

# The Narragansett Sun.

## HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1895

### CHAPTER II

#### The First Settlements

It is probable that there were settlers within our present town limits who came with the intention of remaining, but were frightened away by the Indians, in or before 1690, the year of the destruction of old Fort Loyal, at Falmouth Neck, now Portland. At Ammoncongan, now Cumberland Mills, the Indians, from time immemorial, had had a planting ground on the northerly side of the river, which was included in a tract of land one mile square, purchased of two Indian sagamores, by George **Munjoy**, under date of June 4, 1666. Previous to this, however, as we have already noticed, viz: in 1657, the famous chieftain Squitterrygusset, had sold lands within our present limits to a white man. The grantee in this transaction is mentioned in the instrument of conveyance as "Francis Small of Kittery, fisherman," and the property disposed of was "all that upland and marshes at Capisic, lying up along the northern side of the river, unto the head thereof, and so to reach and extend unto the river side at Ammoncongan." The price paid was "one trading coat a year for Capisic, and one gallon of liquor a year for Ammoncongan." According to the late Mr. Willis this is the first Indian deed, extant, of lands in old Falmouth.

According to the same authority, Small settled upon his purchase where he remained several years. It is probable that his home was at Capisic, as the stream of the name was of much greater volume than at the present day, and afforded a considerable water power at the point where it still falls into the marshes at the head of Fore River. In May, 1658, Small sold one-half of this tract to John Phillips, of Boston, who was the father-in-law of Munjoy.

Small was an ancestor of the well-known correspondent of the Argus, "L.W.S.," who has lately published the little that can be learned of his ancestor's somewhat eventful life. According to this authority, Francis Small was born in England in 1620, and came to America in 1632, with his father, whom "L.W.S." suspects of having borne the Christian name of Edward. Francis Small was living at Dover, N. H., in 1648, and died at Truro, or Provincetown, on *Cap Cod*. in 1713. He had a house and trading camp where the village of Cornish, in York County, is now situated, and received a deed from the famous Captain Sunday, of a tract of 256,000 acres, known as the Ossipee lands. Through one of his sons, Samuel, he was the ancestor of numerous families of Smalls in Limington and other towns in York County.

George Munjoy, who received the deed of the "mile square," was the same individual who gave the name to the present "Munjoy Hill" in Portland. He seems to have been a man of considerable enterprise, who saw with prophetic vision that somewhere in the fullness of years the lands to which the Indian attached little value, being willing to yield up his precarious title for a few trinkets or a coat of many colors, to say nothing of the strong waters which undoubtedly prepared the way for a sharp bargain on the part of the white man, would be of great value, if not to himself, at least to his posterity. But the ancient planting ground that was already cleared presented especial attractions to the English speculator. According to an ancient deposition, Munjoy and his wife Mary, had a house and some improvements on the southwest side of the river at Ammoncongon, "where the said Munjoy and his servants used to go in planting and reaping times, \* \* where they usually tarried about a week at a time."

The deposition was given in 1742, by Elisha Comey of Gloucester, "aged upwards of 73." It would seem that a dispute had sometime arisen concerning the ownership of the Capisic and Ammoncongan lands, and testimony was now being taken "in perpetual memory of the thing," by some of the claimants; hence "this deponent further saith that the house last mentioned was opposite to said Munjoy's planting ground on the northeast side of the river Ammoncongan \* \* which said Munjoy, to this deponent's certain knowledge, improved many years, sowing peas and wheat without interruption. After Munjoy's death, which happened before 1685, his widow married Robert Lawrence, who in 1690 was the officer in command and lost his life at the taking of Fort Loyal. Lawrence also improved his wife's domain's, which she had received from her first husband, "for several years," "and lived on the southwest side (of the river) in the manner Munjoy did, and said Lawrence rebuilt the house \* \* after it was burnt by the Indians."

It is matter of history, therefore, that both Munjoy and Lawrence abode triumphantly, at least, at old Ammoncongan, "and ploughed and sowed the land on the northeast side" of the river, which had previously been cultivated by the Indians.

It was in 1658, the year following that in which Francis Small acquired title to his Ammoncongan lands, that the name of Falmouth was first applied to the ancient township by joint compact between the inhabitants and commissioners appointed by the General Court of Massachusetts."

"Those places formerly called Spurwink and Casco Bay from the east side of Spurwink river, to the Clapboard Islands in Casco bay, shall run back eight miles into Bay, shall run back eight miles into the country, and henceforth shall be called by the name of Falmouth." It was thus that an article, numbered eight, of the agreement read: and from this time the scattered settlements of Spurwink, the Neck, Presumpscot river, (Lower Falls) Capisic

the country, and henceforth shall be called by the name of Falmouth." It was thus that an article, numbered eight, of the agreement read: and from this time the scattered settlements of Spurwink, the Neck, Presumpscot river, (Lower Falls) Capisic and Back Cove, commenced the business of self-government under that most unique form of the republic, the town with its board of selectmen and other necessary officers.

From this time until the abandonment of the territory by the white settlers in 1690 was a period of thirty-two years, that, but for the trouble with the Indians, was marked by a large measure of prosperity. Saw and grain mills grew up in the midst of the virgin forest, and it is probable that the exports of grain and furs brought large profits to the enterprising business men of those days.

That the agricultural operations of Munjoy and his successor Lawrence were not confined wholly to the old Indian planting ground is evident from the fact, that, in 1734, after the reorganization of the old town, when lands between Saccarappa and Cumberland Mills, were laid out by the Proprietors' Committee to Samuel Waldo, mention is made of "old Ammoncongan farm" as being, by implication at least, on the southerly side of the river.

R.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## HISTORY OF WESTBROOK

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1895

### CHAPTER II.—CONTINUED

#### The First Settlements

Robert Lawrence, as we have seen, lost his life in the defense of old Fort Loyal in 1690. By the calamities of this, and the succeeding years up to 1703, inclusive, the white settlers were driven away from Falmouth for the second

time. The wife of Lawrence, who had probably returned to Boston at the commencement of hostilities, about 1688, finding herself again a widow, married, as her third husband, Stephen Cross, and continued to reside in Boston, where she died in 1705. The lands at Saccarappa and Ammoncongan now passed into the hands of a Boston merchant named Cooper, and by subsequent conveyances came to the possession of that great landed proprietor, Brigadier Samuel Waldo. This tract was long known as the "Cooper claim", and is mentioned by that name in conveyances of real estate as late as the early years of the present century.

The period from 1690 to about 1730, covering nearly forty years is, so far as our present territory is concerned, barren alike of incident and interest. The savage, no doubt, roamed away over his ancient domains, and the Indian squaw may have resumed the cultivation of maize on the old planting ground, now rendered all the more productive for the repeated ploughings of Munjoy and Lawrence. But it is probable that the woodlands round about did not escape the attention of the King's mast agents, and that the gigantic pines bore the sign of the broad arrow, pointing the way to their final destination whenever they should be wanted to hold up the sails that in favoring winds should speed them over the briny deep.

For the little that we are able to record of George Munjoy, who appears to have built the first dwelling house within our present limits, we are indebted to Willis. That he was a man of intelligence and great business enterprise goes without saying. It was quite the fashion with our early historians to assume, on the most meagre authority that the colonists who

had achieved any considerable measure of success in their day and generation, had come hither from some part of the old world. Of Westbrook and Waldo it was related by Willis and Williamson that they were both born in England; whereas there can be little doubt that both were natives of our own country, and came of old families that had been domiciled for several generations on New England soil. But there is better reason for believing that the "merry land" over seas witnessed the birth of Munjoy, which occurred a half a century, at least, before that of Westbrook, while he had been several years dead at the time of the birth of Waldo in Boston in 1796.

According to the authority to whom credit is given as above, George Munjoy was the son of John Munjoy, of Abbottsham in Devonshire, England, and was born there in 1626. What year he came to America we are not informed, but he was admitted freemason in Massachusetts in 1647. He married Mary, daughter of Deacon John Phillips of Boston, who, as we have seen, subsequently became the wife of Robert Lawrence, and after his death, of Stephen Cross. Munjoy and his wife had several children, viz: John, born in Boston, and killed by the Indians at Falmouth Neck in 1676; Mary who married John Palmer; George, born in Boston and died in Braintree in 1698; and others, but the family name is now extinct in this country. It is said to have been of Norman French origin, and formerly written Mountjoie. The elder George Munjoy had a sister Mary, who married John Saunders of Braintree.

Much speculation has been indulged in by the local philologists respecting the meaning and derivation of the so-called Indians names of places in and about this

region, which is often, to employ the excessive slang of the present day, not a little tiresome. The name of Saccarappa, which still continues to afford so much amusement to those factious persons who persist in leaving off the final syllable, has undergone very important changes since it was first written in the deed from the Indian sagamores to George Munjoy. There can be but little doubt that the word contains the same root with Saco, which has also undergone important changes and been considerably reduced in length from its original form. It may be, as is fancifully contended, that the waterfall "toward the rising sun" in both cases gave a name to the locality; but it is maintained by others that the common Sac" or "Sak" in both names should signify "a burnt district". According to the late Rev. Dr. Ballard of Brunswick, Ammoncongan was also written Ammoscoggin; but he was most likely in error except in one instance. During the Indian wars, when Falmouth was deserted by the white settlers, one deed was given which was recorded in the York records, and only one that I have been able to find, in which a former inhabitant conveys lands on the "Ammoscoggin river near Presumpscot falls." But wherever else the name is used the stream intended is manifestly the Androscoggin, a very natural mistake, and one into a scrivener drawing a deed in Boston, or any other remote place, in those early times, would easily fall.

According to Dr. Potter, another distinguished antiquarian, the Ammoncongan is compounded of three Indian words, *namaas*—fish, *kees*—high, *auke*—place. To understand just how the combination is effected requires a somewhat vivid imagination, but the result when reached well repays the

effort that it has cost; for it gives us, in English, either of the three forms following, from which to choose an equivalent for one of our best known historic names, to wit, a *fish place*, a *fish drying place* and a *high fish place*.

It is said that the Indian squaws were accustomed to fertilize their cornfields by placing under the seed at planting one or more dead fish, a process which was called "fishing the corn," but in precisely what Indian phrase history has not preserved. Our antiquarians have hazarded the conjecture that in spring time alewives and possibly salmon were abundant in the Presumpscot in the days when the aborigines still improved their fields at Ammoncogan; a view that finds confirmation in a fast fading tradition. For the present writer has heard from the lips of those who in turn had heard it from those who had been eyewitnesses of that whereof they affirmed, that before the waters of the river had been obstructed by dams that spanned the entire width of the stream, the shad and alewives were always abundant in their season; and the salmon were so plenty that when boys were about to be articulated as apprentices to any of the trades that were pursued in the hamlets that had sprung up along the river, it was especially stipulated that they should not be compelled to live upon salmon more than three days out of each week.

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