

151211 PEYTON NASH
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Botwood, Exploits River, March 12th, 1910.

To/ (Blank)

Sir,

Understanding you are a gentleman taking an interest in the affairs of this colony and more especially in and around the Exploits River and its vicinity a thought to me that a few remarks from one whose ancestors were among the first who settled at the place may prove of some little interest -- this must be my apology for intruding myself on you.

As most of what I shall write about was from information obtained from my father, I may here say he was an Englishman, also my grandfather, natives of Wimbourne, Christchurch, and both, after coming to this country, resided in the Colony for a long period eventually dying here at advanced ages -- and of which I shall say more later on.

The first record we have of any permanent settlement at the Exploits River was by two Englishmen by name of Hodge and Hollett who had their headquarters for conducting the salmon fishery at Lower Sandy Point and trapping during the winter season in a back of Northern Arm. Hence we have the high mountain range now called Hodge's Hills. That was the country they carried on their furring business principally Beaver, otter and Martin cat. These men must have resided at the Exploits River now some three hundred years ago. My father told me when he came here in 1812 - now 98 years - and his father certainly was here 20 years before he came, all the old coopering gear and guns in use was branded with the letters H H -- Hodge and Hollett.

The next on the list of old settlers was two men by the name of Hooper; John Hooper and William Hooper. John was a dumb man and was known by the name of Dumb Jack, but he used to go trapping in the winter season and sometimes by himself.

Next of old settlers was Thomas Taylor. All these had their headquarters at Lower Sandy Point but fished at different stations during the summer. Taylor's salmon station was on the north side of the river immediately below the Nut Islands hence it has ever since been known as Thomas Taylor's Point or more recently Tom Taylor's Point.

Next on list of settlers is a Mr. Harry Miller who also carried on a large cod fishery at Fogo, where my Grandfather John Peyton the elder first settled on coming to this country. Mr. Miller was also a native of Wimbourne, Christchurch.

At what date my Grandfather came to the country I do not know precisely but it must have been fifteen or twenty years before my father came which was in A.D. 1812. My Grandfather in all old documents was always written John Peyton the elder and my father John Peyton the younger, being both named John. John Peyton the elder when a young man travelled out the coast of Labrador with, at the time, a Lieut. afterward Colonel Cartwright and came to this country with that gentleman and it was then he became acquainted with Mr. Miller at Fogo. He settled at Fogo and carried on the cod fishery there for several years having had some experience with the fisheries at the Channel Islands. Eventually he settled at Exploits River entering into partnership with Mr. Harry Miller and engaged in the River salmon fishery and remained in Newfoundland up to the date of his decease which occurred A.D. 1829. Occasionally visiting his family in England during the winter season; going home in the fall of 1811 my father then a young man of nineteen years of age came out with him. That was during the war between England and France and the fleet of vessels sailing from Poole, Dorset. A large number was under convoy which consisted of one large frigate, the Commodore, and two smaller ones which were called whippers-in.

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Their business -- the whippers-in -- was to keep the fleet of merchantmen together; if any stragglers was any distance abroad or astern to tow them up and into line ~~xxxx~~ A gun would be fired from the Commodore's ship and all were expected to gather together for the night. Some of the smarter sailers would be ahead of the rest and the masters of these craft would gladly get away if possible to try and make a quick passage, but a sharp lookout was kept on them, another puff of smoke from the Commodore's ship followed by the report of a gun, their numbers hoisted on board the Commodore and if their topsails were not immediately laid aback another gun boomed out from the Commodore's ship followed by a round shot skipping over the water near the wouldbe runaway as much as to say, "Do as you are ordered or I will soon make You". Such cases, my father said, often occurred. The masters of the fast sailers disliked being kept under restraint and those of the dull sailing craft disliked being towed into line, but it was necessary to keep them together; more especially so on their getting near the coast of Newfoundland as there were many French Privateers prowling around ready to pounce upon any straggler not immediately under the protection of the Convoy's guns. They arrived on the coast in the middle of June without the loss of a vessel and parted company with the convoy off or near St. John's.

The vessel John Peyton the elder and his son John Peyton the younger sailed in was a Brig of about 150 tons but nicknamed the "Hammer and tongs" from a habit she had of pounding the water smooth before making her way along; and any vessel behind her would have smooth water. She was bound for the port of Fogo with general supplies for the fisheries for Garland, then the supplying merchant at that place; and had also a number of youngsters on board for the different mercantile houses and planters around. The ice lying about on the coast that spring it was late in June before they arrived at Seldom Come By on the North side of Fogo Island and the youngsters had to travel from Seldom Come By over the ice to Gander Bay, Dog Bay and Indian Arm; these rivers being held by Garlands and it was customary at that date that the right of the river fishery should belong to the person who planted the first youngster there in the spring for the season. My father told me he saw the youngsters marched away from the vessels side for that purpose but it was the last time that this mode of tenureship was carried out. He, my father, with several others was intended for the Exploits River. They had to wait for the ice to move off to get up by boat.

John Peyton the elder having entered into partnership with the Harry Miller aforementioned had taken up his residence at the Exploits River there conducting the salmon fishery their headquarters being Lower Sandy Point, from which station was usually shipped three hundred tierces of salmon, this was considered an average or medium voyage at that date. A few years before John Peyton the younger came to the country about 1800 this lot of salmon was taken in nets at different salmon stations in the river and by rack work or Weirs placed at the mouths of the Brooks -- Northern Arm Brook, Peber's Brook and Rattling Brook. An attempt was once tried to stop the Main River at the foot of the first rattle or rapid half a mile below the Bishop's Falls. The weir was got across alright and properly ballasted down but a flood of rain coming as it was all fixed, the river was so much flooded it swept all the works away. During the time it kept standing one tierce for every hour was dipped from the pounds. I was informed by one of my father's old retainers the rack work across the river remained alright for twenty four hours then all was swept away down the river. The small Island on the south side of the river a half a mile below the rapid is where the crew of men engaged at the work of erecting the rackwork lived on and had their camps. Hence the small island was named Folly Island.

As before stated the salmon fishery was then, at the time of John Peyton the younger coming to Newfoundland, carried on or prosecuted at different salmon berths around, altogether at twelve stations. As soon as the fishery came to a close

for the season the fish were put in the tubs, each tub containing from four to two and a half tierces (A tierce was three hundred pounds neat) until sufficiently pickled or hardened. The salmon after being taken fresh from the nets was first split carefully, was cleaned and then salted into tubs holding from four to 2½ tierces. As soon as sufficient pickle was made by the melting of the salt from the water coming out of the fish to float them in the tubs which would take from four to five days, they would be first covered with a loose covering of pieces of board then rocks placed on these boards to keep the fish under the pickle. If the fish floated above or on top the salmon on top would turn rusty and spoil the whole lot in the tub and, like rusty meat, not fit for food. After remaining in the tubs for five or six weeks the fish would be taken out again, carefully washed in clean water, then weighed and packed into perfectly tight casks or tierces of 300 lbs. each, coopered up and was then branded on the heads of each tierce -- No. 1 Salmon- 300 lbs -- Fogouie (?) Exploits River. The fish was then ready for market.

The salmon fishery, as well as all other fisheries, was at that period conducted on a systematic scale consequently all our fishes were eagerly sought for in the foreign markets and brought good prices. Salmon as well as other pickled fish requires extra care and attention and requires to be well looked after or attended to after being put into casks or packages. If the pickle is allowed to run out ever so little the few fish not under pickle get rusty and so spoil the lot in the package.

But to return to my topic of the early settlement of the Exploits River. On my grandfather and father coming here in 1812 or some little time after, a number of tradesmen were brought out; ship carpenters, a blacksmith, gunsmith, and ship building was commenced. Two large vessels were built, one at Upper Sandy Point and one at Exploits Burnt Island where the men carried on a large codfishery in conjunction with the river fishery. Both these vessels were Brigs rigged and sailed from St. John's. Brooking and Sons then carrying on mercantile business at St. John's and elsewhere took a share in this shipbuilding affair, and it is without doubt but this was the introduction of ship building in Notre Dame Bay. The present schooner builders of Notre Dame Bay are direct descendants of the men who worked with the tradesmen imported at that time.

As my father's name will often be referred to from this to the end of my remarks, as it was from him I got the greater part of my knowledge of what I have written, it is right I should say something of him. As before stated he was an Englishman, a native of Wimbourne, Christchurch; educated at Christchurch school and at an early age served as one of the junior clerks at Somerset House for three years. Of this I have documentary evidence. On his coming to Newfoundland, being somewhat known to the authorities at home as he used to call the land of his birth, he was intrusted with work by the Imperial authorities sometimes of a delicate nature; oftentimes to settle disputes between the Newfoundland and French fishermen which he always accomplished satisfactorily.

Peter's Arm, now called Botwood is rather an historic place in the history of the settlement of the Exploits River. It was here H. M. ships used to lie up during the time of the first marine survey of the Exploits, New Bay, Badger Bay, Grand Bay (now called Hall's Bay) and all the intermediate runs and inlets. First on the list was H. M. Ship Drake, Captain Glasscock, on which ship John Peyton the younger acted as pilot, also in the boat making survey of the Exploits River. There was also the ship Grasshopper Capt. David Buchan; the smaller ships or schooners the Snap and the Scrub Captains Bullock and Cummings. These ships used to lie up at Peter's Arm to refit whilst the smaller vessels were carrying on the surveys and some large stores or buildings were erected by the water side for the use of the same, such as Carpenter's and Blacksmith's shops and sailmakers' lofts. These buildings stood opposite the ground on which the Falls Co. (?) has now

their buildings. Hence we have the name of the King's Ridge, the hills inside. All were burnt down soon after the surveying party left, whether accidentally or not was never rightly known. A large lot of the King's property was destroyed in the fire.

It was at Peter's Arm the Grasshopper laid up in the winter that the Indian woman Mary March died on board of her after being brought from St. John's in the fall of that year by Captain David Buchan in or about the year A.D. 1821. Her body was enclosed in a coffin which was filled up with such articles as would strike an Indian's fancy such as silk handkerchiefs and other fancy drapery. The body was taken from the ship's side and taken in and left on a high scaffold built for the purpose between Rushy Pond and Badger Brook where an Indian encampment had been the previous summer and where the Indians would be sure of visiting at an early date after. Three Micmac Indians were sent in the summer following, by name John Stevenson Stephenson, John Louie and Joe Louie to see if the coffin was still there, but there was no sign or vestige of it. The tribe had taken it away. These same three Micmac Indians on a hunting trip to the north at Cape Quirpon in the summer of A.D. 1829 informed my father John Peyton the younger that they there saw where an encampment of Indians had been previous to their arrival there and from the surrounding about they had been engaged in repairing their canoes, evidently for some long cruise; and they also said that ~~these~~ they thought these Indians crossed the straits or attempted so to do. Of course the land or coast is plainly visible from Cape Quirpon as the distance is not so very great but canoes may cross over on a fine moderate day. This was the last sign of the Aboriginies seen by anyone that I ever heard of. The three women taken at Badger Bay was taken in the spring of A.D. 1828, of whom I shall speak later on.

ABORIGINIES OR RED INDIANS

The Red Indian lake, no doubt the winter quarters of the tribe of Indians known by the name of the Red Indians from the custom they had of swearing not only themselves but all their belongings over with a greasy mixture of oil and red ochre. At Red Indian Lake and down by the sides of the river as far as Badger Brook and Rushy Pond was the principal place where they killed the caribou for their winter supply of food. As the summer arrived they migrated to their summer resorts on the outside waters and bays of the coast, birds and fish being more plentiful and easier obtained for their sustenance than in the interior of the country. No doubt but they had their own particular place of resort for the summer season and as the Colony increased more rapidly at the south they came north and frequented the north and eastern portion. Indeed this is proved by their being often seen after being nearly exterminated as many say in the southern portion of the Colony. But although they frequented the Exploits Bay and River and were often seen here up to the date of 1819, I never heard of a single Indian or white man being killed at or around the Exploits Bay. Not so at New Bay or Halls Bay, there several were killed white men and Indians.

I now come to the capture of Mary March in which my late father acted an important part. After Captain Buchan's unfortunate expedition into the interior to find and try to establish a friendly intercourse in which he unfortunately lost two of his men, a reward was offered by the Imperial Government of one thousand pounds to any person who would capture an Indian and bring about such a measure. My father, with such intention in view, in the month of March 1819 fitted out a party of men at his own expense, eight or ten in number and started off in on the River Exploits. On arriving at Red Indian lake in the evening the party camped outside or behind a point where the lake flows into the river. No fire was allowed to be made fearing the Indians would see the smoke and take the alarm as the Indian camp could be seen. As soon as it was clear daylight the party left their night's camp and went out of the point where the river runs out and John

Peyton the younger looking over up towards the Indian Camps saw a woman coming down by the side of the lake with a birch rind bucket in her hand, evidently for the purpose of getting fresh water. He laid down his gun and, divesting himself of all encumbrances, waited until she came within a hundred yards of where he lay concealed behind the bank; then standing up and showing himself the woman turned and commenced to run away. He ran after her. When she ~~was within a hundred yards~~ saw it impossible to get away as she was fast losing the race she turned and falling on her knees opened her dress to show she was a woman. He then walked up and gently rose her up on her feet keeping his hand on her shoulder. By this time his party had joined him and, some noise made, the Indian encampment was soon astir and one man, afterward found to be the woman's husband, came boldly up to where the woman was and attempted to take her by trying to unfasten a silk handkerchief her captor had loosely wrapped round her arms but was given to understand by signs he shouldnt do so. Also he was tried to be made understand the woman had to go with her captors and that he too may come if he wished. He, the Indian man, then became violent and one of Peyton's party pricked him in the shoulder with a bayonet. He instantly collared Peyton and threw him some distance away on the ice and following him up took from inside his dress a small tomahawk which he had concealed with the intention no doubt of killing -- when someone of the party fired at him and severely wounded him-- and a man there named Richard Richmond then shot him in the head. It was the same man who first pricked the Indian and who caused all the trouble. The white party then went up to the Indian encampment where everything was found in a confused state. Nothing was touched or taken away that I ever heard of unless it was some small articles of no value. The woman selected her snowshoes and quietly went with her captors being treated with every kindness. In the evening when the party camped for the night rugs and blankets were given her to cover herself up with. The second night after starting from the lake she sometime in the early morning when all the party was asleep crept off taking a blanket with her which she trailed after her as there had been some slight snow falling. This she did to try and cover up her footsteps. She was found snugly stowed away under the roots of a spruce tree. This tree had blown down and the roots of it turned up formed a snug hiding place. From this time until the party reached the waterside there was not the least trouble with her. When she would be a little tired from walking she would sit in a sleigh made with seal skins which was used on the journey in for hauling supplies and the men would haul her along over the snow. In the evening on camping, after supper she would wrap herself up snugly in her blankets and creep up behind Mr. Peyton's back and there remain quietly until the party was up and stirring about then take breakfast with them -- was already for the coming days travel. How long the party was travelling from the lake out I cannot say. My informant on these subjects was a man by name John Snelgrove who formerly served my grandfather, also my father and as an old retainer lived with myself for quite a number of years and I could relie on his information. My grandfather, John Peyton the elder was not of the party who captured Mary March as has often been reported but resided at the time at Sandy Point.

In the spring when the navigation opened she was taken to St. John's by Mr. Peyton where she was taken (?) by all more especially by Sir. Charles Hamilton Governor of Newfoundland. A painting of her was taken by Lady Hamilton which I believe to be still in existence as Mr. Jas. Howley informed me. I never saw it. After being civilized it was deemed advisable to bring her back to the Exploits River to try and return her to her tribe. She was brought back in His Majesty's Brig Grasshopper and died on board that ship at Peter's Arm as before mentioned about the year A.D. 1821. (Incorrect. She died 2 PM January 8th 1820)MB).

She was not the last of the Red Indians taken and civilized. Three women were taken at Badger Bay in 1823, an old woman and two young women. They were also taken to St. John's also by Mr. Peyton, returned again under Mr. Peyton's charge

and landed by him at Charles Brook north side of Exploits Bay where the younger woman died. The other young woman brought her mother up to Sandy Point where the old lady died and was buried there. The remaining young woman was then sent down to Exploits Burnt Island and lived with my mother for some time after, finally dying at the hospital at St. John's in the year 1829. She was called Nancy. Her Indian name as she pronounced it Shen,ath,adie. She was the last of the tribe ever seen in Newfoundland, the remnant being, according to her description, starved out.

No doubt but these aboriginies were a wild and mischevious race and caused the early settlers such annoyance more particularly at the fishing harbours on the outside settlements, getting on board the fishing boats during the night, cutting off and carrying away their sails and fishing gear and everything movable, nothing was safe. One instance I shall make mention of; My father owned a large boat, it was about the year 1814. This boat was loaded with eighty tierce of salmon and already to start for St. John's and moored or fastened up at Lower Sandy Point wharf and although a strict watch was kept during the early part of the night, the Indians managed, during the early part of the morning, to cut her adrift. It was blowing strong at the time right down the bay and what was their amazment on going out after daylight to see no sign of the boat. Of course they knew that the Indians had been to work. A search party immediately set out down the north side of the bay as it was judged it was in that direction the boat must have drifted and found her on the rock at the mouth of Charles Brook about eight miles from the wharf where she was moored. A number of tierces of salmon was knocked open and thrown about; all that was in the cabin of the boat carried away, sails cut off, rigging chopped up and all carried off. Everything that could not be taken away was cut up; several guns that were in the cabin were broken off at the backstock and the gunbarrels found in the water of the brook. The Indian woman who afterward lived with my mother told how the whole affair was managed. No doubt it was a big loss to the owner as all the boats belongings were cut to pieces and carried away and several tierces of salmon spoiled and thrown away.

I could follow writing on the subject of the aboriginies. Having once started on the subject I scarcely know when to stop, and fear I have trespassed on your time by writing on subjects that can be of little interest to you.

Again apologising for intruding myself on you,
I am Sir, yours respectfully,

Thomas Peyton
Twillingate.