

THE WOODSTOCK DISPATCH

MAY 26, 1897.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM POTE'S

Journey Up the River St. John in the Year 1745.

[90]

The last three articles of this series have furnished an account of early steam boating on the St. John river; in this one we shall retrace our steps to a period when there were neither steam boats nor settlers worth speaking of on the river.

William Pote, whose mid summer journey up the St. John we are now to consider, was born in Portland Maine, then called Falmouth. In the year 1745 he was engaged by John Henry Dastide the Chief Engineer at Annapolis Royal to carry artificers and supplies for the repair and defence of the Fort at that place, which was threatened by the French and their Indian allies. While in command of the schooner Montague lying at anchor near Annapolis his vessel and those on board were captured by a party of French and Indians. Some of the savages were from the St. John river, others were Hurons from Canada. Captain Pote was taken by his Indian master to Quebec, where he remained in captivity three years. During this time he contrived to keep a journal of every day occurrences, which with the assistance of one of the female prisoners was hidden at the time of their release and so escaped confiscation. This journal was discovered by Bishop Hurst of Washington while on a visit to Geneva in Switzerland a few years ago how it came there is a mystery, and has lately been printed by Dodd, Mead & Co., of New York, price \$15 and \$25 per volume. From Capt. Pote's journal we learn that on his way to Quebec he traversed the present province of New Brunswick in what we may term a diagonal direction from Bay Verte to Lake Temiscouata. On Sunday June 23rd the Indians with their prisoners crossed the isthmus of Chignecto and encamped at "Seconnectau" (Chignecto) near the "Mass House" or Church. Here it was decided to send part of the prisoners in the captured schooner Montague by way of the Bay of Fundy up the St. John river to Aukpaque, but the Huron Indians decided to go by land, much to Pote's disappointment as he had no love for the fatigue and exposure of land journey. They left Chignecto June 27th on board a small French schooner and sailed up the Petitcodiac as far as the navigation permitted. Thence they went the following day, some in canoes and some by land, up the Petitcodiac to the carrying place to the Canaan the head of the Washademoak river. Having crossed the portage they encamped. The Indians were surprised by the arrival of the priest of the St. John river on his way to Beaubassin. Pote does not give the name of the Priest but there can be little doubt that he was Father Charles Germain who about this time was appointed to the post of missionary on the St. John and who made frequent visits to Chignecto and co-operated with the Abbe Leutre in the interests of the French. The Indians received the priest with much ceremony and conducted him to their captain's camp. He conversed with Pote, who has some knowledge of the French language, advising him to content himself in his present condition as he was in the hands of a Christian nation, and his captivity might prove very beneficial both to his body and soul. Pote says "I was obliged to concur with his sentiments for fear of displeasing my masters." On being Sunday the Indians built a table against a large tree where the priest said mass after which he gave them permission to commence making canoes. Owing apparently to the scarcity of birch they made canoes of elm and ash bark. The following day, Monday July 1st, they started with seven canoes down the Canaan to the Washademoak reached the river St. John on Friday morning about ten o'clock. One night on their journey they encountered a very severe storm. Pote says "we had much difficulty to kindle fire by reason that it rained exceedingly fast, and wet our fire works; we were obliged to turn our canoes bottom up and lay under them. At this time it thundered exceedingly and the Indians asked me if there was not people in my country sometimes destroyed by Thunder and Lightning; yes, I told them. They told me that never anything happened to ye Indians of harm neither by thunder nor lightning, and they said it was a judgment on ye English and French for encroaching on their liberty in America."

Capt. Pote did not receive any gross abuse from his Indian masters but he did not relish their company. One day he says there being good paddling "Our Indians became exceedingly merry, singing and hooping &c., they asked me to hoop as they did, I told them I could not, therefore they constrained me to sing. "This night we encamped by ye side of ye River and caught some small fish, which I made an attempt to clean but they would not permit me, nor suffer me to wash them that I had already gutted, but took them from me and boiled them as they were, time and blood and all together. This put

me in mind of ye old Proverb, God sent meat and ye D—l cooks."

Having arrived at the river St. John the party proceeded upwards until they arrived at the house of a Spaniard who probably lived at the mouth of the Jemseg where some improvements had been previously made by the French, and where there were the remains of old Fort Gemisick. The Spaniard spoke very good English having sailed some years out of Boston in English vessels. The Indians with much difficulty prevailed on the Spaniard to sell them his canoe. The next day July 6th the party proceeded to the Indian Village of Aukpaque about seven miles above Fredericton passing several French houses by the way. They endeavoured to procure provisions at these houses but their occupants were so poor they could not supply any. On arriving at Aukpaque in the evening they found the schooner Montague with the other prisoners had arrived some days before. The account of the reception Pote and his fellow prisoners now met and their experience on their journey up the river are thus recorded in Pote's journal:—

"At this place [Aukpaque] ye Squaws came down to ye Edge of the River, Dancing and Behaving themselves in ye most Brutish and Indecent manner that is possible for humain kind, and taking us prisoners by ye arms, one Squaw on Each side of a prisoner, they Led us up to their Village and placed themselves in a Large Circle Round us, after they had got all prepared for their Dance, they made us set down in a small circle about 18 inches assunder and began their frolick Dancing Round us and Striking of us in ye face with English Scalps, yet caused ye Blood to Issue from our mouths and Noses, in a Very Great and plentiful manner, and tangled their hands in our hair, and knocked our heads Together with all their Strength and Vehemence, and when they was tired of this Exercise, they would take us by the hair and some by ye Ears, and Standing behind us, oblige us to keep our Necks Strong so as to bear their weight, then Raise themselves, their feet off ye Ground and their weight hanging by our hair and Ears, in this manner they thumped us in ye Back and Sides, with their knees and feet, and Twisted our hair and Ears to such a Degree, that I am Incapable to Express it, and ye others that was Dancing Round if they saw any man falter, and did not hold up his Neck, they Dashed ye Scalps in our faces with such Violence, yt every man endeavoured to bear them hanging by their hair in this manner, Rather then to have a Double Punishment; after they had finished their frolick, that Lasted about two hours and an half, we was carried to one of their Camps, where we Saw Some of ye Prisoners that Came in ye Montague, at this place we Incamped yt Night with hungry Belleys 40 L from ye entrance W. N. W. by our Computation.

Sunday ye 7th. This Day we was Informed, and found we had Sufficient Reason to Confide in ye Information, That they held a counsell amongst ym weather they Should put us to Death, and ye Saint Johns Indians almost Gained ye point for they Insisted it was but Justice, as they sd there had been Several of their Tribe, murdered by Capt. John Gorham at Anapolis. our masters being Verey Desireous to Save us alive, Used all ye arguments in their power for that purpose but could not prevail, for they Insisted on Satisfaction, howsoever our masters prevailed So far with ym, as to take Some Considerable quantity of their most Valuable Goods, and Spare our Lives, this Day they Gave us Some Boild Salmon which we Eat with a Verey Good Appetite, without Either Salt or Bread, we Incamped this Night at this afforsaid Indian village Apog[Aukpaque.]

W. O. RAYMOND.

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JOHN UNDERHILL,  
License Commissioner, Strathclair, Man.

SUNDAY CARS CARRIED.

An Election Which Excited The Whole City.

People will always differ as regards the observance of Sunday. Some think it should be observed as strictly as the Jewish Sabbath, others that Christians are under no such obligations as bound the Jews. Of course both sides can quote scripture, but the one quotes from the old testament, the other from the new.

In Toronto a fierce fight has been raging over the running of electric cars on Sunday. Hitherto Toronto has not had Sunday cars. The rich could and did drive in their coaches to church, but the poor were obliged to walk. It was very inconvenient, for Toronto is a city of magnificent distances, and when friends or relatives lived six or seven miles away from each other, it was rather a long walk on Sunday.

Milton is authority for the saying "New presbyter's but old priest writ large," and from the action of a majority of the Toronto ministers, the truth of the adage would seem to be proved. With few exceptions the ministers opposed the cars running on Sunday, with an unmistakable zeal. If they ran the judgment of the Almighty would surely fall on the great and good city, Toronto. They did not say that the running of Sunday cars would lead to a great re-adjustment of congregations, and that many, very many of

them would suffer thereby. But many of the laity appeared to have thought that. Altogether, the priests of Quebec never worked harder for a cause, than the ministers of Toronto worked against Sunday cars, nor did the priests attempt to use "terrorism" more thoroughly than the majority of Toronto ministers.

The papers say that an election for the dominion house did not cause more excitement in Toronto, than this vote last Saturday wherein the majority declared for running the cars. There were eminent speakers on both sides.

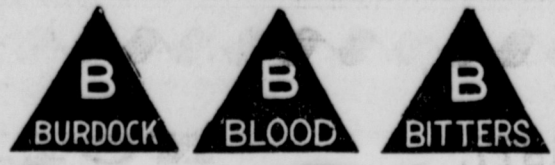
Mr. Samuel Blake, Q. C., a distinguished lawyer and a brother of Mr. Edward Blake, M. P., was on the Sabbatarian side. On Friday last, he made a speech, reported as follows:—"After a word or so as to the objects of the meeting, the clerical-legal chairman opened as usual, by taunting his enemies in the campaign. "They speak of our brutal intolerance," said he, "but it is the intolerance which I got from my mother's milk and I will stick to it." This little mannerism caused some to blush, but others applauded. He would seek to enforce the word of God in spite of those Pharisees who were trying to make it of no effect. It was stated by their opponents that the city was in a state of ecclesiastical terrorism. "That is why so many are here tonight," shouted the speaker. Continuing, he expressed his pleasure at seeing the clergy with him in the "holy war." There were some 182 of these gentlemen with him and only 12 against him, which was ten too many. He desired to inform those who were trying to cause friction between the laity and the clergy, whoever that meant, that they were trying to interfere with God's appointed teachers of men and the day of judgment awaited them. But how amusing it looked to see the Sunday car advocates grabbing for any odd clerical fish who might be willing to give them a benediction. He was glad to see that they could not get them in Toronto, so they had to send to Hamilton for them. The most they got was a letter, and they licked their lips at that. They had with them, it was true, a Doctor of Divinity, but he had always been noted in the Synod as an anti-Sabbatarian. "May they have much joy in the fish they have caught," was his comment on this gentleman's stand for Sunday cars. A Laocoon serpent was the epithet applied to the Sunday service, which, in his view, was to hold the fair city of Toronto in its coils."

The Sunday car advocates had an equally distinguished legal gentleman on their side, Mr. B. B. Osler, Q. C. who spoke on another platform, the same evening. Mr. Osler said that there was a certain clique of lay platform religionists in the city who, unless they were working or fussing all the time, thought the city was going to the dickens. They were people for whom the ordinary religion was not cruel enough. There was his friend J. J. MacLaren, to whom it was a necessary duty to appear on the public platform at least once a month. Then there was Mr. Henry O'Brien, without whose efforts the city would be going to the mischief. Then there was his friend, Sam Blake, who, if he could not get an opportunity to empty his venom or malice or something like that during the week, was not in a fit state of charity to occupy a pulpit on Sunday. These were a sample of the men who were taking care of us. As Mark Twain had said regarding such men, "When I fully consider their lives I decide to live differently." Personally, Mr. Osler said he would rather take his share of sulphur and brimstone than share the opinion of Sam Blake. This was not a religious question. If it was, the religion was peculiar to Toronto. There were hundreds of the laws of Moses that could not be adapted to this community. Why, if the Mosaic law regarding the marriage of the sexes was enforced, the penitentiary would take many, many people. "You can't live up to all these laws. How can you? Why, the Sabbath laws of Moses are just as rigid in reference to observing every seventh year in every seventh day."

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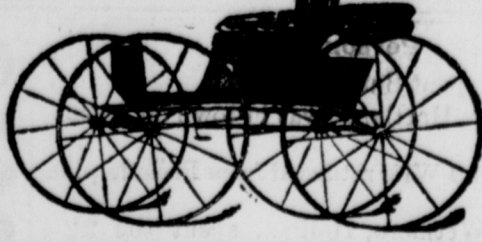
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