

MANTEO AND JACK STRAW.

BY WILLIAM T. FORBES.

THE shire town of Dare County, North Carolina, is situated on Roanoke Island, between Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, and bears the name of an Indian, Manteo, who was for several years in the service of Sir Walter Raleigh.

This island is, and doubtless always will be, associated with Raleigh's five unsuccessful attempts to make a permanent settlement in Virginia.

In the southeasterly part of Westborough, in this Commonwealth, a hill has borne the name of Jack Straw for more than two hundred years.

As a boy, the writer played in Jack Straw Brook, climbed Jack Straw Hill, and watched the cattle feeding in Jack Straw Pasture. A deed, dated 1723, granting eighty acres of land to Jonathan Forbes, an ancestor of the writer, described the premises as situated "at Jack Straw's Hill." Other ancient deeds of land in the vicinity refer to the south line of Marlborough as "Jack Straw's old line."

Efforts to ascertain the origin of this name have led me back through registries of deeds in Worcester, Middlesex and Suffolk counties, in each of which, successively, this hill was located. I find among the Massachusetts archives at the State House, proof that many years prior to the first white settlement in that vicinity, Jack Straw's Hill was a well-known landmark.

In all early deeds, maps and grants of the General Court the name is written "Jack Straw's Hill." During

the last half-century, in all printed documents and among the people of its vicinity, it has been known and is now called, "Jackstraw Hill."

It is the purpose of this paper to show that Manteo, the faithful friend of Sir Walter Raleigh and his colonists, from 1584 to 1587, the first Christian Indian in the English Colonies, and Jack Straw, who in his old age enjoyed the hospitality of Gov. Winthrop, in Boston, and of Gov. Bradford, in Plymouth, were probably the same person,—that the county seat of Dare County, North Carolina, and this Worcester County hill, bear the names of the same Indian.

In 1584, Queen Elizabeth granted to Sir Walter Raleigh the land in America from latitude 33° to 40° north, which he named Virginia. That very year he sent two vessels, under Capt. Amadas and Capt. Barlow, to explore the country.

They were cordially received, and returned with the products of the soil and also "two of the savages, being lusty men, whose names were Wanchese and Manteo."

They were taken to Sir Walter Raleigh, who presented them and a great pearl and other products of Virginia to Queen Elizabeth.

The following year, 1585, Sir Richard Grenville sailed to Virginia with seven vessels, the four largest from 50 to 140 tons. He left 108 men, under Ralph Lane, to found a colony in Roanoke. Lane says, "The natives which were taken to England returned with this expedition. One of them, Manteo, did good service in opening the way for the landing and friendly reception of the fleet."

Referring to one of his exploring expeditions, Lane writes:—

"In the evening, * * * about three of the clock, we heard certain savages call, as we thought, Manteo, who was also at that time with me in the boat, whereof we all being very glad hoping of some friendly conference with

them & making him to answer them they presently began a song, as we thought, in token of our welcome to them.

But Manteo presently betook him to his piece & told me that they meant to fight with us.

Which word was not so soon spoken by him, & the light horseman ready to put to shore, but their alighted a volley of their arrows among them in the boat."

In the second part, touching the conspiracy of King Wangina, otherwise called Pemisapan, Lane refers to an expedition in which he was accompanied by Manteo.

In the troubles with the Indians which followed, Wanchese, Manteo's companion in England, is referred to as "one of our great enemies." He aided in the killing of George Howe, who was ambushed on Roanoke Island.

In one of the numerous fights with the savages, their king, Pemisapan, formerly named Wangina, who had been shot through by the colonel and left for dead, suddenly started up and outran his captors, while Lane was looking out for the safety of Manteo's friends among the Indians. He was overtaken and beheaded by an Irishman named Nugent.

In 1586, Sir Francis Drake, with a large fleet, appeared and, at their request, took the discouraged colonists back to England.

A few days after they sailed, Sir Walter Raleigh's relief expedition, of three vessels, under Sir Richard Grenville, arrived, immediately preceded by a ship of 100 tons. The fifteen men left on the island by this third expedition were killed by the Indians. "Their houses were found standing, and deer feeding on the melons of divers sorts growing in the deserted fort."

The fourth and best equipped expedition sent out by Raleigh sailed in 1587, under Capt. John White. Manteo, who had gone to England with Lane the previous year, returned with White. There were 150 persons with White, including his daughter and 16 other women.

The following narrative is taken from White's report :—

"July 30th. Mr. Stafford & twenty of our men passed by water to the island of Croatoan" (Cape Lookout, about 75 m. S. of Roanoke) "with Manteo, who had his mother and many of his kindred dwelling in that Island, of whom we hoped to understand some news of our fifteen men, but especially to learn the disposition of the people of the country towards us & to renew our old friendship with them." The natives at first appeared hostile and then fled, but returned at the call of Manteo, who spoke to them in their own language.

In revenge for the death of George Howe, who was slain by Wangina's men in Roanoke Island, Manteo conducted a night expedition, under Capt. Stafford, who surprised and killed some friendly Indians who were encamped in the enemies' country for the purpose of gathering their abandoned "corn, peas, pompions and tobacco."

Lane says that Manteo behaved himself towards us as a most faithful Indian, and adds :—

"August 13th, our savage, Manteo, by the commandment of Sir Walter Raleigh, was christened in Roanoke, and called lord thereof and of Dasamonguepeuk, in reward of his faithful services."

Another eye witness writes that they arrived at Hata-rask July 22, and "the Governor, accompanied with forty of his best men in a small pynnace, stood in for Roanoke * * * where, having christened a grandchild of his own born there (his daughter being married to one of the company), and calling it Virginia" (this was Virginia Dare, born August 18, 1587), "he caused, likewise, Manteo, the savage, to be christened, by Sir W. Raleigh his appointment, and, in reward of his faithfulness, entitled him Lord of Roanok and of Dasamonguepeuk."

So far as I can learn, Manteo was the first Indian baptized in the English colonies or under English auspices.

So Manteo succeeded Wangina, the beheaded king of Roanoke and Dasamonguepeuk. The latter place was the large peninsula west of Roanoke.

The fifth and last expedition for the relief of the Roanoke Colony, under John White, in 1590, after various vicissitudes, sailed north from the West Indies, past Cape Lookout on the island of Croatoan, and reached Roanoke in August.

They encountered rough weather. lost seven men, and returned to England without seeing a colonist.

They found on a tree three fair Roman letters, "C. R. O.," which letters, White writes, "we knew to signify the place where I should find the planters seated, according to a secret token agreed upon between them and me. If in distress, they should carve a cross over the letters or name; but no sign of distress was found. . . At the entrance to the fort, in fair capital letters, graven on one of the chief posts, they found the word "CROATOAN." Capt. White was but a passenger on Watts's fleet with supplies, and was broken-hearted when his associates decided to leave the colonists, including his daughter and granddaughter Virginia Dare, to their fate. He writes, however, "I greatly joyed that I had safely found a certain token of their safe being at Croatoan, which is the place where Manteo was born, and the savages of the islands our friends."

This is the last certain information that we have of the fate of the colonists. A tradition among the Hatteras Indians a hundred years after suggests that they intermarried with the natives and, finally, were absorbed by the savages, having lost every vestige of Christianity and civilization.

This seems probable to Dr. Francis K. Hawkes, author of a History of North Carolina, printed in 1856.

His principal reasons for believing this tradition are the grey eyes and other signs of white blood found among the savages.

The story told by Strachey, first Secretary of the Jamestown Colony, is much more credible. He says that they were killed a few years before the landing at Jamestown by Powhatan, who was influenced by his priests.

In the year 1674, Maj.-Gen. Daniel Gookin makes this report:—

“Magunkaquog (Magunco) is the seventh town where the praying Indians do inhabit.

The number of its inhabitants are about eleven families and about fifty-five souls, of whom eight are church members and fifteen baptized.”

This Indian town was included later within the limits of Hopkinton, adjoining Westborough.

Among them were William Jackstraw and his two sons, Joseph Jackstraw and John Jackstraw.

They were all hanged on Boston Common, September 21, 1676.

The story of the Indian attack on the family of Thomas Eames of Framingham, February 1, 1675-6; is well known. In his absence, a party of eleven Indians burned his house, barn and cattle, killed his wife and five children, and carried off five others.

William Jackstraw and his two sons were present, under the lead of the famous Netus, who, with a few other praying Indians escaped to the woods when their associates were deported to Deer Island, at the beginning of King Philip's War.

After the proclamation of June 19, promising life to such of the enemy as would come in and submit, the three Jackstraws gave themselves up, with their wives and children.

They relied on these words of the Council: “Those that have been drawn into the war and acting only as soldiers * * * shall have their lives spared.”

William Jackstraw and his two sons were examined before Mr. Thomas Danforth, August 14. His minutes

of the examination are as follows:—"Joseph, Indian, son of William, of Mognocke, being examined, do say & confess that himself with these others named in the margin (see list above) were the persons that destroyed Thomas Eames' family in the beginning of Feb. last: that the same was occasioned by their missing of corn which they expected to have found at Mognocke, & by that means were provoked to come & do that spoil, killing of some & carrying captive of the rest, and burning house, barn and cattle; and do confess that he carried away on his back one of Eames's sons.

"Apumatquin, alias John, being examined, do confess the same thing.

"William Jackstraw, being examined, do confess the same thing as above: owns that his sons Joseph and John were present at the desolation of Goodman Eames's family, and that himself was of the company, but kept at a distance a little way off in the cornfields.

"Isaac Beech being present at this examination, do say Joseph, above-named, confessed the same thing to him and Jno. Prentice.

"For encouragement to Joseph, who was first examined, to tell the truth (they at first denying all), I told him I would speak to the Governor to spare his life in case he would tell me plainly how all this said matter was acted.

"Taken the day and year above said, Before Thomas Danforth, John Speen, Interpreter.

"Confessions were owned by the prisoners at the barr, 18, 6, 76.

E. R. Sec."

Copy of Indictment. "We the grand jury for our Sovereign Lord the King do present and indict Joseph Indian of Maguncog by the name of Joseph Indian, for that he not having the fear of God before his eyes and being instigated by the devil did with other his accomplices on the beginning of Feb. 6 last burn the house and cattle of Thomas Eames and killed his wife and children,

contrary to the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King his crown and dignity, the laws of God and of this jurisdiction.

"The Jury finds this bill, and have him to forthwith tryal. Richard Colicott foreman for the name of the rest of the Jury."

They were all convicted August 18, 1676. They sent in to the Court of Assistants on the fifth day of September following, a petition reciting the terms of their surrender, and claiming that, although present, they did not assist in the massacre, and asking for their lives. Sixteen days later, the diary of Samuel Sewall contains this item:—

"Stephen Goble of Concord was executed for murder of Indians. Three Indians for firing Eames his house and murder. The weather was cloudy and rawly cold, though little or no rain. Mr. Mighil prayed; four others sat on the gallows, two men and two impudent women, one of which at least laughed on the gallows as several testified." The remaining eight Indians were killed, pardoned, or escaped.

The Indians frequently used the first name of the father as the surname of the son or daughter.

In the diary of the Rev. Ebenezer Parkman of Westborough, Mass., great-grandfather of the historian Francis Parkman, under the date of March 23, 1737, is this entry:—

"Cold northerly wind. P. M. visited old David Monnaow, he tells me he was 104 last Indian Harvest. Says the name of Boston was not Shawmut but Shaw-waw-muck."

His son was named Abimeleck David, and the latter's daughter Sue Abimeleck. Her fate is noted in the same diary, under date of Jan. 31, 1779. "Hear that Sue Bimeleck was lately frozen to Death. This whole month has been cold to admiration."

Sarah Boston, the Indian giantess of Grafton, Mass., still remembered by persons living in the land of the Hassanamiscoes, was the daughter of Boston Phillips.

It seems, therefore, probable that the children of Jack Straw the elder used his name as one word for a surname, and the children of his son William, who would naturally be adults in 1675, still retained the family name derived from their famous ancestor.

Phineas Pratt was one of sixty sent to Massachusetts to found a Colony, by Thomas Weston, in the year 1622. In his Narrative, published in the Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Vol. IV., Fourth Series, are these words :

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"Neare unto y^e place is a Town of Lator Time caled Brantry. Not long after this oferthrow of the first plantation in this bay Capt. Louit cam to y^{er} Cuntry.

At the Time of his being at Piscataway a Sacham or Sagamor Gave two of his men, on to Capt Louit & an other to Mr. Tomson, but on y^t was ther said "How can you trust these Salvagis & call the nam of on Watt Tylor & y^e other Jack Straw after y^e names of the two greatest Rebills y^t ever weare in Eingland"

"Wott Tylor" said "when he was a boy Capt. Doomer found him upon an Island in great distress."

Watt Tyler and Jack Straw led insurgent peasants of the counties of Essex and Kent, and Tyler was killed by the Lord Mayor Walworth while treating with Richard II.

GOV. WINTHROP'S JOURNAL, p. 25.

April 4, 1631.

"Wahginacut a Sagamore upon the river Quonehtacut which lies W. of Naraganset came to the Governor at Boston, with John Sagamore and Jack Strawe (an Indian which had lived in England and had served Sir Walter Raleigh and was now turned Indian again) and divers of their sannops and brought a letter to the Governor from Mr. Endicot to this effect; that the said Wahginacut was very desirous to have some Englishmen to come plant in his country and offered to find them corn and give them yearly eighty skins of beaver, and that the country was

very fruitful, &c. and wished that there might be two men sent with him to see this country.

"The Governor entertained them at dinner but would send none with him. He discovered afterwards that the said sagamore is a very treacherous man and at war with the Pekoath (a far greater Sagamore): His country is not above five days journey from us by land."

To sum up:

The literature of the Roanoke Colony and of Sir Walter Raleigh's connection with Virginia is very minute and voluminous, and based on detailed narratives of those who participated in the events narrated, which cover the years 1584 to 1590, inclusive. Raleigh had nothing to do with Virginia after the latter date. All contemporary and other writers agree that two natives, Manteo and Wanchese, were taken to England in 1584, presented by Raleigh to Queen Elizabeth, and returned to Roanoke in 1585.

Wanchese immediately joined the hostile natives, assisted in killing George Howe, remained an implacable enemy of the English, and was never in the service of Raleigh.

Manteo twice visited England; "was a firm friend to the English"; was of the greatest service to the Colony; was baptized and made king of Roanoke and Dasamonguepeuk by command of Sir Walter Raleigh himself, who never visited the infant settlement. No writer mentions the visit of any other North American Indian to England and of his serving Raleigh.

According to Capt. Lovit, an Indian on the coast of Maine, in the early part of the seventeenth century, was given the name of Jack Straw and went to Braintree. His companion when a boy (and very possibly Jack Straw himself), was rescued from peril on an island by Capt. Doomer. A large proportion of the ships of that time sailed direct from England to the West Indies, and then followed the coast north and passed in sight of the island of Croatan, Manteo's home.

A few years later he is employed to negotiate a treaty with the colonies of Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth, is dined by Gov. Winthrop and by Gov. Bradford, and the following year is given a coat worth twelve shillings (paid for out of the Colony Treasury), by order of Governor Winthrop.

According to Winthrop, this Indian, Jack Straw, had once served Raleigh, and had doubtless once lived as a civilized Christian, or Winthrop would not have observed that he "had turned Indian again."

He was so well known in the Massachusetts Bay Colony that his humble wigwam made a landmark in the wilderness and his name still marks the place of his abode. Contrary to the usual Indian custom in the vicinity, his descendants, for at least two generations, retained his Christian and surname as a family name.

Does it not seem probable that Manteo and Jack Straw were two names of the same man, and he one of the most famous Indians of the English Colonies in America ?

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