

HOW THE LATE MOSES H. PERLEY BECAME AN INDIAN CHIEF

Won Confidence of the Red Men, and Appeared Before Queen Victoria as the Red Men's Sachem—An Interesting Sketch of Thoma, the Old Indian Chief, and Other Thomas.

W. O. RAYMOND, LL. D.
CHAPTER XXVI. (Continued.)

MICHAEL FRANKLIN AND THE INDIANS

Michael Franklin continued to the last to cultivate the friendship of Pierre Thoma the old Maliseet chieftain whose descendants, it may be observed, are numerous at the present day. The name of this well known Indian family (variously spelled Thoma, Toms, Tomsy, Tomsie) is clearly of French origin, and was originally Thomas, which pronounced in French fashion sounds like Tomsie. The name Pierre Thoma was very common among both the Micmacs and the Maliseets, so common indeed as to make it difficult to distinguish between individuals. A few observations will enable the reader to see what splendid opportunities there are for confusion with regard to those Indians who bore the name of Pierre Thoma.

Old Chief and English Governor.

In the month of August, 1827, the Lieut.-Governor of New Brunswick, Sir Howard Douglas, visited the historic Indian village of Medecetec where he was introduced to an Indian name Pierre Thoma (or Toms) aged 93 years. The old warrior, who had lost an eye and an arm in the battle of the Heights of Abraham in 1759, was carefully provided for by the kindly hearted governor. Our first conclusion naturally would be this is the old chieftain of Revolutionary days. But further investigation shows such a conclusion to be very improbable. If old Toms, who greeted Sir Howard Douglas, were 93 years old in 1827, he must have been born in 1734, and in that case (supposing him to have been Franklin's old ally) he would have filled the office of supreme sachem or head chief of the St. John river when about thirty years of age, which is very unlikely. This is not all. In the sworn testimony submitted to the commissioners on the international boundary in 1879, John Curry, Esq., of Charlotte County says that when he came to the country in 1770 there was an Indian place of worship and a burial ground on St. Andrew's Point at the mouth of the River St. Croix, and that among those whom he recollected to have been buried there were John Neptune (alias Bungawarawit), governor of the Pessamaguddy tribe, and a "chief of the Saint John's Tribe known by the name of Pierre Thoma." There can be little doubt that the latter was our old chief Thoma. His wife was one of the Neptunes whose home was at Passamaquoddy. The burial ground at St. Andrew's Point was abandoned by the Indians when the Loyalists settled at St. Andrews in 1783. We may therefore conclude that Pierre Thoma did not long survive his old friends and patron Michael Franklin. Their acquaintance began as early as the summer of 1768, when Governor Thomas and Ambrose St. Aubin had an interview with Lieut.-Governor Franklin and his council at Halifax. At that time the chiefs made a favorable impression. They requested that their missionary Bailly, lately arrived might remain with them, complained that rum was much too common for the good of their people, delivered for their hunting grounds should be reserved to them. Having completed their business they stated "We have nothing further to ask or represent, and we desire to return soon, that our people may not be debauched with liquor in this town."

Old King Thoma.

The previous summer (12th August, 1767) Rev. Thomas Wood officiated at a notable wedding at Halifax the contracting parties being a young Indian captain named Pierre Jacques and Marie Joseph, the oldest daughter of "Old King Thoma." An English baronet, Sir Thomas Riddings, and other distinguished guests were present on the occasion. However this Thoma was not our old Maliseet chief, for Mr. Wood speaks of him, "Old King Thoma looks upon himself as hereditary king of the Micmacs." Moreover the date is too nearly coincident with an interesting event at Annapolis in which Pierre Thoma was concerned. The event was a christening at the Indian chapel the particulars concerning which we find in the old church register. The Abbe Bailly on two consecutive days baptized thirty-one Indian children, viz., sixteen boys on August 29th and fifteen girls on August 30th. Among the boys we find a son of Ambrose St. Aubin and Anne, his wife, who received the name of Pierre Thoma. The name of Pierre Thoma, chief, and his wife Marie Mettelle. The following day the compliment was returned and Ambrose and his wife stood as sponsors at the christening of Marie, the daughter of Pierre Thoma. The next year (June 5, 1768) there was a double wedding in the family of Governor Thomas at which the Abbe and which 1768 and died at Woodstock in the possession of great property at the Indian village. The old chief's son Pierre Thoma, Jr., wedded an Indian maiden named Marie Joseph, and his daughter Marie Belanger married Pierre Kest. The younger Pierre Thoma was most probably his father's successor as chief of the Maliseets. At any rate when we find in his list Governor Thoma, his wife and four children. The Indians were always migratory and two years later we find Governor Thoma living at the mouth of the Beauséjour and telling his confidant how he became the site of the town of Hartland. This Governor Thoma is the same referred to in the following paragraph in the Courier of January 6, 1841:

Sir John Harvey and Chief Thomas. "Friday last, being New Year's day, a large body of the Micmac tribe of Indians including a considerable number of well dressed, headed by their old chief, Chief Thomas, appeared at Government House to pay their annual compliments to the representative of their Sovereign, and were received by His Excellency with great kindness. His Excellency availed himself of the occasion publicly to decorate the worthy old chief with a splendid silver medal suspended by a blue ribbon, exhibiting a beautiful effigy of our gracious sovereign on one side, with the Royal Arms on the reverse."

Many of the Thoma family were remarkable for their longevity. When the writer of this history was a boy there lived at the Indian village, three miles below the Town of Woodstock, a very intelligent and industrious Indian, whose bent, were figure was a familiar object to travellers along the country roads. It would be hard to count the number of baskets and moccasins the old man carried on his back to town for sale. He was born at 1759 and died at Woodstock in 1840, not long ago at the age of nearly one hundred years. The old fellow was famous for his knowledge of herbs, which he was wont to administer to the Indians in case of sickness; indeed it was not an uncommon thing for the white people to consult "Doctor Thoma" as to their ailments. In the year 1877 "Tommy" came to pay a friendly visit to Charles Raymond, the author's grandfather, who was then in his 80th year and confined to his room with what proved to be his first and last illness. The pleasure of meeting seemed to be mutual. The two had known one another for many years and were accustomed from time to time to compare ages. "Tommy" was always one year younger, showing that the Indians kept his birth-day well. He is believed to have been the last surviving grand-grandson of the old chieftain, Pierre Thoma.

Moses H. Perley and Queen Victoria.

While speaking of the Maliseets and their chiefs, mention may be made of the fact that the Indians, as a mark of especial confidence and favor, occasionally admitted one of the whites to the order of chieftainship. This compliment the Maliseets paid to the French Governor Villon, when he commanded at Fort Nahcouch, and a like compliment was paid some sixty-five years ago to the late Moses H. Perley. In early life Mr. Perley was very fond of the woods and frequently visited the Indian villages on the upper St. John to buy furs, which he paid for in silver dollars. So great was the confidence reposed in him by the Indians that he became their agent with the provincial government, and was in the Victoria in the character of an Indian chief, wearing on the occasion a very magnificent costume of ornamental bead-work, plumes, and so forth. He received at the Queen's hands a silver medal three inches in diameter, on the edge of which was engraved, "From Her Most Gracious Majesty to M. H. Perley, Chief Sachem of the Micmacs and Wungwe Sagamore of the Micmac nation. A. D., 1840." This medal is still in the possession of Mr. Perley's descendants.

It will be noticed that the St. John river Indians are termed "Micmacs" in the above description. The form Miclete, or Melicete, used by Dr. Granger and Moses H. Perley, has been followed by the majority of our provincial writers. Dr. Hannay, however, in his history of Acadia, retains the spelling of Villon and the early French writers, Malicete, which is almost identical with the Latin form, Malicetiae, on the stone tablet of the chapel built by the missionary Jean Loyard at Medecetec in 1717. Either of these pronounced in French fashion is practically identical with Maliseet, the form adopted by modern students of Indian lore, and which the writer has followed in this history.

*Frederick Dibble was a Loyalist, a graduate of Columbia College (N.Y.); afterwards resided at Woodstock, N. B. He went to Medecetec as a lay missionary teacher to the Indians under an arrangement with an English Society for the propagation of the Gospel amongst the Indians. There, Pierre Dibble lived about seventy Indian families including 96 men, 71 women, 165 children; total, 332 souls.

**The author is indebted for the above extract to the kindness of Mr. Ward.

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CANADA ASKS BRITAIN TO LIFT CATTLE EMBARGO

Opponents of the Move Say No Government Can Afford to Do It.

Montreal, Feb. 3.—(Special.)—The Star's London correspondent cables: "The news that the Canadian government has telegraphed the British government urging the removal of the cattle embargo, leaves the opponents of removal in the cold. They point to the fact that the embargo is established by an act of the British parliament. The last thing the Balfour ministry proposes at the far end of the term of power is to introduce a repeal of an act which would set three-fourths of the British farmers in deadly opposition to the ministry on the eve of going to the polls. "These opponents add that if the Canadian government believes in its own case, why have the ministers relaxed the rigor of Canadian restrictions on the American frontier? Let them prove conclusively, if they can, that Canadian herds are exempt from every risk of contagion from American cattle. This is what Canada's friends here must prove before any responsible ministry will contemplate a change in the law."

SENSATIONAL SPEECH OF BRITISH OFFICIAL

Says that England Must Keep Her Eyes on the North Sea for Trouble—Meaning Germany.

London, Feb. 3.—A speech delivered in the House of Commons on Thursday evening by Arthur Hamilton Lee, civil lord of admiralty, creates a sensation. In dealing with the recent redoubtable British naval force, Mr. Lee frankly declared that Great Britain had not so much to keep her eyes on France and the Mediterranean, but had to look with anxiety, though not with fear, towards the North Sea, and the fleets had been so distributed as to enable them to deal with any danger in that direction. The speech was not without its effect. The British navy would get its blow in the first, before the other side had time to read in the papers that war had been declared. He maintained that "by recent naval reforms Great Britain's strength in the North Sea is practically doubled during the last few weeks." The speech, which was delivered at a railway dinner in no wise polite character, was commented upon in some of the London morning newspapers as exceedingly indiscreet and likely to be greatly resented by Germany, at which it evidently pained the German ambassador, Sir Premier Balfour should muzzle his civil lord of the admiralty.

WINTER CARE OF THE HANDS.

One of the minor ills to which human flesh is heir when winter's chilling blasts search out and discover weak spots in the roughness of the skin, particularly of the hands. A too frequent cause is carelessness in drying the skin after washing it, particularly if it is washed immediately before going out into the open air or directly after coming in. Honey rubbed into the skin while still wet, drying it in as the skin is dried, is a preventive of chapping. Another delightful emollient for the hands, arms, neck is fine oatmeal. Put it into a flannel bag, boil it, and then place it in the wash tub, and keep it there in a jar on the wash stand and some rubbed on the hands whenever they are washed. If the hands were dried more carefully, particularly if it is washed immediately before going out into the open air or directly after coming in. Honey rubbed into the skin while still wet, drying it in as the skin is dried, is a preventive of chapping. 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