the squatter sovereignty of two men, Hunt and Flagg. They planted the apple trees whose gnarled branches still remain to tell of the winter storms that howled across the plains, and converted the moose-yards into a field of oats, for the wary, frightened animals vacated their hereditary land in favor of these usurpers. Their mercantile skill taught them how to use, for purposes of trade rather than for private consumption, the shoals of fish which it was firmly believed Providence sent into the bay.

Post Office. There were not enough inhabitants to justify the maintenance of a post office till 1795; then the mails came once in two weeks. Lewis Frederic Delesdernier was the resonant, high sounding name of the first postmaster who lived at Flagg's Point (the Narrows). But when a post office was opened in Eastport, in 1805, this little Island one was abandoned, or rather it dwindled out of existence before the larger one established by Admiral Owen at Welsh Pool.

Welsh Pool. The Narrows, because of its close proximity to the mainland, was a favorite place of abode in those early days. Yet Friar's Bay, two miles to the north, was a safe place for boats in easterly storms; and thus, before the advent of the Owens, a hamlet had clustered around what is now called Welsh Pool. A Mr. Curry was the pioneer. The house opposite the upper entrance to the Owen domain was called Curry House until it became "the parsonage," a name abandoned when the present rectory was built. Curry traded with the West Indies, and owned,

it is said, two brigs and a bark.

People also gathered at the upper end of the Island, Wilson's Beach, and on the road between Sarawac and Conroy's Bridge, where there were several log houses.

Garrison's Grandparents. That some kind of a magistrate or minister even then was on the Island is attested by the fact that William Lloyd Garrison's grandparents, Andrew Lloyd and Mary Lawless, chanced to come to Nova Scotia on the same ship from Ireland, and were married to each other "the day after they had landed at Campobello, March 30, 1771." Lloyd became a commissioned pilot at Quoddy, and died in 1813. His wife was the first person buried in Deer Island. Their daughter Fanny was Garrison's mother.

Many of the early inhabitants were Tories from New York. Some were of Scotch origin, especially those who lived on the North Road.

Captain Storrow. Among these settlers was a young British officer, Captain Thomas Storrow, who, while he was prisoner of war, fell in love with Ann Appleton, a young girl of Portsmouth, N.H. In vain did her family object, "British officers being less popular then than now; but young love prevailed," and the marriage, which took place in 1777, "was a happy one." Captain Storrow took his bride to England; but after a while sailed for Halifax, where they remained "nearly two years." In 1785 they went to St. Andrews. Through the courtesy of their grandson, Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the following extract is

given from a manuscript sketch of the life of Mrs. Storrow, prepared by her niece, Mrs. Norman Williams:—

False Sale. "Soon after this (1785) they removed to Campobello, which had been purchased by Mr. Butler and Captain Storrow. There were two houses on the Island, one for each family, and here they lived very happily and pleasantly. There was always a garrison at St. Andrews, and a ship of war stationed near Campobello; so Captain Storrow had congenial society, and they had many pleasant lady friends, and, as their hospitality was unbounded, they were seldom without company at one or the other of the houses.... All was bright and prosperous. But a change came. In 1790 or 1791 the Butlers and Captain Storrow had gone to Halifax on business, and Mrs. Storrow was left alone with her children on the Island, when a notice was served to her that she must quit the Island immediately, as it had been sold to them under a false title, and the real owner had come to take possession. The Island had been granted by William Pitt to his former tutor, David Owen, a hard man who would not move from the position he had taken. Mrs. Storrow sent to my father, who was her husband's lawyer, and he, with some other gentlemen, chartered a sloop and brought the family to St. Andrews, where a house was already prepared for them. Here they remained a year or more. But Capt. Storrow's finances were so crippled by the loss of Campobello that he and his family sailed for Jamaica, where he had a small estate."

William Owen. David Owen, to whom this manuscript

referred, was a cousin of William Owen, through whom the Island became connected by royal gift and by romance with the fortunes of his immediate descendants. As naval officer William Owen had been "in all the service and enterprise where ships, boats, and seamen were employed," had labored at Bengal for the re-establishment of the affairs of the East India Company, and had fought under Clive. At the blockade of Pondicherry he lost his right arm, and the Sunderland, to which he belonged, having foundered, he was ordered to England. Broken in spirit and weak in body, the copy of what was presumably his memorial to the Admiralty in 1761 has a piteous sound. It begins:—

His Petition. "My Lord, permit me, with the most profound respect, to lay by your Lordship a true State of my past service, with the accidents that happened to me during the same, praying your Lordship not to judge hard of me, in being reduced to the disagreeable necessity of doing that myself which would appear in a much more favorable light were any of my Friends in Town who could take the Liberty of Introducing me to your Lordship." After recounting the services he rendered, and the injuries he received, he ends with these words: "I beg you will be pleased to represent to the Right Honorable the Lords of the Admiralty that I am the person mentioned in Admiral Steuen's [the spelling is illegible] Letter to have lost my Right Arm, when I had the Honor of Commanding one of the Divisions of Boats ordered by him to cut out the Two French Ships, La Baline and Hermione, from under the Guns of Pondicherry, on the 7th of October last, and

that I had been wounded before in that country with a Musket Ball, which lodged in my Body above three years and a half. My long service in the East Indies, together with the Wounds I received, having greatly impaired my health, lays me under a necessity to be the more urgent with you on this occasion, that I may the sooner go into the Country to endeavor to re-establish the same, as well as to see my Friends, from whom I have been above nine years absent. Let me, therefore, Sir, entreat you to move their Lordships in my behalf, humbly praying that they will be pleased to direct something to be done for me, either by Gratuity, Pension, or Preferment, such as their Lordships may deem me to deserve."

Sir William Campbell. In November of the same year he writes to Lord William Campbell: "I arrived in London above four months ago. After long attendance and great solicitations, I am at length put off with a pitiful Pension, with which I am going to retire into the Country among my Relations for the remainder of my days, unless somewhat unexpected happens to enable me to obtain the promotion I think I have a right to.... I have spent a great deal of money in Town, have no Fortune, and want a sum soon on a very urgent Occasion.... I hope, notwithstanding the disparity between us in point of Rank and Fortune, that your Lordship will honor me with a Continuance of the Friendship and Regard which I had reason to imagine subsisted between us during the five years we Messed together."

This beseeching letter must have been effectual; for in

course of time he did receive, not only thanks and promise of promotion, but through the intercession of his friend, Sir William Campbell, who was Governor General of Nova Scotia, he obtained possession of the Island which Hunt and Flagg had ruled.

Royal Grant. As it embraced more land than could then be granted to one person, Owen induced others to join him in asking for the grant, that the whole Island might eventually be under control of the Owen family.

Origin of Name. Consequently, in 1767, the Island was deeded to William Owen and his cousins, Arthur Davies, David and William Owen, Jr., who, in grateful compliment to Campbell, changed its name from Passamaquoddy Outer Island to Campobello, thus "punning on the donor's name, and also expressing the beauty of the natural scenery." It was like the Admiral to invent a name which should include both a joke and a subtle allusion to his classical learning.

First Colony. William Owen immediately brought over from the mother country a colony of seventy persons; stationed his ship at Havre De Lute, a Franco-Indian corruption of Harbor of the Otter; and, having settled his people according to his liking, returned to England; but soon left it again on public service, and died with the rank of Admiral.

David Owen. David Owen acted as agent for the grantees, and was a veritable lord of the Island, always interested in protecting the fisheries. His house, near the site of the cottage now owned

by James Roosevelt, Esq., had even more roof than the usual sloping, barn-like home of former days. He built a rude church, read the service, and preached. What matter if the sermon was oft repeated, or now and then was original! Could not he, though a layman, best tell the needs of his congregation? He played the fiddle for dances, married the people, scolded them as a self-constituted judge, and kept a journal of Island events in microscopic chirography. He was an occasional correspondent of the "Eastport Sentinel" on matters of British history and theological controversy. "He had a fine library of old books, and was well versed in scholastic subjects," said Dr. Andrew Bigelow, the first Unitarian minister of Eastport, who often visited him.

To "Hue and Cry." Once David Owen committed to the gaol in St. Andrews a Frenchman, for "feloniously taking and carrying away some fish from flakes at Campobello." As the offender went on his way to gaol in his own vessel, he threw overboard the deputy sheriff who accompanied him, drew his dirk on the other man and compelled him to follow, and then escaped himself with his own vessel. Therefore, Owen advertised in the "Sentinel" of September 25, 1819, "To all officers and others to whom the execution hereof may belong … to search for the said Appleby [the Frenchman], and therefore to '*hue* and *cry*' after him as the law directs." Signed "D. Owen, J.P."

When David died he left his share of the land to William Owen, Jr. This younger Owen sold Campobello, which had now come into his sole possession, to William Fitz-William, who, as

the natural son of the Owen of Pondicherry fame, could obtain possession only through purchase of his father's grant.

Primitive Life. Island life was still very primitive. The people raised stock, and the creatures fed on the wild grass and young hemlock. But, as David had freely deeded the land to the settlers, the underbrush was soon killed off and stock raising ceased. The Campobellians also proved no exception to the rule that agriculture is seldom a favorite occupation with those who can support themselves by the precarious life of fishermen, even if that has its perils.

Illness. Here, too, as everywhere in pioneer life, the women suffered as much as, if not more than, the men. When sickness came upon them they endured it patiently, with that kind of meek despair which looks upon illness either as fate or as the will of the Lord. Fortunately for them, a young girl, who had been born on the Island, became at sixteen a skilful nurse. She was sought from far and near, and taken out at night when she had to be blindfolded on account of the storms. The description of one of her visits must be given in her own words, as she told it when she was eighty-four:—

The Indian's Squaw. "Once I and my husband were abed a howling night, and I heard a knock. Says I, 'Jim, I bet that's for me; get up and see.' And I sorter guessed it was a foreigner. And he came back and says, 'P. (that's what he called me, short for Parker), it's an Indian from down on the Narrows; and he's been for the doctor, and he's down at Robinson, and won't be fetched

'cause he's having a good time.' So I got up and dressed and went down with him; for the squaw's skin was as dear to her husband as a white woman's is to her, and her heart may be just as good to God. And when I got there I saw two squaws, and one was all in a heap; and they made eyes at me, and I didn't know whether it meant murder or not, only I guessed not. And I says, 'Sister, what is it?' And she says, her husband tell her 'white doctor no come. You white woman come and make his squaw live.' So I went to work. And when all was right, they wanted me to take a blanket and lie down; but I could no way make believe Indian, so I sits up till morning. Then the Indian asked me what he should give me; and I told him my gineral price was three dollars, but when folks was no better off than I, I turned in and asked nothin'. And he says, 'We give five dollars if it's a girl, and three dollars if it's a boy.' 'Well,' I says, 'sure enough it's a boy'; and I come home. And next day he travels down here [to the Pool], and says me better than man doctor, and wished he could give me twenty dollars."

Some sixty years after this incident had occurred, when Mrs. Parker was driven up to the Narrows where the squaw had lived, and past the Tyn-Y-Coed and cottages, that she might see the changes which time had wrought, she exclaimed, "As the Bible says, now I can die in peace, for mine eyes have seen the salvation, I will not say of the Lord, but of Campobello."

The Admiral. The salvation, such as it was, came slowly; at first through Admiral William Fitz-William Owen. His life was

curious and pathetic, from the time when a boy five years old, an inmate of the artillery barracks, he replied, on being asked his last name, "I don't know, mother can tell you," to his old age, when, dressed in admiral's uniform, he paced back and forth on a plank walk, built out into the bay, over the high cliffs of the shore, in memory of the quarter deck of his beloved ship. Conceited and religious, authoritative and generous, humorous and ceremonious, disputatious and frank, a lover of women more than of wine, his fame still lingers in many a name and tradition.

His Growth. When very young, a friend of his father's took him away from the barracks and from his mother, of whom he never again heard. He was boarded and punished in various homes in North Wales, but as recompense wore a cocked hat and a suit of scarlet made from an old coat of his father,—"the first sensible mark of the earthly pre-existence of some one who claimed to be my father" he had ever received, wrote the Admiral, in his later days. He learned the catechism and collects, repeated the Lord's prayer on his knees, and thought of raising the devil by saying it backwards; but he never completed the charm, and for four or five years after was self-punished by his fear that the devil was waiting for him at the church door.

By degrees he learned something of his father, the William Owen of Pondicherry fame, who had died while he was a baby. When about fourteen he went to a mathematical academy, where his "progress was as remarkable as it had before been in classics." Here religious instruction consisted in going to church "to talk

with our fingers to the girls of a school who used the adjoining pew." As a boy, he "had no other distinct idea of our Lord Jesus Christ than that he was a good man."

His Dreams. His belief in the direct interposition of the Creator on his behalf frequently solaced him in these youthful days of loneliness and misdemeanor. The literal and instant fulfillment of two dreams on special and unthought-of subjects were convincing proof, to quote his own words, that "they were sent by God Almighty himself, as a simple way of assuring me that as I was under his eye he would himself take care of me."

Man-of-War Garden. So he grew up to be presumptuous, adventurous, resolute, and strong. In 1788 he became a midshipman in a line-of-battle ship, in due course of time cruising in the Bay of Fundy. For three years his man-of-war was stationed at Campobello. The crew often went ashore in summer, tending a little garden at Havre de Lutre (Harbor of the Otter), called Man-of-War Garden, which in turn gave its name to the headland. The garden was brilliant with dahlias and marigolds, which were presented in overweighted bouquets to the few Island belles, who, in return for such unexpected courtesies, consented in winter to dance on the ship's deck, regardless of their frozen ear-tips. Two of the midshipmen were as dauntless in pedestrianism as in love, and for a wager started on a perilous walk around icy cliffs which threw them headlong. Their comrades buried them under the gay flowers, and sailed away from the henceforth ill-omened garden. And the little store

near by, kept by one Butler, lost its customers and passed into tradition.

The Boy as Midshipman. With Owen's entrance into the naval service as boy officer "commenced," he wrote in later years, "a public life which may be said to have had no sensible intermission until the close of 1831, or forty-three years, during which I have served under every naval man of renown, and was honored by the friendship of Nelson. From the year 1797 I have held commands and been entrusted with some important service, for the most part in remote parts of the world. My character, if I may be allowed to draw it myself, contained much of good and bad. The latter, perhaps, I contrived to veil sufficiently not to mar my reputation; but, by the grace of God, he has not left me without his spirit of self-conviction.... At forty-four I married [a Miss Evans, of Welsh extraction]. I thought myself a tolerably religious man, but knew myself to be as Reuben, unstable as water. At fifty-seven my worldly ambition was barred by corruption in high places. At sixty-one I became the 'Hermit.'"

His Settlement at Campobello. "The Quoddy Hermit,"—this was the name he chose when, with the rank of admiral, he came back to Campobello to live. He brought with him building material and the frame of a house taken from Rice's Island, and erected his habitation where is now the Owen. In the grove at the northern end of the present hotel he planted two or three English oaks. He placed the sun dial of his vessel in the garden fronting his house, and put a section of his beloved quarter deck close to

the shore, not far from the seedling oaks. There, pacing up and down in uniform, he lived over again the days of his attack upon the Spanish pirate. Proud as he was of the two cannon he then captured, there is no one living to tell who bled or who swore, or whether the Spanish galleon sank or paid ransom. He placed the cannon on the Point, where they bid defiance to American fishing boats. In later years one was taken to Flagstaff Hill whenever a salute was to be given in honor of the Queen's birthday, or a fish fair, for such fairs were famous.

Weddings. The population of the Island increased, and the old man married the boys and girls at church or at home, slowly or hastily, as his humor bade him, always claiming the first kiss of the bride. A certain sailor who had wooed a Campobello maiden was determined that this privilege should not be allowed by her, and therefore tried to salute his bride before the service was ended. "You are not married yet. Back!" shouted the Admiral. Frightened, the sailor-groom turned his face and his feet toward the minister-magistrate, who more and more slowly repeated the words of the service, as he approached nearer to the lady, till, with the last word, he snatched the first kiss. His most princely gift as a wedding present is said to have been the Island of Pope's Folly, a present conditioned on his performance of the marriage service, which was gladly granted by the bride.

He widened the narrow roads along the bay, which David had broken out, and in his heavy, lumbering coach of state went through snow and mud from one tenant to another. The coach

is still to be seen, and the tenants' grandchildren bear the Owen surname as the universal Christian cognomen. The Admiral would often stroll down to Whale-Boat Cove,—so called from a large kind of row-boat used in the herring fisheries,—which he persuaded the men to call Welsh Pool. Many a little maiden counted her pennies by the Admiral's kisses, and many a poor fisherman blessed him for allowing the house rent to run on from year to year, though the Admiral invariably insisted on the rental from the weirs; he well knew which was the more profitable.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.