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SURVEYOR-GENERAL HOLLAND.

BY REV. H. SCADDING, D.D.

A notice of Samuel Holland, first Surveyor-General of Lands for the Northern District of North America, based on a hitherto unpublished manuscript letter, addressed by him to Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe, in the year 1792.

Having in my possession a somewhat important hitherto unpublished manuscript letter, addressed by Samuel Holland, first Surveyor-General of British North America, to Lieutenant Governor Simcoe, on some matters relating to the early history of British Canada, and throwing light on the origin of certain local names still to be seen on our maps, I feel anxious that the document should in some way be committed to the safe keeping of print, and so find a place in one of the volumes of Provincial Archives, which it is confidently hoped the Government will be induced hereafter to publish.

The letter would seem to have been written at the request of Governor Simcoe, in order that he might have a written record of Mr. Holland's familiar acquaintance and intercourse with his father (Captain John Simcoe, R.N.) when brought into contact with him in the neighbourhood of the recently-captured French Fortress of Louisbourg, on the Island of Cape Breton, some forty-eight years previously. Mr. Holland was officially engaged at the time making surveys of Louisbourg and vicinity, and Captain Simcoe's ship, the *Pembroke*, happened to be moored not far off from the shore, the sailing master, being on the beach, took particular interest in Mr. Holland's employment of a certain mathematical instrument, which was new to him, here called a Plane Table, and expressed a desire to become better acquainted with its use.

An invitation from Captain Simcoe to Mr. Holland to come on board with his instrument soon followed, in order that he might personally explain its use to him and his sailing master, and this was done.

The sailing master who had exhibited such a laudable curiosity was no other than the person who in after years became famous as the great discoverer, Captain James Cook.

The letter itself will explain the valuable services afterwards rendered by the Captain of the *Pembroke*, Sailing Master Cook, and Mr. Holland conjointly, in the survey of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence generally, services which contributed materially to General Wolfe's successful operations against Quebec, in 1759.

In this expedition, however, Captain Simcoe did not take part, having been seized with an illness which eventuated in his death on board the *Pembroke*.

Captain Cook, we find, used to refer in after years with gratitude to his intercourse with Captain Simcoe and to the scientific experience gained on board his ship.

The letter before us is dated "Quebec, January 11th, 1792." It reads as follows, and will explain itself:—

QUEBEC, 11th January, 1792.

Lt.-Governor Simcoe, York:

SIR,—It is with the most sincere pleasure that I recall to memory the many happy and instructive hours I have had the honor of enjoying in your late most excellent father's company, and with more than ordinary satisfaction do I recollect the following circumstances which gave birth to our acquaintance: The day after the surrender of Louisbourg, being at Kensington Cove surveying and making a plan of the place, with its attack and encampments, I observed Capt. Cook (then master of Capt. Simcoe's ship, the *Pembroke* man-of-war) particularly attentive to my operations; and as he expressed an ardent desire to be instructed in the use of the Plane Table (the instrument I was then using) I appointed the next day in order to make him acquainted with the whole process; he accordingly attended, with a particular message from Capt. Simcoe expressive of a wish to have been present at our proceedings; and his inability, owing to indisposition, of leaving his ship; at the same time requesting me to dine with him on board; and begging me to bring the Plane Table pieces along. I, with much pleasure, accepted that invitation, which gave rise to my acquaintance with a truly scientific gentleman, for the which I ever hold myself much indebted to Capt. Cook. I remained that night on board, in the morning landed to continue my survey at White Point, attended by Capt. Cook and two young gentlemen whom your father, ever attentive to the service, wished should be instructed in the business. From that period I had the honor of a most intimate and friendly acquaintance with your worthy father, and during our stay at Halifax, whenever I could get a moment of time from my duty, I was on board the *Pembroke*, where the great cabin, dedicated to scientific purposes and mostly taken up with a drawing table, furnished no room for idlers. Under Capt. Simcoe's eye, Mr. Cook and myself compiled materials for a chart of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, which plan at his decease was dedicated to Sir Charles Saunders; with no other alterations than what Mr. Cook and I made coming up the River. Another chart of the River, including Chaleur and Gaspé Bays, mostly taken from plans in Admiral Durell's possession, was compiled and drawn under your father's inspection, and sent by him for immediate publication to Mr. Thomas Jeffrey, predecessor to Mr. Faden. These charts were of much use, as some copies came out prior to our sailing from Halifax for Quebec in 1759. By the drawing of these plans under so able an instructor, Mr. Cook could not fail to improve and thoroughly brought in his hand as well in drawing as protracting, etc., and by your father's finding the latitudes and longitudes along the coast of America, principally Newfoundland and Gulf of St. Lawrence, so erroneously hitherto laid down, he was convinced of the propriety of making accurate surveys of those parts. In consequence, he told Capt. Cook that as he had mentioned to several of his friends in power the necessity of having surveys of these parts and astronomical observations made as soon as peace was restored, he would recommend him to make himself

competent to the business by learning Spherical Trigonometry, with the practical part of Astronomy, at the same time giving him Leadbitter's works, a great authority on astronomy, etc., at that period, of which Mr. Cook, assisted by his explanations of difficult passages, made infinite use, and fulfilled the expectations entertained of him by your father, in his survey of Newfoundland: Mr. Cook frequently expressed to me the obligation he was under to Capt. Simcoe, and on my meeting him in London in the year 1776, after his several discoveries, he confessed most candidly that the several improvements and instructions he had received on board the *Pembroke* had been the sole foundation of the services he had been enabled to perform. I must now return to Louisbourg, where, being Gen. Wolfe's Engineer during the attack of that place, I was present at a conversation on the subject of sailing for Quebec that fall. The General and Captain Simcoe gave it as their joint opinion it might be reduced the same campaign, but this sage advice was overruled by the contrary opinions of the Admirals who conceived the season too far advanced, so that only a few ships went with General Wolfe to Gaspé, etc., to make a diversion at the mouth of the River St. Lawrence. Again, early in the spring following, had Captain Simcoe's proposition to Admiral Durell been put into execution, of proceeding, with his own ship, the *Pembroke*; the *Sutherland*, Captain Rous, and some frigates, via Gut of Canso, for the River St. Lawrence, in order to intercept the French supplies, there is not the least doubt but that Monsieur Cannon with his whole convoy must have been taken, as he only made the river six days before Admiral Durell, as we learn from a French brig taken off Gaspé. At this place, being on board the *Princess Amelia*, I had the mortification of being present whilst the minute guns were firing on the melancholy occasion of Captain Simcoe's remains being committed to the deep. Had he lived to have got to Quebec, great matter of triumph would have been afforded him on account of his spirited opposition to many captains of the navy, who had given it as their opinion that ships of the line could not proceed up the river, whereas our whole fleet got up perfectly safe. Could I have recourse to my journals, which have unfortunately been lost, it would have been in my power to have recounted many circumstances with more minuteness than I am at present enabled to do.

I have the honor to remain, Sir,
With great respect,
Your most devoted and most obedient and
humble servant,
SAMUEL HOLLAND.

The captain of the *Pembroke*, we see, was a daring and enterprising officer, and had his advice been taken in preference to that of Admiral Durell, Wolfe's capture of Quebec might have occurred some months earlier than it did. There is in the parish church of St. Andrew, at Cotterstock, in Northamptonshire, a mural tablet sacred to Captain Simcoe's memory inscribed with the services rendered by him to his "King and country."

On the back of the MS. letter which has been engaging our attention is to be seen a sentence in the handwriting of Lt.-Gov. Simcoe himself, and it was this that in the first instance imparted a special value to the document, containing as it did a curious record of some words used by his father just before his sad decease. The memorandum reads as follows:

"Major Holland told me that my father was applied to to know whether his body should be preserved to be buried on shore, he replied, 'Apply your pitch to its proper purposes; keep your lead to mend the shot holes and commit me to the deep.'"

The initials J. G. S., John Graves Simcoe, are appended.

This document was presented to me by a daughter of Gen. Simcoe, and to her this autograph memorandum of her father constituted its chief value.

Gov. Simcoe, we may observe, uses the expression Major Holland. This probably indicated his rank as an officer of the Royal Engineers. He was, as must necessarily be the case with officers of that department, a lover of science.

The following papers of his appear in the proceedings of the London Philosophical Society. Their titles as given by Mr. Henry J. Morgan in his *Bibliotheca Canadensis*, are:

- I. Observations made on the Islands of St. John and Cape Breton to ascertain the longitude and latitude of those places, agreeable to the order and instructions of the Right Hon. the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, 1768.
- II. Astronomical Observations, 1769.
- III. Eclipses of Jupiter's Satellites, observed near Quebec, 1774.
- IV. Astronomical Observations, 1774.

Major Holland appears to have been a native of Canada, and he died at Quebec in the year 1801. He had been, it would seem, a personal friend of Gen. Wolfe, who had made him a present of a pair of beautiful pocket pistols, associated with which was a pathetic story of the death of one of Major Holland's own sons in a duel. At the time of his death he was a member of the Executive and Legislative Councils, and had filled the office of Surveyor-General for nearly fifty years. We learn from Mr. Le Moine's "Maple Leaf," first series, 1863, chap. 7, pp. 41-43, that Major Holland's family residence was situated in the neighborhood of Quebec, not far from the estate known as Spencer Wood, it came to be

popularly known as "Holland House." On the property was a private family burying ground where Major Holland's remains were deposited. A conspicuous fir tree in this burying plot, a survivor of the primitive forest, was long spoken of as the "Holland Tree."

There was, down to a late period, preserved in the Crown Lands Department at Toronto, a fine manuscript map of the Province of Quebec as well as of all known Canada, on a large scale, by Major Holland. This map I believe is now deposited at Ottawa. It has been reproduced, I understand, by the Government, and may prove an acceptable boon to students of early Canadian geography and history.

Few people probably realize at the present day that the name "Lake Simcoe" was intended to recall the memory not of the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, but that of his father, the Capt. Simcoe of whom we have just heard so much.

This we learn from the note appended to page 138 of Surveyor-General David William Smith's *Gazetteer* of Upper Canada, published by authority in 1797. The note on the item "Lake Simcoe" is this:

"So named by Lt.-Gen. Simcoe in respect to his father, the late Capt. Simcoe of the Royal Navy, who died in the River St. Lawrence on the expedition to Quebec in 1775." "In the year 1755," the note continues, "this able officer had furnished Government with the plan of operations against Quebec, which then took place." "At the time of his death," it also added, "Capt. Cook, the celebrated circumnavigator, was master of his ship the *Pembroke*"—a fact of which we have already been made aware. The previous older name of Lake Simcoe, it should here be observed, as stated by D. W. Smith himself in this *Gazetteer*, p. 109, was "Toronto, or Lake Toronto."

LAKE SIMCOE LORE.

Whilst as set forth in the article on Surveyor-General Holland, the primary intention of Governor Simcoe in changing the name of Lake Toronto was to do honor to the memory of his father, the Captain of H.M.S. *Pembroke*, he desired at the same time to utilize as it were separate portions of the Lake with the islands contained therein, and streams entering it from several quarters as memorials of other persons likewise:

Francis Island, in the north-west portion of the Lake, preserved the name of his eldest son Francis.

Darling's Island was so named after General Darling, a friend; Cook's Bay was intended to commemorate the great navigator, Capt. Cook, who was so largely spoken of in Surveyor-General Holland's letter; Kempenfelt Bay was meant to recall Admiral Kempenfelt, who so sadly went down in the *Royal George* off Spithead, August 29th, 1782; Cowper's words will be remembered:

"His sword was in its sheath,
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men."

Talbot's River entering the Lake from the north-east bore the name of a young aide-de-camp of the General's, afterwards so well known in Canada as Col. Talbot, founder of the Talbot settlement. Gray's River bore the name of another officer on the General's staff. Graves Island, alluded to Admiral Graves, a relative. [1] The three Townships of Gwillimbury, on the edge of this lake, embalmed the family name of the Governor's wife (Gwillim), and last, but not least, there is the Holland River entering the Lake from the south-west, preserving to this day the name of Major Holland. [2] Yonge Street itself, leading northwards from Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe, is another instance of the Governor's commemorating a friend. Sir George Yonge, from whom the street or military way derived its name, was a friend and neighbor of Governor Simcoe in Devonshire. That these names were imposed by General Simcoe himself is manifest from the fact that they all appear on the pages of Surveyor-General D. W. Smith's *Gazetteer* compiled under the eye of the Governor.

Georgina Township, close by, was a reminiscence of the name which the Governor originally intended to give the capital of his new province as a compliment to George the Third, when it was proposed that the spot occupied by the Canadian City of London should be its site.

Georgian Bay on Lake Huron, not very far off, was another reminder of the old King. Gloucester Bay and Prince William's Island, in the same, are likewise allusions to certain members of the King's family.

As to the name borne by the whole Lake before it acquired the name of Lake Simcoe, David William Smith's *Gazetteer* informs us that it had once been known as Lake Toronto, and other names of a more recent date are given, such as Lac aux Caies (Hurdle Lake), corrupted sometimes into Lac la Clie, and Sheniong (Silver Lake). That Lake Toronto was an ancient appellation of this lake we have abundant evidence. Thus we have in "Pierre Margri's Memoirs and Documents," Vol. II., p. 115, the following extract from a letter written by the famous La Salle, dated August 22nd, in the year 1680:

"To take up again the course of my journey I set off last year from Teiaiaagon on the 22nd of August, and reached the shores of Lake Toronto on the 23rd, where I arrested two of my deserters."

From this we see that on August 22nd he was at Teiaiaagon—that is to say the locality known afterwards as Toronto, and the day following he arrived on the banks of Lake Toronto, as he very distinctly speaks—that is to say on the banks of Lake Simcoe, as we should speak, where he arrested two men who had been plundering his goods. We thus see that "Teiaiaagon" and the shores of Lake Toronto are two different localities, distant a day's journey one from the other.

This same Teiaiaagon is again referred to by La Salle in his remarks on the proceedings of Count Frontenac, forwarded by him to the authorities in Paris in the year 1684 (*See* "Documentary History of the State of New York," Vol. IX., p. 218).

He there speaks of Teiaiaagon as a place to which the Indians from the North, to whom he gives the general name Outaouacs, came down to traffic with people from the other side of the lake, that is with New Englanders: and he stated

it as an advantage accruing from the existence of Fort Frontenac, that this trade was thereby stopped and drawn to Fort Frontenac.

What is here stated (by La Salle) corresponds with the testimony of Lahontan, a French officer in charge of Fort St. Joseph, on the western side of the southern entrance to Lake Huron (afterwards Fort Gratiot) as given in his book and the large map which accompanies it.

Referring to his map on page 12, Vol. II., Lahontan says: "one sees at the south-east of the river (French River) the Bay of Toronto." (This is evidently a portion of the Georgian Bay, including Gloucester and Matchedash Bays, certainly not drawn with the precision of a modern hydrographic survey.) "A river empties itself there," he continues, "which proceeds from a little lake of the same name, i.e., Toronto, forming some impracticable cataracts, both in going up and descending," this is evidently the Severn. "The man's head," Lahontan adds, "that you see on the map on the edge of this river designates a large settlement of Hurons, which the Iroquois have laid waste," consistently with all this, Delisle's map, published in Paris in 1703, places Teiaiaagon where Toronto now stands, at the same time giving Lake Toronto in the Huron region to the north.

[Mr. Barlow Cumberland, Toronto, furnishes me with the curious information that in the Grand Salon of the Ducal Palace at Venice, when visited by him in 1872, there is a large terrestrial globe, some four feet in diameter, constructed in 1690 by Antonio Patrizio of Venice, on which, where the American lakes are presented, the small lake situate to the north of Lake Ontario here called Lake Frontenac, between it and Lake Huron, is styled Lake Taronto, and the track there called Portage is distinctly marked from the lesser lake to the larger one on the south, where its terminus is marked by the word Toiouegon. All this corresponds very well with the record on a number of old maps in my possession, the spelling in several instances varying a little. Taronto is, of course, our Toronto with a slight Italian variation of "a" for "o." (Sometimes it is Tarento, from slight resemblance in sound to the name of a famous ancient city in the south of Italy. The oldest French maps, however, give "Toronto" precisely as we have it now, so La Salle gave it in 1680, and the maps used by Lahontan.) As to Toiouegon—the name appears with several literal variations in the old maps, and in D. W. Smith's *Gazetteer* it designated the spot now occupied by the City of Toronto. It signified, as I have elsewhere shown, the Landing place to, *i e.*, for parties about to proceed up the Trail to Lake Toronto. That this Trail should have been so clearly marked with the word Portage on the globe in the Ducal Palace at Venice is very interesting.]

The Holland Landing is to this day a well-known locality; it is the spot where Yonge street reaches one of the branches of the Holland River, and here canoes and bateaux coming down from the north used to receive trading and travelling parties coming up from the south, from a landing place on Lake Ontario, via the trail running along the valley of the Humber to the Oak Ridges, and thence along the valley of the Holland River to Lake Toronto, that is Lake Simcoe. A long branch from the westward enters the Holland River not far from the "Landing," and steamboats plying on Lake Simcoe used to navigate these branches; and former travellers in this region will recall the sinuosities of the route, as the huge hulk of the vessel made its way amidst reeds, rushes and shallows, through the marsh which extends back from the true mouth of the Holland River, many miles into the interior.

FOOTNOTES:

[1]It is to be regretted that these names have not in every case been retained. Francis Island, for example, is now known as Grape Island and Darling's Island is Strawberry Island. Graves Island is known as Georgina Island, but is occasionally spoken of under the former name. Gray's River is now Beaver River. Canise Island, so named from an Indian Chief of the Simcoe period, is now perhaps better known as Thorah Island.

[2]It is to be added that "Holland House," Toronto, did not in any way refer to the Surveyor-General. It was so named by its builder, the Hon. H. J. Boulton, in allusion to the famous "Holland House" situated in the Kensington suburb of England.

Transcriber's Note:

The text has been preserved as in the original. In the second last paragraph, the text "...the Landing place to, *i e.*, for parties about to proceed up the Trail to Lake Toronto." does not make apparent sense—an "id est" here does not fit logically, and the abbreviation is not reproduced correctly.

[End of *Surveyor-General Holland* by Henry Scadding]