

# TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

## Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.

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SESSION OF 1872-73.

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### PAPER I.—“ON SOME ADDITIONAL INCIDENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SIEGE AND BLOCKADE OF QUEBEC, IN 1775-6.”

BY LIEUT.-COL. WILLIAM F. COFFIN, OTTAWA, ONTARIO.

(Read before the Society, Dec. 18, 1872, by the President.)

MY DEAR DR. ANDERSON,

I received, a day or two since, the *Transactions of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec*, for 1871-72, addressed to me, I think, in your own handwriting. Whether right or wrong, pray accept of my best thanks, which, under any circumstances, are your due for an excellent paper, from your pen, on Canadian history.

It so happens that the period of history embraced in this paper interests me very deeply. I feel as if I took a hereditary share in the siege and blockade of Quebec in 1775-76, ninety-seven years since. My grandfather, my father, and two uncles, were all present in Quebec during the siege; and the first took a more active part in that remarkable event than has ever been assigned to him. Will you allow me, under the inspiration of your article, to say something in vindication of his claims to honorable notice, and to explain why so little has hitherto been said about him?

Indeed, until now I never saw his worthy name in print. His was a modest and a brave nature. If, in the spirit, he

should read your paper—and, as all good things tend Heavenward, there is no good reason why he should not do so—I have no doubt but that he would stare,

“And wonder how the d—l he got there.”

Nevertheless, by the aid of the printer's factotum, there he is. You say that Mr. LeMoine has attached this note to Thompson's narrative:—“There were other Canadian “worthies who can legitimately share the credit of this *fait d'armes*—Chabot, Coffin, and the captain of an English “transport, Barnsfare”

Justly, indeed, are they called “worthies.” Not a man of them was a professional soldier: they were simply citizens—common *men*, but men who felt that they had a duty to perform, and did it. I don't think that they took much order in their going; but they went at once.

Often, in my childish days—for I was in Quebec in 1812, '13, '14—have I heard my father tell how, on that tremendous New-Year morning of 1776, their white-faced mother had sent him and his brother John from the Upper-town to the *Près de-Ville*, to ascertain if their father was alive or dead; how they found him, and how he looked—very grave, but very glad; how they, the two boys, had been allowed to crawl out of the embrasure, on the snow, to where lay the bodies of Montgomery and his staff, stark, and as yet undisturbed; and then, of the free breathing, and of the exultation of the town-folk, not unmingled with heartfelt thanksgiving.

Years after, I found myself once more in Quebec, in the old house in St. Lewis-street, with uncles John and James, and that paragon of spinsters—albeit imbued somewhat with the Puritan gravity of her New-England origin—aunt Anne Coffin; and often, over that small black mahogany table, reflecting the wine-glasses and the decanter of crusty old port, have I heard uncle John repeat the above incident, and many

a like old-world story, while the wintry winds howled without, and the old stove roared a triumphant *refrain* within. By Jove, sir, what a cosy contrast were those low-beamed rooms, and the warmth and the snug comfort of those days, to the fashionable apartments and ageish atmosphere of our own!—and how naturally one's heart warms with the recollections of dear old genial Quebec!

But to pass on. Old uncle James died, and then John; and good aunt Anne was laid in her peaceful grave far away from her quiet forefathers. Some time after her death, there were found in the drawer of a bureau, which had been her special property, a number of papers bearing upon the siege of 1775-76, which prove the part her father took in it, and from which, with your leave, I shall quote at length.

John Coffin, her father, though an unobtrusive, undemonstrative man, was a resolute loyalist. Born and brought up in Boston, he resisted the revolution, and made himself so obnoxious that he was, by name, proscribed, and his property confiscated, by act of the Massachusetts Legislature, September, 1778. Forewarned by friends, and taking time by the forelock, he freighted a schooner, of which he was part-owner, with his family and worldly goods, and coasted round from Boston to Quebec, where he must have arrived in or about June, 1775,—seeing that on the 23rd August, 1775, he bought, by *Acte* made before J. A. Panet,  *fils*, N. P., from la dame Veuve Lacroix, a piece of land at the *Près-de-Ville*, described as “un terrain de trois cent pieds de front, situé le long du fleuve St. Laurent, au bas du Cap aux Diamants, où passe le chemin qui conduit à l'Anse des Mères.” In a letter from John Coffin to his brother Nathaniel, in England, dated 1777, in relation to his losses at the siege of Quebec, he speaks of his property at the “Potash.” I believe this to be the same property referred to by Hawkins, in his *Siege of Quebec*, as being “formerly occupied by Mr. Racey as a “brewery; at the time of the siege this was called the

“*Potash.*” He went to work here, at once, to establish a distillery, when his labours were interrupted by the invasion of the country in September; and from that time to the end of the siege his industry was paralyzed.

Nor was this the only trouble of the time; for, in the letter above quoted from, he states that “his brig had been stopped at Lisbon, by the British consul, six months, as the property of a rebel, and at the very time when I was carrying a brown musket for his Majesty at Quebec.”

To what effect he carried his brown musket in the King’s service will now be shewn by documents which speak for themselves, and require but a very short introduction. These services had attracted attention in quarters capable of valuing them, and are best explained by the following letter, received by him from Colonel Allan Maclean, 87th Regiment, who commanded the garrison of Quebec during the siege of 1775-76, and, apparently, spontaneously given:

“QUEBEC, 28th July, 1776.

“SIR,—As I am, in a few days, going to England with despatches from the Commander-in-Chief, I should be glad to know if I could be of any service to you. Power to do you any material service I have none; but your conduct during the siege of Quebec, last winter and spring, makes it a duty on my part to give you my testimony and approbation of every part of your conduct. Truth must always have some weight with his Majesty and his ministers, who, I am certain, wish to reward deserving men like you. To your resolution and watchfulness on the night of Dec. 31st, 1775, in keeping the guard at the *Près-de-Ville* under arms, waiting for the attack which you expected; the great coolness with which you allowed the rebels to approach; the spirit which your example kept up among the men, and the very critical instant in which you directed Capt. Barnsfare’s fire against Montgomery and his troops,—to those circumstances alone I do ascribe the repulsing the rebels from that important post, where, with their leader, they lost all heart.

“The resolutions you entered into, and the arrangements you made to maintain that post, when told you were to be attacked from another quarter, were worthy of a good subject, and would have done honor to an experienced officer. I thought it incumbent upon me to leave with you this honorable

testimony of your services, as matters that were well known to myself in particular ; and I should be happy, at any time, to have it in my power to be useful to you ; and do assure you that I am, with truth and regard, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ Mr. Coffin.”

“(Signed,)      “ ALLAN MACLEAN.”

This letter is endorsed :

“ From Col. Allan Maclean, 87th Regt., commanding the garrison  
“ at the siege of Quebec, 1775-76, to John Coffin, Esq.”

This generous testimony, on the part of Colonel Maclean, sufficiently establishes the share which John Coffin took in the defence of the *Près-de-Ville*. He was not in command ; he was not an officer ; he was simply a volunteer-soldier defending his hearthstone. But the emblems of command do not always confer the power ; and on occasions like this, the epaulet of the officer often gives place, tacitly and not unwillingly, to the man—let his garb be what it may—whose promptitude and force of character are equal to the emergency. Chabot and Picard, ready and valiant volunteers, may have been in command. Captain Barnsfare, no doubt, directed the guns, which were probably carronades, landed from his own ship. That all the brave men present nobly did their duty, is sufficiently proved by the event ; but Colonel Maclean avouches that to the resolution and watchfulness of John Coffin,—to his coolness and spirit and example, and to the critical promptitude with which “ *you directed Barnsfare’s fire against Montgomery and his troops,*” is to be ascribed the repulse of the rebels, when, losing their leader, they lost all heart.

In corroboration of the above, it may properly be stated, in this place, that Henry Caldwell, lieutenant-colonel commanding the British militia at the siege of Quebec, certifies, by a document given under his hand at Quebec, May, 1787, that :

“ John Coffin, Esquire, served in the British militia, under my command,  
“ during the siege of this town by the rebels, from November, 1775, to

“ May, 1776 ; during all which time he conducted himself and behaved with the greatest spirit, zeal, and activity in the King’s service, which, by his example, was very much promoted, particularly on the attack of the 31st December, when he very much distinguished himself.”

And further, in his letter to Murray, published by the *Literary and Historical Society of Quebec*, he has written, at pages 12 and 13 :

“ Soon after the enemy was repulsed at that side, some old women brought an account that the rebels had surprised the post at *Sault-au-Matelot*, and had got into the Lower-town. Part of the garrison, that had lately behaved so well, were struck with a panic, and began, some to hide their arms, and some to throw them into the river. The officer began to feel a little frightened, when a *Mr. Coffin*, a *British gentleman*, who, with his wife and twelve children, had taken refuge there, expecting to find there peace and quietness, and who had served previously in our militia, drew his bayonet, and declared he would put the first man to death who laid down his arms or attempted to abandon his post ; by which means he re-established order, and, with the assistance of *Captain Burnsfare*, who commanded the seamen, got two of the guns pointed at the opposite sides, in case *Arnold’s* people, having got into the Lower-town, should attempt to force the post on that side,” &c., &c.

It appears, moreover, that, independent of the services thus loyally and energetically rendered, *Mr. Coffin* had been subjected to heavy pecuniary losses from the invasion of the Americans and the siege of Quebec. He had abandoned “ affluence ”—as *Colonel Caldwell* says, in another part of his letter—at the command of duty ; and of the scanty relics of his property, brought with a large family to Quebec, he lost during the siege, by the hands of the Americans, effects of the value of nine hundred and sixty-one pounds, Halifax currency (£961 cy.) These pecuniary losses, though proved before commissioners appointed by *Sir Guy Carleton*, and subsequently admitted as correct by the report of the committee of the Executive Council of the Province, 3rd March, 1802,—hereinafter more particularly referred to—were never compensated.

The above statement introduces, very naturally, the following correspondence. Among the papers which have

come into my possession is a letter in the handwriting of John Coffin, of Quebec, addressed to his brother, Nathaniel Coffin, also proscribed by name in the Boston Confiscation Act, and who, flying from Boston, had taken refuge in England in 1775. In this letter, which bears date 29th July, 1778, is the following passage :

“ Two or three days since, I called upon General Carleton, and inquired what was the prospect of compensation for losses sustained by particular persons in consequence of the rebels coming into the Province of Canada in 1775. His answer was that Colonel Christie had received £3,000, Col. Caldwell £2,000, and William Grant £1,500; and he believed that was all they proposed paying in England,—that the rest of the account was returned this spring, to be further inquired into. I told him I had an account among them, the foot of which was about £860, stg., and that the money would be very convenient to me. He replied that neither of those gentlemen could in any respect be better entitled to that favor from Government than I was. He advised me to draw up a memorial to Gen. Haldimand, who, he said, was not unacquainted with my conduct in this garrison, and he would present it himself; which he accordingly did, and told Gen. H., before me, that Mr. Coffin was very serviceable during the siege, and that his conduct on the 31st Dec., 1775, at the post attacked by Mr. Montgomery, was more like an old experienced officer than like a gentleman not bred to arms; and desired Gen. H. to transmit my account to the Treasury, and recommended the payment. He answered he would do it with much pleasure. I told them I was much obliged to them both. Gen. Carleton replied: ‘ You are not at all obliged to me; what I have said to Gen. H. is no more than doing you justice. I should have mentioned you in my publick letter, but was afraid of the consequence to your friends,’ (meaning that he imagined the rebels would resent the part I acted upon my friends). He advised that my agent should apply to the Treasury, and that I should furnish him with a copy of my account, lest the one sent home by Gen. H. should be mislaid in the office. He also proposed that my friend should call upon him to back the application, which I make no doubt he will do most heartily, as he never promises without meaning to perform. He is one of the best private characters in the world; his publick one you are not a stranger to. I relate the before-mentioned conversation (much as it may savour of vanity) to let you know what dependance I can have upon Gen. C.’s interest in this affair. \* \* \* I hope Gen. Carleton’s interest with the Treasury will be sufficient to procure the payment of my account.”

In accordance with the suggestions made by Sir Guy Carleton, in the conversation alluded to, John Coffin appointed his brother to act as his agent in London, who was furnished with a copy of the account, "lest the one sent home by General Haldimand should be mislaid." It is evident, from the whole tenor of this letter, that, when it was written, General Carleton was on the point of departure for England. Mr. Coffin, therefore, advised his brother and agent to act upon the further kind suggestion of Sir Guy, and to "call upon him to back the application," which, "as he never promises without meaning to perform," he did "most heartily," in the following letter, dated "Jenningsbury, December 25th, 1779." If it did not procure the payment of Mr. Coffin's account, the fault certainly did not lie with Sir Guy Carleton :

"JENNINGSBURY, Dec. 25, 1779.

"SIR,—I have received your letter, and am sorry to learn your brother's misfortunes render it now necessary for him to apply for any assistance beyond his own industry. Having observed in all his conduct, from his arrival in the Province of Quebec till I left it, a constant attachment and zeal for the King's service, as well as the manner of a prudent, worthy man, I could not but interest myself for him. Yet his conduct and judicious behaviour on the morning of the 31st Dec., 1775, gave him a still stronger claim on me; for to him, with the assistance of Barnsfore, I attribute the repulse of the rebels on the side of Quebec where Mr. Montgomery attacked in person; while the success on the other was very different, and brought the town into no small danger. Now, whether we consider the strength of this post, the number allotted to its defence, or the former services of the officer who commanded, we might have expected as much, at least, from him,—a remarkable proof, this, that former services and greater numbers may be outdone by superior vigilance and good sense of gentlemen, though not used to arms. After all this, sir, I cannot but lament that it is nowise in my power to forward Mr. Coffin's wishes. I might, 'tis true, bear witness to his merits; but this, probably, would hurt, not serve,—such is the state of things. I have, therefore, only to assure you of my esteem for him, and that I am, sir,

"Your most obedient and most humble servant,

"(Signed),

"GUY CARLETON.

"Mr. Nathaniel Coffin."



I think it will be admitted that, up to this point, sufficient evidence has been adduced to satisfy any judicial mind that John Coffin is entitled to share, and to share largely, in the honour due to the defence of the post at *Près-de-Ville*, at the most critical moment of the siege.

The documents above produced prove that whatever may be the merit justly assigned to Barnsford and others for the defence of this post, an equal measure of praise was, at least, due to the American loyalist, John Coffin.

What that merit was, time has long since shewn. On that memorable winter morning, the flame of fidelity to the British empire, paling throughout the American continent, flickered uncertainly over the walls of Quebec. At midnight the desperate Arnold had forced the St. Roch suburb and the Lower-town, and, although obstinately resisted, doggedly fought on, hoping and looking for a junction with Montgomery. An hour later, and a resolute volley had decided the fate of a great country. The brave Montgomery was slain,—his detachment annihilated; Arnold was wounded; the American army was in full retreat. Quebec had been saved, and the flickering flame of fidelity to the British empire blazed up therefrom, thenceforth and forever, a beacon of light, inextinguishable in Canada.

And yet it may be asked why, if the conduct of this gentleman was so conspicuous, and so well known at the time,—why was his name unnoted in General Carleton's despatch which has immortalized the brave French-Canadians, Colonel Dupré, Major Ecuyer, and Captains Bouchette, Laforce, and Chabot, of the marine? This question has been already answered in the letter from Mr. John Coffin to his brother in England, dated 29th July, 1778, given at length above:—"General Carleton replied, 'You are not  
" "at all obliged to me; what I have said to General  
" "Haldimand is no more than doing you justice. I should

“ ‘ have mentioned you in my publick letter, but was afraid  
 “ ‘ of the consequences to your friends,’—meaning that  
 “ he imagined the rebels would resent the part I acted  
 “ upon my friends.”

Those who have read the historical essay which prefaces the *American Loyalists*, by Lorenzo Sabine, cannot fail to recall the severities exercised at this time in the insurgent States, and the general exasperation which prevailed against the loyalists, increased in intensity by the failure before Quebec; and will be able to appreciate the thoughtful consideration of Sir Guy Carleton, and to understand that the public mention of Mr. Coffin's name in a despatch announcing so signal a triumph to the British arms, might have been productive of very grave inconvenience to his friends in Massachusetts.

Two interesting features in the story of that eventful night have been brought out into stronger light by the preceding letters from Colonel Maclean and Sir Guy Carleton, and are worthy of a passing commentary.

*First:* In your paper on Canadian history, read the 6th March, 1872, you quote from Hawkins, “ on a point of some interest,” as follows:—“ Soon after the repulse of the enemy before the post at *Près-de-Ville*, information was given to the officer in command there that Arnold's party from the General Hospital, advancing along the St. Charles, had captured the barrier at the Sault-au-Matelot, and that he intended an attack on that of the *Près-de-Ville* by taking it in the rear. Immediate preparations were made for the defence of the post against such an attack, by turning some of the guns of an inner barrier, not far from the old Custom-house, towards the town.

The fact of this *alerte*,—fortunately a false alarm, which might, if true, have been a serious matter,—and of the measures taken to meet it, are confirmed by Colonel

Maclean, in words very much to the credit of John Coffin:—"The resolutions you entered into, and the "arrangements you made to maintain that post"—to wit, that of the *Près-de-Ville*—"when told that you were to be "attacked from another quarter, were worthy of a good "subject, and would have done honour to an experienced "officer." Colonel Allan Maclean was in command of the garrison; to him all reports and returns were made. If any man in Quebec knew what had occurred, he did; and this letter was written in the July following, six months after the occurrence. The above paragraph, therefore, while it approves the fact of the alarm, points out the man whose resolution and forethought had foreclosed the danger, had it come.

*Second*: In the letter from Sir Guy Carleton, dated from the country-seat of his family, Jenningsbury, December 25th, 1779, speaking of Mr. Coffin, the gallant general says: "His conduct and judicious behaviour on the morning of the "31st December, 1775," (he meant 1st January, 1776,) "gave "him a still stronger claim upon me; for, to him, with the "assistance of Barnsfare, I attribute the repulse of the rebels "on the side of Quebec where Mr. Montgomery attacked in "person; while the success on the other was very different, "and brought the town into no small danger. Now, whether "we consider the strength of this post, the number allotted to "its defence, or the former services of the officer who "commanded, we might have expected as much, at least, "from him,—a remarkable proof, this, that former services "and greater numbers may be outdone by superior vigilance "and the good sense of gentlemen, though not used to arms."

This passage points to a foregone conclusion. The recollection of the general in actual command, four years after the event, embraced, at once, all the vicissitudes of that changeful night—the first disaster, the distress, the danger, and then the sudden relief, the assurance of safety—the

deathless pause between stern peril and hope and life revived and assured. It brought forward into rapid relief the vigilance and good sense of the volunteer who saved the town, as compared with the carelessness or sloth of the more experienced officer, who had nearly lost it.\* When Arnold attacked the *Sault-au-Matelot* at five A. M. of the 1st January, 1776, he carried the first barricade by surprise; the guard and the advanced posts were taken almost without firing a gun; Adjutant Mills became prisoner, and Captain Lester narrowly escaped. For a time the town was "in no small danger," indeed. But then arose hesitation; Arnold himself had fallen desperately wounded; a change of commander ensued; a pause took place. In the meantime the inner barrier had been firmly closed. Sir Guy Carleton became aware of the danger, and, with the inspired promptitude of the true general, directed \* Captain Lawes, of the Royal Engineers, covered by Captain McDougal, of the Royal Emigrants, to sally out through Palace-gate and take the assailants in the rear. The defenders, at the second barrier, had already been reinforced by Caldwell, Nairne, Dambourges, and Anderson (who was killed). The disaster was thus converted to success, and the enemy, placed between two fires, surrendered. In writing his kindly letter, the mind of the writer glanced back over contemporaneous facts: he bethought him of the peril which would have ensued had the palissades at the *Près-de-Ville* been as carelessly guarded as the first barrier at the *Sault-au-Matelot*; and he drew a comparison honorable to the "vigilance and good sense of gentlemen, though not used to arms."

And now to resume the thread of our story. On the 9th of May, 1776, the siege was raised. Peace came, but not plenty. Whatever credit John Coffin may have acquired

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\* See *Journal of an Officer*, relating to the principal occurrences during the siege of Quebec, 1775-6. London: Simpkin & Co., Stationers' Court. 1824. (A copy of which is in the Library of the House of Commons at Ottawa.)

during the siege, he got nothing else. He had been ruined by friend and foe alike. His establishment at the *Près-de-Ville* had been wrecked. His ships at sea had been captured. He applied for redress, and got none. In those days, and at a long distance, the Imperial Government was, beyond all peradventure, mean and partial. To save the British treasury, they had recourse to subtrefuges unbecoming in a huckster. References, which took months to send, were referred for consideration and re-referred for re-consideration. Some men were put off on the most frivolous pretences, and put off to the end of their lives. Other men—such as Christie, who got £3,000; Caldwell, who got £2,000; and Grant, who got £1,500—had friends at court; but Coffin had no other friend but Carleton, who did not stand well with the ministry of the day,—whose advocacy would “hutt rather than serve,”—and, therefore, got nothing. His claims, though proved and admitted, were never paid.

Years passed on without remedy and without hope, until, in 1796, when, after having exhausted all expedients and applications to obtain pecuniary compensation, he was, in consequence of a proclamation of Sir Alured Clarke in 1792, induced to ask for an equivalent for his losses, in the shape of a grant of land. His application was favourably received. But delay is the chronic distemper of governments. They all take it in turn, only the older they grow the worse it becomes. Thus, six years elapsed before he got an answer. It came at last, in 1802, and in the following shape:

“Extract of a Report of a Committee of the whole Council, dated the 3rd of March, 1802, on the petition of John Coffin, of Quebec, Esquire,—approved by His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, 15th March, 1802:

“The Committee give full credit to Mr. Coffin's representation, in this petition, of his losses and sufferings at Boston previous to his arrival in this Province, in the year 1775, resulting from his approved loyalty and attachment to his Majesty's person and government, and of his

“losses in this Province since his arrival here, occasioned by the invasion of it by the rebels, and the consequent blockade of this city for the whole of the winter of the year 1775-6. Some of the members of the Committee have an intimate knowledge of the facts (so honourable to Mr. Coffin) that are mentioned in the certificate annexed to his petition. But, independent of Mr. Coffin’s well-founded pretensions to every reasonable consideration on the part of the Government, on account of his losses and services, the Committee, from their personal knowledge of his merits, can have no hesitation in recommending that he may obtain the prayer of his memorial;—that is to say, that he and his wife and their nine children may have one thousand two hundred acres each of her Majesty’s waste lands, to be located in any one of the townships set apart for loyalists and other deserving subjects.

“[*Certified,*] (Signed,) “H. W. RYLAND.”

This Order-in-Council confirms and crowns the story of John Coffin’s services and disappointments; for it did *not* give him the land. It had been ordered, but not located; and hence arose a new difficulty. At this time a conflict of jurisdiction was rife in relation to grants of land. The Imperial Government claimed to have the disposal of all the wild lands in Canada. The Provincial Government demurred to these exclusive pretensions: they claimed the right to deal with their own. Hence came interminable minutes and references, reports and counter-reports, until, between the two battle-dores, the plaintive applicant was shuttlecocked and shaken into utter bewilderment, to find himself, on awakening to consciousness, deep down in the bottomless pit of the Colonial-office.

Thus it fared with John Coffin. In 1796 he had asked to be allotted land in Wakefield. In 1802 he petitioned for land in Ely. In 1803 he asked for land in the township of Kildare. In 1806, during the administration of the Honorable Thomas Dunn, he once more prayed for a free-grant of land wherever he could get it. But all his landscapes, put them in any light, proved to be but dissolving-views. In 1816; ten years after, there was received from “Henry Goulbourn,” dated “Downing-street, 17th December,” the ultimatum of Lord

Bathurst, to the effect that "he did not feel himself at liberty to make a grant to Mr. Coffin's family upon any other terms than those prescribed by the present regulations." In the meantime John Coffin had gone to his grave, without compensation in land or money; and as one of the "regulations" above referred to involved the payment of a fee of five pounds on letters-patent for every lot of two hundred acres, the family felt, probably, looking at the then value of wild lands per acre, that "*le jeu ne valait pas la chandelle.*"

Independent of this, the family of Mr. Coffin was at this time scattered the wide-world over—the sons in the army or navy; the daughters, with one exception, married to officers in these services. No opportunity had offered for concerted action. The whole subject appears to have been thought of lightly, if at all, and to have been forgotten.

And now, with your leave, I will give you the sequel. In 1847 the papers above recited came into my hands, and remained unheeded, as of little worth. In 1860, thirteen years after, the Public Lands Act (2 Victoria, cap. 23,) was passed, which authorized the allotment of lands, or the substitution of scrip, in all cases where sanctioned by previous order-in-council, and, very properly, without limitation as to time. On the strength of the order-in-council above cited, and of the fact that I was the only surviving son of my father, one of the children of John Coffin, I claimed twelve hundred acres of land. To gain my point, I assumed at once the vocation of a *teredo*. I became a bore. I began by boring good Sir Edmund Head, who took it very gently; then, for seven years, in every successive year, I bored the Crown-Lands department, until there arose a commissioner of large mind and superior aptitude for business, and who, therefore, never allowed himself to be bored. He grasped the point of the question at once, admitted the righteousness of the claim, and awarded me land-scrip for twelve hundred

acres of land,—recognizing, thereby, the validity of an order-in-council passed fifty-two years before in reward of services only practically compensated after an interval of *ninety-seven years!*

I think it a very good thing to have had a grandfather; but it is a better to be grateful to his memory; and I have felt it to be my duty—profiting by the opportunity afforded by your excellent paper (an opportunity, by the way, which had not before offered)—to put on record a few facts relating to his life, most honorable to him, and which have been very beneficial to me.

OTTAWA, 2nd November, 1872.