

Comments and Suggestions on the Cabinet Article

Introductory

Over forty years ago I was fortunate enough to be able to buy from an old book dealer in Manchester a box of manuscript material relating to Henniker in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, which he said he had got "from a box out of the attic of the the Ben Gove farm in Deering." The papers proved to have been those of William Wallace, whose daughter Mary became the wife of Benjamin F. Gove. They included personal accounts, a 293 page ledger of his making of spinning wheels, with the barter payments for them by his debtors, etc.; a considerable batch of documents relating to Wallace's service as selectman and a very large collection of papers relative to his activities as a justice of the peace. These papers, both personal and official, have yielded me much information not available in any other way. Among them are accounts having to do with the settlement of James Wallace's estate, receipts from James (Thomas⁴) for his share in paying for his grandmother's board, etc. etc.

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From Parker's History of Londonderry 1851, pp. 368-9.

In 1720, a company of emigrants, on their passage from Ireland to this country, were taken by pirates, and while in their hands, Mrs. Wilson was delivered of her first child, which so moved the pirate band, and particularly the captain, who had a wife and family, that he permitted them to pursue their voyage, bestowing upon Mrs. Wilson some valuable articles of apparel, among which was a silk dress, pieces of which are still retained among her descendants as memorials of her peril and of her deliverance. The Captain of the band obtained from her the promise, that she would call the babe by the name of his wife. The company of emigrants arrived safely, and were among the early settlers of this town. Their signal deliverance was commemorated by the annual observance of a day of ~~thanksgiving~~ during that generation. The child was named Mary, and became the wife of James Wallace. Mrs. Wilson, after the death of her husband, married James Clark, whose son John was the father of Mrs. Woodburn.

This is the oldest printed account of Ocean Born Mary and probably the most trustworthy. The author, Rev. Edward L. Parker, was pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Derry (originally the old East Parish Church of Londonderry) from 1810 until his death in 1850. (The History was published posthumously, by his son, in 1851.) Mr. Parker was early interested in the history of Londonderry and delivered an historical address in his church in 1819 on the centennial of the settlement. During his lifetime he knew one of Mary's children well (Elizabeth Pstterson, who did not die until 1833) and many of her grandchildren, as well as numerous fellow-townsmen who had known James and Mary Wallace well. Therefore one ought never to lose sight of the account by Parker, as likely to contain more truth than any of the later and more fanciful stories.

* Dr. Frazier Lane Childs

Column 2:

Par.3: Where do you get the name Wolf? I doubt that anyone has been able to identify the pirate's vessel. See Parker above for support for the name being that of the wife.

Par.4 (end) You might support your statement by the record that Widow Elizabeth Wilson and her daughter Mary are given $\frac{1}{2}$ share each of land being divided among the original grantees.

Column 3:

Par.3: Four sons and a daughter were all the children that lived to adulthood, but see my account of the Family for all who "were born.... during their 49 years of their marriage."

Thomas was not so shadowy as you thought. See my account on p.3 of "Wallace." Born 1744, not 1745.

Par.4: Robert settled in H. in 1777, not 1774. See account p.4.

Par.5: The "traditional coach-and-four" seems not to have gone back of the pld lady Roy's visions of Ocean Mary riding up to the house behind four horses. Cozswell in one of his more florid outbursts in his 1880 History of Henniker to his "almost royal" ride to church on Sundays, with the fellow townsmen bowing like peasants by the roadside, but I doubt the reality of that picture. Robert was a gentleman of distinguished behavior and proper dress and highly respected by the citizenry, but he was also an honest citizen of the the young republic and probably behaved in character. He did own a chaise which was taxed during the years 1809 to 1814 at various appraisals from 50 to 100 dollars. During those years the town tax lists show 12 persons who owned "chaises" or "carriages" of sufficient elegance to be taxed; only three of these are listed at the highest value, and one of those is always that of Robert Wallace, Esq. There is no reason to believe it was drawn by more than one pair of horses.

Column 4:

Par.1: There should be no mystery about Robert's money. He was an astute business man, the son of a father who had been successful in land speculation and who no doubt brought up his sons to be both honest and practical. Robert brought very large numbers of pieces of land in H. and in some of the surrounding towns. Some he held for a long time, others he sold at a profit quickly. He took mortgages from time to time, and he evidently lent money readily to good prospects. In these pre-banking days, most well-to-do made money by lending at fairly high rates of interest. Besides, Robert had a home farm of about 250 acres, which he carried on successfully, raising stock and horses to be sold down country as well as locally. There were too the perquisites from his law practice, etc. It is easy for us today also to exaggerate the cost of Robert's house; it was, of course, a fine house for its day but not so extravagant as a comparably

building would be at the present time. We forget the difference in availability of lumber, for instance. Probably not a single piece of wood went into this house that was cut on Wallace's own land! And the huge pile of bricks that form the chimneys were presumably made in a small brikyard that once was situated a few rods west of the house. Another thing we forget is that skilled labor was cheap, compared with later times. I do not know who built this house, but there were several skilful joiners (carpenters) and hosewrights here and in Hopkinton. Few houses were completed rapidly in these early times; it was the custom to move in with only a few rooms finished and to do the rest when money and time were available. Of course, I know nothing about how thas house went, except for one item. In William Wallace's ledger under date of Sept. 1801 there is this entry in the accpunt against George Addison of Hopkinton, joiner: "to turning the Bannister for Major Wallace's stairs by your request." So the beautiful staircase in the house was not completed until nearly 20 years after the house was erected!

Son James was the first innkeeper in what is now the village of Henniker, but not the first one in town; there were sevral before him.

(Last sentence in this Par.) You Hvave confused tow Robert V. Wallaces. The first, son of James, born 1779, was a merchant and miller; the second, born 1847, ws grandson of James and son of Jonas, and he graduated at Dartmouth in 1867, became a lawyer and served as a justice of the Superior Court of N.H. 1893-1901 and Chief Justice from 1901-1910. He lived in Milford (I roomed in colleze with his son Robert B. for our freshman year.)

Par.2: Drop the smuggling conjecture. Robert Wallace's character was never suspect in any way in his own day, and it too bad to smirch it at this late date. Besides, Lord's story about smuggling is vague and without dates; I think it must date from a time after the War of 1812, which was the period of most of thse adventures. Counter-fweeting always went off, as it still does, but to accuse Wallace of it would be as strange as to attack the Secretary of the Treasury. Leave the imaginings to the Roys and Holzer mediums.

Par.3: When did Mary move to Robert's? Never. I have in my possession a double sheet of paper on which William kept a record of his annual settlerent with his Nephew James for te latter's share in the expense of boarding his grandmother. This shows William charging as follows:

7 years boarding my Hon ^d Mother to July 6 1805	
75 Dollars per year.....	\$25.00
From July 6 1805 to July 6 1807- 2 years	200.00
Sept.24 1808 this day settled for Board of widow MaryWallace to the present time at two dollars per Week	\$127.00
Sept.15 1809 (similarly--51 weeks)	102.00
Oct.20 1810 " 41 weeks at \$2 and 16 weeks at three dollars fifty cents per week	138.00

Aug. 3 1811 Board as above settled up to this date	
16 weeks 18/ when sick	48.00
25 do 12/	50.00
	<u>98.00</u>

(This is reckoning at ^{per} three shillings to a dollar)

Sept. 19th 1812 Settled for board up to this date	
30 weeks at 18/	\$60.00
38½ do - 12/	77.00
	<u>\$137.00</u>

In each of these there ~~is~~ ~~are~~ the signatures of William and James to the accounts. Although this paper ends here there is no reason to believe that there was not a final settlement after Mary's death, which occurred about a year and a half later. At any rate, the best evidence that she died where she had lived so long, in the William Wallace home, is the fact that she was buried in William's family lot in the Center Cemetery behind the Town Hall in H., not in Robert's lot. His entire family are laid to rest in the Depot Hill Cemetery, half a mile south of the one where William's family, including Mary, lie. By the way the census records of both 1800 and 1810 show Mary living with William. I enclose a not very good snapshot of the William Wallace house--I suppose the only picture of it in existence. It was taken by my sister in Sept. 1918, when she and I were walking by it; it had long been abandoned then and was rapidly going to pieces. A year or two later (I have not been able to learn exactly when) it burned to the ground.

Column 5:

Par. 1: When I first saw "6,000 acre grant" I thought it was a misprint, but I find the same figure in Holzer and conclude it must go back to Roy. It is a ridiculous figure: the whole town of H. contains only about 26,000 acres. Robert's farm was one of about 250 acres, with additional pasture and wood land at a distance. William's farm was of almost the same size.

Par. 3: I am intrigued by your quotation from William Wallace's day-book. Do you know where that book is today? The date you give for Mary's coming agrees with what I gather from the documents I have but I should much like to compare the daybook with the ledger, etc.

Column 6:

Par. 2: Robert Wallace farm remained in possession of his family, although occupied some of the time by tenants, until 1834 when it was sold to Washington Berry, a good farmer, who kept up both land and buildings. He sold out in 1864, and soon after that James Dowlin bought it, and he and his son owned it until shortly before the Roys came. It was not well cared for after about 1900 and was in desperate condition when the Roys came.

The mills of Robert Wallace Jr. were not in West Henniker, but at the so-called ~~lower~~ upper dam in the village, ~~where~~ on the east bank, opposite the site of the later shoe shop and rim factory.

Comments 5.

Conclusion

I find Holzer's book wholly unreliable on Ocean Mary. I became distrustful early in my reading, but when I came to the place where he describes the house as (p.136) "a rectangular building of gray stone and brown trim, very well preserved" I decided that a person who cannot tell clapboards from stone cannot be relied upon to make any correct observations. No wonder his "facts" in the story are almost useless!

I discover I forgot to comment on Column 5, last Par. on the painted eagle and stars. This was of course done by one of the itinerant painters of the first quarter of the 19th century (forerunners of interior decorators) who went about doing murals for reasonable. Some of them were quite skilful and artistic, others very ordinary. There are many houses in southern N.H. which contain their decorations; very few of them are well preserved, however, and almost all of them have at one time or another been papered over. Gus Roy did a fine job in restoring this one, which was in bad shape when I first saw it. He needn't have tried to assign it to Mary's handiwork, however.