

THE STORY OF THREE OLYMPIC PEAKS

The countless thousands who, from year to year, admire the three prominent peaks at the southeastern end of the Olympic Range would find themselves gazing at the wonderfully beautiful picture with even keener rapture if they but knew a part of the history interlocked with the names these peaks bear—Ellinor, The Brothers, and Constance. There are probably no other geographical features in the Pacific Northwest whose names involve a richer history. A beautiful and tender modesty screened the identity of the personalities behind those names, while a single one of the four people survived. The last of the four was gathered to her fathers two years ago, and it is now possible to learn who were the people whose names have become so well known as geographical terms.

In the first place let us see when and by whom the names were given to the mountains. The most accessible source is the *Pacific Coast Pilot*, which says: "When a vessel is going northward, and is clear of Vashon Island, the Jupiter Hills show over Blake Island, with Mount Constance to the southward."¹ A little further on the same work says: "Behind the Jupiter Hills is Mount Constance, 7777 feet elevation; The Brothers, 6920 feet, and Mount Ellinor, estimated at 6500 feet. These great masses, rising so abruptly in wild, rocky peaks, are marks all over Admiralty Inlet and Puget Sound, but seem to overhang the main part of [Hood] Canal. The Brothers, a double peak, is less than seven miles from the water."² Similar information is given in the reports made at the time of the surveys.³ The author of the reports and of the *Pacific Coast Pilot* was the same man and he was appealed to for information about the persons honored by those names. In a long correspondence, covering many points of historical geography, the nearest that Professor Davidson would come to giving the facts about the names of the mountains was this: "I may add that while in charge of the survey in that region I had command of the U. S. Coast Survey Brig 'R. H. Fauntleroy,' and that the names refer to his family."⁴

In the same letter he says: "In 1853-57 I conducted the triangulations from Point Roberts to Nisqually. About 1856 I observed from sev-

¹*Pacific Coast Pilot* by George Davidson, Assistant United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, fourth edition, Washington, 1889. P. 612.

²*Ibid.*, p. 629.

³Annual Report of the Superintendent of the United States Coast Survey for 1857, p. 115.

⁴Letter from Professor George Davidson dated at San Francisco, February 28, 1903.

eral stations to determine the position and elevation of prominent peaks, with these results and names given by me to them: Mount Constance, 7777 feet from Point Hudson and 7794 from Point Wells; I adopted 7777 feet merely because it would readily be recalled; The Brothers, S. W. Brother, 6920 feet; Mount Ellinor, 6312 feet.”

In the same series of surveys, Fauntleroy Cove was named in honor of the little brig. The record reads: “This slight indentation on the east side of the sound is between Point Williams on the north and Brace Point on the south; the distance apart of these points is a little over three-fourths of a mile, and the shore recedes a quarter of a mile to the eastward. The immediate shore is low, except under Point Williams, where the bluff reaches the water. We found good anchorage here in ten and twelve fathoms of water; but when on the range of the two points the depth increases and the bottom drops away suddenly outside. Fresh water is easily obtained in the vicinity. We named this cove in 1857.”⁵

Anchored in that cove the young geographer looked across the water to the beautiful mountains he had named and his heart throbbed with joy. We feel sure of that now, for his recent death sent us looking up his own personal history and it was learned that in one year after he had named the cove he was married to Ellinor Fauntleroy.⁶ In a comparative wilderness he had bestowed upon geographical features the names of his sweetheart, her sister, her two brothers and her father. That sweetheart kept his home bright for almost half a century, preceding him to the grave in 1907.

Professor Davidson died on December 1, 1911, since which time the correspondence has been carried on with his surviving daughter, who bears the name of her mother and the mountain—Ellinor. She says the Survey Brig “was named after my grandfather, Robert Henry Fauntleroy, who was an officer of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, and under whom my father acted as aid when starting on his career. He was of old Virginia stock and a man of considerable ability in many lines (mathematical, engineering, musical, inventive) apart from his profession. He married the daughter of Robert Owen, the socialist and philanthropist.”⁷

Here she has introduced a wide vista for those who would know all that the names of those mountains suggest. Most scholars know something of the social reform work of Robert Owen at New Lanark, Scotland, and at New Harmony, Indiana. This last was referred to as “a success-

⁵Pacific Coast Pilot, p. 613.

⁶Who's Who in America for 1912-1913, p. 519.

⁷Letter from Ellinor Campbell Davidson, dated at San Francisco, June 11, 1913.

ful failure" by Professor Barnes of Stanford University. Besides these practical efforts to benefit the condition of his fellow men, he wrote many books, all with the same humanitarian bent. He was aided by his son, Robert Dale Owen, who achieved a remarkable career before his death in 1877. While a member of Congress he introduced a joint resolution on the Oregon question that facilitated the settlement of the boundary in the treaty of 1846. He joined forces with John Quincy Adams in securing the legislation to establish the Smithsonian Institution. He was very much in favor of the emancipation of the slaves and early in the Civil War he wrote a letter to President Lincoln on that subject. Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase says the Owen letter "had more effect in deciding the president to make his proclamation than all the other communications combined."⁸ Robert Dale Owen also wrote many books. His speeches, especially on the Oregon question, had a wide circulation. Two brothers, David Dale Owen and Richard Owen, became famous as early American geologists. It was into this family of remarkable talents that Robert Henry Fauntleroy married.

On the death of Lieutenant Fauntleroy his widow took the four children to Germany to complete their education. The two boys, Arthur and Edward, "The Brothers," both died unmarried. Arthur became a civil engineer. He died in 1884 at the age of forty. Edward came to the Pacific Coast as an aid to Mr. Davidson. He died in 1861, a little under twenty years of age. As already stated, Ellinor was married to Mr. Davidson in 1858. Miss Davidson writes:

"My mother was always more or less of an invalid, but had the spirit and spiritual insight for a poet, a finely tuned mind, impartial in an abstract sort of way and leaning to the metaphysical. Her knowledge of life and the world made her inclusive rather than exclusive—an universalist in religion and deed. I like to think of her as always smiling, gracious, gentle in her judgments and holding herself in firm control, radiating the finer things we look up to and take inspiration from. Hers was essentially a private life, while Mrs. Runcie's was a public one."⁹

The Mrs. Runcie referred to was Constance Fauntleroy. She was born in Indianapolis, January 15, 1836, and died at Winnaka, Illinois, May 17, 1911. Her long life was spent wholly in the Middle West of the United States, except the five years of schooling in Germany. On April 9, 1861, she was married to James Runcie, D. D., a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church. She had a brilliant career, but will probably be remembered longest as having organized the first permanent

⁸Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography, IV., p. 616.

⁹Letter from Miss Davidson, June, 1913.

woman's club in America. In 1859 Constance Fauntleroy organized the Minerva Club at New Harmony, Indiana. This was nine years before the famous Sorosis Club was organized in New York. A delegation from a late biennial meeting of the General Federation of Women's Clubs went to New Harmony to do honor to her old home. Mrs. Runcie was further recognized by being chosen an Honorary Vice President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. The Federation of Women's Clubs of the State of Washington might well perpetuate the honoring of this notable pioneer in their work by searching out ways to make known the beauties of Mount Constance.

Mrs. Constance Fountreloy Runcie also organized the Bronté Club of Madison, Indiana, in 1867, and the Runcie Club of St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1894. Of the last she was made "perpetual president." She was the author of a number of books in prose and verse. Her poems—"Anselmo, the Priest," and "Zaira—A Tale of Siberia"—have been given frequently from various platforms. She was also a composer of note, some of her principal works being the opera "Incognito," the cantata "We Have Sinned Unto Death," and many songs, such as "Take My Soul, O Lord," "Invocation to Love," and violin and piano solos. Everyone who admires Mount Constance should be pleased to know that it bears the name of a woman of splendid talent who gave to her fellows a long life of useful service.

The man who conferred those interesting names on the three Olympic peaks had a wonderful career of valuable service, mostly on the Pacific Coast. George Davidson was born in England in 1825. He came to the United States in 1832 and graduated from the Central High School of Philadelphia in 1845. Before his retirement from active work he had been made a member of many learned societies throughout the world. He started his career as Secretary to Professor A. D. Bache, Superintendent of the United States Coast Survey in 1845. His activity in that branch of service, in geodesy, field, and astronomical work, continued in the Eastern States until 1850, when he was transferred to the Pacific Coast. On this coast he was active for a period of forty-five years and was in full charge of the work from 1868 to 1895. The University of California recognized his ability by making him Honorary Professor of Geodesy and Astronomy in 1870. The same university created for him the Chair of Geography in 1898. He also served that institution as a Regent from 1877 to 1884. When Roald Amundsen visited San Francisco after his discovery of the Northwest Passage, the first man he asked for was Professor Davidson. Seafaring men held him in high esteem, as

did all others who knew of his character and his great record of achievement.

His greatest book, the *Pacific Coast Pilot*, is one of his best monuments. Here is how he tells about writing it: "The first edition of the *Directory of the Pacific Coast of the United States* was undertaken while I had command of the United States Survey Brig 'R. H. Fauntleroy' during the years 1854-'58. It was written wholly outside of official hours and official duties, and part of it was first published in one of the daily journals of San Francisco."¹⁰

The three interesting peaks are in full view of the City of Seattle. Moreover, the city has expanded until it includes Fauntleroy Cove and street cars run regularly to Fauntleroy Park. Who can measure the full value to be inherited by generations of citizens who may stand on the shore of that cove and, while enjoying the picture of the sun setting behind the distant peaks, recall the charm of the names—Constance, Ellinor, and The Brothers?

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¹⁰*Pacific Coast Pilot*, p. 7.