

HALL'S HARBOUR Pirates, Pasha and the Sea

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Hall's Harbour was named after Samuel Hall. He was born in Kings County but had moved to New England. When I was growing up Hall was always referred to as Captain but apparently he was the pilot and guide for an expedition of 17 men on the ship MM Jane under Captain Gow.

In 1779, they made raids along the Bay of Fundy. This was during the American Revolution (1775-1783). Apparently they made several expeditions into the valley taking cattle and robbing houses and stores.

Tradition has it that the Mi'kmaq had helped these pirates in the past but on this occasion they warned the settlers of Hall's arrival.

The militia was alerted and a force of 40 men led by Abraham Newcomb made their way to the harbour but found only three men guarding the ship. The militia fired on these men, shattering the leg of one, wounding another under the arm while the third man escaped.

A romantic story tells that a young pirate had been warned of the coming attack by his Mi'kmaq sweetheart and they had been able to get the pirate treasure ashore and bury it. It is said that the treasure is still there to be found today.

The militia learned from their wounded prisoners that the privateers had gone to the valley to rob Mr. Sherman's house and store at the Cornwallis Town Plot. The militia returned to the valley only to find the place pillaged and the robbers gone.

Another traditional story tells that Lydia Sweet who married Josiah Sweet Rusco, had discovered the privateers in her yard trying to catch her geese and that she drove the men away using her broom.

The militia rushed back to the harbour taking the east side of the vault while the robbers had taken the west side on their return. The militia opened fire on the pirates but they managed to escape.

The young seaman and his sweetheart were said to have been killed in this encounter and so the location of the treasure was lost.

Samuel Hall was separated from the others and fled overland to Annapolis and eventually got back to the Revolutionary Colonies.

As an aside, there were Mi'kmaq in the area as late as the 1920's and 30's. They camped in the Cove Road during the summer. This area used to be referred to as the Indian Reserve.

The harbour was used as a fishing station by people from the valley but the first settlement began in 1826 when two families settled there. They were Samuel Bucknam who built the first house, and Captain Tom Parker and his wife Rachel Cross. They all came from the Saint John area in New Brunswick. Bucknam was married to Parker's aunt. Many of the first settlers came by sea rather than overland from the valley.

A mill was built at the head of the dam above the present bridge. There are stones in the area said to have been the mill foundation and there is a path down over the east vault known as the Mill Road.

The mill was built by two Cross brothers and their sister Rachel Cross Parker worked with them at the mill. After a day's work, Rachel would carry lumber up over the west vault to build her house. The foundation of this house remains today.

Rachel Parker was the first woman in Hall's Harbour. She was often left alone by her captain husband, Tom Parker, and was very lonely although she and her husband had 11 children (8 girls and 3 boys). She

would go to the shore and wave to any passing ships, hoping they would come in and take her and her children away.

In 1830 Sylvanus Whitney opened the first store at the harbour which still stands the old Post Office. In 1835 the first vessel was built at the Harbour the 5 ton Dove. In 1836, a dozen more houses and two stores were built. The religious life of the community also developed. During the winter of 1841-2, Elder Jacob North preached at the home of Sylvanus Whitney and in 1843, Sylvanus Whitney and Benjamin Parsons were "set apart" as Deacons. The first mention of a meeting house was made in 1843. This is the present Baptist Church on the west side. The land and the frame for the church were donated by Captain Tom Parker. The silver communion set, pulpit chairs and brass chandelier all still in use were donated by Elmira Whitney, sister of Tom Parker and wife of Sylvanus Whitney.

In 1846 the church passed a Resolution on Temperance and there were to be cases later when people were expelled from the church for breaking this Resolution. I suspect that at least some men signed this Resolution because of strong influence from their wives.

Temperance was to have long lasting influence because even in the 1950's many men at the Harbour did not drink hard liquor in their homes. Drinking was done in the domain of the men the barn or the fishhouse. In some homes there was a carefully hidden bottle of rum for "medicinal purposes" or to moisten the Christmas cake.

In 1864, the Baptist congregation numbered 140 but tended to decline after that. In 1892 there were 40 members and in the Centennial Celebration year of 1945 there were 56 members.

It may be disappointing to some when I tell you that it is said that Sylvanus Whitney found the pirate treasure. He moved to North Dakota and when he died he left \$60,000 in gold coins.

PASHA BUCKNAM

An interesting person who has born in Hall's Harbour was Ransford Bucknam.

Do you remember Lydia Sweet Roscoe who saved her geese from the pirates?

She and her husband had six children. The eldest son, James, married Isabella Robinson and settled on a 205 acre farm in east Hall's Harbour where they made a living fishing and farming. They had five children. The third was William Andrew Roscoe who married Susanna Porter and purchased 100 acres on the Hall's Harbour Road. They had ten children. The second of these was Isabella or Isabel Roscoe who married Ezra Bucknam around 1860. Ezra Bucknam was a grandson of Samuel Bucknam the builder of the first house in Hall's Harbour.

Isabel and Ezra Bucknam lived at the top of the west Hall's Harbour hill. Ezra was lost at sea and Isabel died at age 31 leaving four young children. The third was Ransford Dodsworth Bucknam.

These children went to live with their paternal grandparents in Eatonsville and perhaps for a short time in Hantsport. At age 14 Ransy moved to Emerson, Manitoba with his grandparents. He soon joined the crew of a ship on the Great Lakes and later sailed from New York as a quartermaster on a schooner going to the Pacific. In Manilla, the captain and mate died of cholera and Ransy studied navigation and was granted his master's certificate by a special board of 9 examiners. He then brought the vessel back around the Horn. He had a number of adventures but by 1892. he and his wife, Rose Thayer from California, were settled in Castine, Maine.

Bucknam was hired by Cramp's Shipyard of Philadelphia, to take four revenue cutters to Turkey. They were being built for the Imperial Turkish Government.

Bucknam commanded the first of these armed cutters named the Medjid and delivered it to Constantinople. The Turkish navy was to consist almost entirely of these four cutters and they were used mainly in the tax collecting process.

The Medjida was received with great ceremony. Sultan Abdul Hamid II himself came on board. The Sultan was so impressed by Bucknam, that he offered him command of the entire revenue service with the title Admiral Bucknam. Pasha. His salary was to be \$15,000 American (this was 1902) have a headquarters ashore with all expenses paid and included a harem befitting a high government official.

Bucknam accepted and returned to the United States to hire three captains to bring the remaining cutters to Turkey and to remain in service aboard them. Bucknam directed the expenditure of \$20,000,000 on the navy and seems to have done so with scrupulous honesty.

He is credited with twice saving, the life of the Sultan. The first time he drove off assassins who were armed with daggers while he himself was unarmed. The second time a bomb exploded killing 80 mounted guards. Bucknam walked in front of the Sultan's carriage with a drawn sword, offering to decapitate anyone who came within sword's length of the carriage.

Bucknam was decorated with the Star of the Order of Osmanieh, the distinguished Service Medal and other medals.

During this time Bucknam's wife, Rose, remained in the United States. Bucknam had discouraged her from coming to Turkey by stressing that she would always have to wear a heavy veil and would be a virtual prisoner indoors and that he could not bear to have her suffer these and other indignities and discomforts. Apparently he neglected to mention the harem.

However, in due time, Rose began to hear rumours about her husband's life style in Turkey. She suddenly appeared in Constantinople but was denied entry to the Sultan's Palace. At naval headquarters she was told that Admiral Bucknam Pasha was at his harem. When asked at the harem who she was she replied, "I'm the American wife of the Admiral and I want to see him immediately.

The reply was, "American wife? He has one Spanish wife. Some French. Some Syrian. A few Egyptian. But the Admiral Bucknam Pasha has no American wife. No!"

She finally was admitted to the Admiralty waiting room where Bucknam eventually appeared. There is no record of the events of their meeting. Mrs. Bucknam sailed for Italy on the next steamer and a month later Bucknam sailed for the United States. He retired from Turkish service when Abdul Hamid II was overthrown.

In 1916 he was living in Philadelphia when he was invited by the Turkish government to Constantinople. This time he took his wife with him. He was offered the post of Admiral but declined. Even though the United States was neutral at that time, Turkey was allied with Germany and Austria and was at war with Britain and Canada.

On May 27, 1919, Bucknam. died near Constantinople under mysterious circumstances. The official cause of death was given as Bright's disease and heart trouble, but his family always believed that he was poisoned.

BOUNTY FROM THE SEA

Fish have become scarce in recent years but in the time of the first settlers they were abundant. At times there were weirs located at five or more places along the shore off Hall's Harbour from Race Point to Huntington Point. Salmon were so plentiful that horses and wagons were taken to the weirs to bring the hundreds of large salmon home that were caught each tide. The price was so low that if a few fish fell from the cart as it bounced along the rocks, they would be left as not worth stopping to pick up. Sometimes salmon were used as fertilizer on the fields.

Lobsters could be picked up on the beach at low tide. They were so numerous that they were little regarded also being used at times for fertilizer. Children who took lobster sandwiches to school would hide to eat them because lobster was food for the poor. Their more prosperous friends could afford to have bologna sandwiches.

It was after 1920, when American tourists began to visit Nova Scotia that lobster became a delicacy.

Many ships were built at the harbour in the days of sail. My great grandfather John Neville had a shipyard there. He named two of the ships he built after his daughters, the Violet N and the Susie N. In a reversal of this process, my mother was named after the ship Vilda A that her father (John Roscoe) was helping build in Parrsboro when she was born.

The sea was the highway in the early times of Hall's Harbour. People came by sea to first settle there as I mentioned. Trade was carried along the shore by ship. Many privately owned ships carried all kinds of goods from one place to another. My grandfather, Max Parker, owned one of these vessels named the Nina C. She carried apples to Moncton and Saint John, potatoes to Parrsboro and lumber, gravel and fertilizer to many areas.

One story my grandfather told was of taking a load of potatoes to Parrsboro. He told the buyer that this load should be of good quality because they were grown by a deacon of the church. The buyer replied, "Oh, Mr. Parker, I have never had any problem with your potatoes before, and was not going to check them, but since you tell me these were grown by a deacon, I shall have to inspect this cargo very carefully." Apparently he had problems with church people before.

Consumer goods were delivered to stores in the fishing community around the Bay usually from Saint John. One of these cargo ships was the Rudy S. She was driven ashore at Tiverton on Jan. 25, 19' :)0 but no one was lost. She was later being towed to Bridgewater for work on her engines when both ships went down and several lives were lost.

Some ships came from the United States and made their first landing in Canada at Hall's Harbour. My grandmother, Violet (Neville) Parker, acted as the customs agent for a time collecting excise taxes from such ships.

The sea provided several unexpected bounties in other areas. In 1924, a schooner named Oranhapteka was caught in a squall and was in danger of foundering. The crew threw the cargo overboard. This cargo was malt whiskey and Belgian alcohol. Some was in kegs and some in bottles packed in wooden crates protected by excelsior. People along the shore rescued these unexpected gifts and hid them away making them last for shorter or longer periods depending on the individual. It is said that there were some people who had never drank liquor before but could not pass up this gift from the sea. It should be noted that Nova Scotia had prohibition at this time (1919)0).

During World War [I a Red Cross boat was sunk off Saint John. Cases of surgical alcohol floated up the Bay and a few cases reached the shore off Hall's Harbour. This time, it took some trial and error to work out the proportions of water to alcohol and in the process a number of people became very ill. However, as far as I can find out there were no fatalities.

In the 1950's the Canadian Government released bottles in the Bay. They were stopped with a black rubber stopper and inside was a small amount of sand which made the bottle float upright with the top just at the surface. These were to trace the currents in the bay. Also inside was an orange paper and through the bottle could be read the words "Break this Bottle". When the paper was obtained, it offered a \$1 .00 reward if the finder would return the paper with the location where it was found. They were released from St. Steven in New Brunswick and from the Digby Saint John ferry and probably other areas.

These bottles brought some additional income. I know that 40 bottles were found in one afternoon in a cedar swamp and at least 17 were picked up on Huntington Point beach in one walk along there.

The wharf has been a vital part of Hall's Harbour. The first pier was built in 1836, the year of sudden expansion of the settlement. Over time additional wharves were built lining the harbour.

Major work was done on the pier in 1920 with a substantial extension of the main wharf.

In 1962 a storm caused extensive damage to the wharf, estimated damage at the time of \$50,000. The repairs shortened the main wharf by 175 feet bringing it to its present length.

In January 1997, a winter storm weakened the wharf greatly and it was only a matter of time before further damage occurred. This happened in February 1998 when the center span's inside piling collapsed leaving it in the state it is today. Much work has been done to obtain funding for repair but no announcement has been made as yet (May 1998).

Today there is limited fishing based at the Harbour. Tourism is being seen as a source of income. The Lobster Pound is expanding to develop this industry. We have several artists in the Harbour Dave Lacey, John Neville and his wife Joyce Martin producing paintings and prints; Dick Killam has a photograph studio open in the summer months and Pam Petrie works with tole painting,

Over the winter we had the Katimavik Project active in the area. They have reconstructed the Old Lighthouse Wharf, built a boardwalk all around the Harbour, did work developing a nature and fitness trail and made repairs to the East Hall's Harbour School and Hall next to the Fire Department. This is only a quick mention of their work.

We have formed the Hall's Harbour Historical Society in 1997 and will be having our first public meeting June 20, 1998 at the Fire Hall. Membership is only \$2.00. The Historical Society is working, to take over the School/Hall and is trying to preserve one of the old fish buildings at the Harbour. We opened the Red Fishhouse Interpretive Centre last year on weekends and plan to have it open five days a week this summer.

I am excited by all the activity and improvements going on and the involvement in these projects by many people. If you have heard that the damage to the wharf has killed the harbour, I can only say that, "The rumours of the death of Hall's Harbour have been greatly exaggerated,"

May 1998

Sources

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