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HOULTON MEN AT WOODSTOCK.

Something About Joseph Houlton, Aaron Putnam, Samuel Rice and Dr. Charles D. Rice.

[No 55]

The early history of Woodstock is of necessity somewhat interwoven with that of Houlton and a few words are now in order about the men whose names appear at the head of this chapter. For much of the information that will be given the writer is indebted to "The Story of Houlton" , by Francis Barnes published in 1889.

The legislature of Massachusetts in the year 1799 granted to the trustees of the Academy in New Salem, a half township of wilderness land to be located in the eastern part of Maine, then a district under the jurisdiction of the State of Massachusetts. The academy trustees appear to have had a voice in the selection of their land and they wisely secured a tract to the north of the granite belt that strikes across eastern Maine through New Brunswick to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The half township allotted in accordance with their wishes, included the southern half of the present town of Houlton, and contained 11,520 acres. Joseph Houlton of New Salem, visited the place in the summer of 1801, and was very favorably impressed with the quality of the soil, the beautiful stream a branch of the Meduxnakik, that flowed through it, and the wealth of forest that grew on its banks. Under his surpervision the grant was surveyed and laid out in lots for settlers that summer by Park Holland. For some time nothing further was accomplished and as the act of the legislature required that six families should become actual settlers within a limited period, the lands were soon in danger of being forfeited.

Joseph Houlton was then in the prime of manhood and the owner of a good farm in New Salem. Aaron Putnam and others who aided in the formation of the settlement at Houlton were similarly situated. Yet they resolved to relinquish the comforts of civilization and to begin life anew in the unbroken forests of north eastern Maine. It surely required much resolution thus to plunge into the pathless wilderness and effect the establishment of a settlement in so wild and unknown a region so far removed from the coast and not even having a navigable river for the transport of supplies.

There was a woman at the bottom of the movement and that woman was Lydia Putnam. Her maiden name was Lydia Trask and she was no common woman as the sequel will show. Her father had served under in the vicinity of Woodstock, and his calls General Wolfe in the old French war, and died with him upon the plains of Abraham. She married Avios Putnam and by his death was left a widow with five children. She resided with her youngest son Aaron at the time the grant was made to the New Salem Academy. In the year 1810 the trustees of the academy sold their half township to ten purchasers in the following proportions, viz., one fifth part to Joseph Houlton; one eighth part each to Aaron Putnam and Varney Pierce; one tenth each to John Putuam, Joshua Putnam, Rufus Clowes and John Chamberlain; and one twentieth each to William Bowman, Consider Hastings and Thomas Powers. Of these purchasers Aaron Putnam was son of Lydia (Trask) Putnam, John and Joshua Putnam were her husband's nephews, Joseph Houlton had married her second daughter Sarah and Varney Pierce had married her oldest daughter Hannah. Her nieces Elizabeth and Eunice (sisters of John and Joshua Putnam) married Dr. Samuel Rice and Samuel Kendall-men who afterwards filled a leading place in the early life both of Houlton and Woodstock. Aaron Putnam's wife was Isa Patrick of Weston,

Massachusetts. In the summer of 1804, Aaron Putnam and Joseph Putnam started from New Salem in quest of their future homes. They hired an Indian with his canoe to take them through the wilderness to the river St. John by the old historic Indian route up the Penobscot and then by the Mattawamkeag and the Cheputneticook lakes to Eel river. When they had arrived at the lakes they un wisely allowed their Indian guide to return, and in the attempt to make the portage from North Lake to Eel river lake they lost their way and wandered for miles in the woods. By making a dip net out of a shirt they managed to scoop up a few fish from a stream that teemed with trout and thus saved themselves from starvation. They finally reached the St. John river about thirty five miles below the town of Woodstock thoroughly worn out and exhausted. These two pioneers with the assistance of the Woodstock settlers soon after cleared a rough pathway from a point on the river, the mouth of Bulls Creek, to their plantation at Houlton. The trees were "blazed" along the way and the route was familiarly known as "the spotted line." It could only be traversed on horse back or on foot. Aaron Putnam returned to New Salem for his family and the next year they set out for their new home. From Boston they sailed to St. John and up the river to Fredericton. Here they were obliged to embark their goods and chattels in a small boat in which, after the usual tedious passage, they reached the old ferry landing below Bull's Creek. The younger men of the party proceeded on through the woods by the spotted line and during the summer made small clearings to ensure possession of their lots.

Aaron Putnam now decided to remain with his family on the bank of the river St. John until some further progress had been made at Houlton. He accordingly bought out the stand where Daniel McSheffrey, the old sergeant of DeLancey's brigade, had kept tavern, near the old ferry. Here he began keeping store and tavern with the usual entertainment for travellers who were then few and far between. The store was the first one in the Woodstock settlement. Rev. Frederick Dibblee in his diary mentions the fact of Aaron Putnam's residing at the ferry landing in the autumn of 1805, and he makes incidental mention of him from time to time the Board of Trade for September show an during the next few years in such common increase in imports of £378,000 and an inplaces as the following:-

"November 9, 1806-Mr. Putnam killed

my oxen; the pair weighed 1448 lbs.'

During their residence at Woodstock the family attended the parish church of which Mrs. Putnam (probably the mother) was a communicant member in 1807. Aaron Putnam was granted a tavern license in 1806 by the York County Sessions of the Peace on payment of the customary fee of ten shillings and the license was renewed the three following years. While he lived at Woodstock his family consisted of his wife, his mother, and his sons Amos and Jay Stillman aged 9 and 3 years respectively; also a boy, whom he took to bring up, named Joseph Goodenough. His third son Lysander was born at Woodstock Sept. 21, 1806.

In the autumn of 1809 Aaron and his cousin John Putman moved to Houlton. It is said that he did not accumulate much money by store keeping at Woodstock. While there, however, he showed his enterprise by being the first to employ a horse to haul a tow boat from Fredericton to Woodstock: others speedily followed his example and thenceforth the boats were built with a view of substituting horse power for man power. Soon after his arrival at Houlton Mr. Putman again displayed his spirit of enterprise by building a mill dam across the creek. It was washed away and rebuilt a number of times before it became permanently fixed. He built a rude grist mill which was a great accommodation to the little settlement. There was no miller in charge but any of the settlers who chose could grind their wheat or corn, and rude as was the mill it was an improvement upon the hand mills J. A. EDWARDS, - - Proprietor. that many of the settlers in other places had to depend upon for the first year or two.

The next of the Houlton colony that claims our attention is Samuel Rice M. D. who with his son Dr. Charles Rice was afterwards even more prominent at Woodstock than at Houlton. Dr. Samuel Rice married Aaron Putnam's sister Elizabeth. He was a physician in good practice at New Salem in the year 1807 when he purchased from William Bowman his share of the Houlton plantation. He moved with his wife and family to Houlton in 1811. His children were: (1) Mary who married her cousin Franklin Houlton; (2) Elizabeth who warried in Eastport; (3) Charles, of whom more will be presently said; (4) Samuel who entered the ministry and removed to Ontario. In addition to their own children the doctor and Mrs. Rice brought with them three of her sister Mrs. Kendall's children. After a year's experience in a log house they moved into a more commodious frame dwelling built by a carpenter named Wormwood, who came to Houlton shortly after the doctor settled there. This was the first frame house built at Houlton: there were not more than three frame houses in the Woodstock settlement at that time. After the decease of old Doctor Larlee of Northampton, Doctor Rice was the only physician in that direction became more and more frequent until at length, at the solicitation of the inhabitants, he decided to remove thither. He bought land and raised his house and moved there in 1820. It was completed by Shephard Cary of Houlton, then a very young man, and was considered quite a mansion in its day. The house was afterwards bought by the late A. K. Smedes Wetmore Esq. and is now occupied by Mrs. James P. Wetmore: it is still in good condition. For nearly thirty years Doctor Samuel Rice pursued the practice of his profession at Woodstock with credit to himself, and usefulness to the public. He spent his declining years with his two daughters in the United States. His son Charles studied medicine at Bowdoin College and succeeded his father at Woodstock where he soon established quite a reputation as a skillful physician and in the course of an extensive practice acquired considerable property.

When Doctor Samuel Rice first came to Woodstock he might be seen almost any day jogging along on horse back over the rough country roads, his saddle bags well stocked with medicines. As he grew older and the roads improved he found the waggon an easier means of locomotion. He was the first in Woodstock to drive a chaise and the arrival of that vehicle excited the wonder and admiration of the juveniles whose greatest ambition was to ride in it. As the Woodstock settlement progressed Dr. Rice found it to his interest to move into town, and he accordingly built a new house opposite the Roman Catholic chapel: this house was afterwards occupied by George Strickland and

later by Col. R. B. Ketchum. Dr. Charles Rice in addition to his skill as a medical man was one of Woodstock's most useful and active citizens. Being by birth an American he was naturalized as a British subject. He was appointed surgeon to the militia forces of the county. He possessed excellent natural gifts as a public lecturer, clothing his ideas in easy and familiar language and his appearance on the platform was always hailed with pleasure. It was largely through his instrumentality that the Mechanics Institute was established at Wood-

stock about the year 1847. In social intercourse Dr. Charles Rice was always cheerful and sometimes gay; he possessed rare conversational powers and always contributed his full proportion of amusement to whatever company he happened to be among. He resided for years in the upper part of the town. He became much interested in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg and in the end became a convert to his peculiar religious views which he endeavoured to propagate among his friends with but little success. After some years he removed to Eastport where he died of hemorrhage of the lungs. His widow returned to Woodstock where she lived many years.

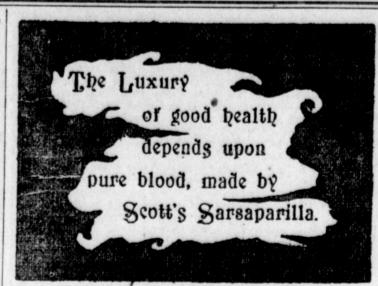
W. O. RAYMOND.

Kidney Facts.

In Jan., 1892, my son was taken with Kidney disease. Though attended by three physicians, and change of climate he grew worse and by '93 had fallen from 195 lbs. to 95 lbs. In 10 days from starting to use Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills we were able to move him home. In 4 months he gained 50 pounds and was fully restored to health by the use of this medicine. Jno. S. Hastings, 23 St. Paul St., Montreal.

Britain's Foreign Trade.

London, Oct. 7.- The return issued by crease in exports of £1,863,000 as compared quantity in sight at the present time. with those for the corresponding month last



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F. & A. M., Woodstock Lodge, No. 11.—Regular meetings held in a sonic Hall the first Thursd ay in each month. Visiting brethren are made wel-

A. O. H., Woodstock Division, No. 1.—Meets in their rooms in McDonough's Brick Block, on the first and third Wednesdays in each month,

commencing at 8 o'clock p. m.

Black Knights of Ireland, King Preceptory.—

Meets in the L. O. L., No. 38, Hall on the first and third Friday evenings of each month.

Regular meeting of the "Y" in W. C. T. U. Hall every Thursday evening at 8 o'clock. The Band of Hope meets in W. C. T. U. Hall

every Thursday at 4 p. m.
S. of T., Campbell Division, No. 299.—Meets in W. C. T. U. Hall every Tuesday evening at 8 B. of L. E., Missing Link Division, 341.—Meets first and third Saturdays of each month in K. of

P. Hall, King street. Royal Arch Masons.-Woodstock Chapter G. R. of N. B.—Regular convocations held in Masonic Hall, the third Thursday in each month at 8 o'clock, p. m. Visiting companions always wel-

Uniform Rank. K. of P.—Meets in the K. of P. Hall, first and third Tuesdays in each month. K. of P., Ivanhoe Lodge, No. 7.—Meets in Castle Hall, King Street, every Monday evening at 8 o'clock.

I. O. O. F., Carleton Lodge, No. 41.—Meet-every Thursday evening at 8 o'clock, in Odd Fellows Hall, Main street.
I. O. O. F., Meductic Encampment, No. 8.—

Meets on second Monday of every month at 8 p.m in Odd Fellows Hall,

L. O. A., Woodstock Lodge, No. 38.-Meets first Tuesday of each month at 8 p. m.
I. O. G. T., Woodstock Lodge, No. 131—Meets
every Monday eveding at 7.30 o'clock, in the W.
C. T. U. Hall.

Emerald Council, No. 64, R. T. of T.—Meet-every Thursday evening in the R. T. of T. Hall. Woodstock Hose Company, No. 1.—Mee's first Monday of each month at 7.30 p. m. Wellington Hose Company, No. 2.—Meet the 2nd Monday in each month.

I. O. F., Court Regina, No. 652—Meets at K

of P. Hall, King street.

The Corn Crop. The largest crop of corn ever raised in the

United States is now being gathered in. As usual the price is almost below living rates for even the largest western farmer. One buyer in Chicago claims to have contracted to deliver over a million bushels on the Atlantic seaboard for 15 cents per bushel, hauling it from Kansas. While, of course, such a statement is made purely to force the market price down on the board of trade, the fact remains that corn will be cheap and plenty this fall. Western farmers are more prepared for these flush markets, however, than they once were and will keep most of than they once were and will keep most of the cheap at home to fatten their own hogs MERCHANT TAILOR, and cattle. A reaction may therefore be expected to take place and before spring corn may teach its normal price in spite of the

K. D. C. Pills tone and regulate the bowels.

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