

DOCUMENTS

Captain William Hale Fauntleroy, a Neglected Character in Northwestern History

It is always a pleasure, as well as a real service to the cause of history, to rescue from forgetfulness some worth-while personality or to make available some neglected document. In this case both those objects are attempted.

Many writers have used as theme the arbitration of the long dispute between British and American authorities about the possession of the San Juan Islands. They have mentioned the United States Propeller *Massachusetts* and her use as army headquarters. General Winfield Scott, then chief officer of the United States Army, sought to temporarily adjust the trouble by sending messengers from Port Townsend and "False Dungeness Harbor" (once a name applied to Port Angeles) to Governor James Douglas of Vancouver Island. These messengers bore General Scott's proposal that the British land on San Juan Island a force of soldiers equal to the number of American troops to be retained on the same island. The proposal was finally accepted and the joint military occupation of the island continued until the arbitrator, Emperor William I of Germany, rendered his decision on October 21, 1872, giving the group of islands to the United States.

Although the time was brief, about two weeks in October and November, 1859, the little United States Propeller *Massachusetts* attained great dignity as "Headquarters of the Army." The captain of the boat in that crisis of her history ought to be remembered and yet he is probably not mentioned in a single one of the many accounts of the stirring international events in which the steamer had an important part. The captain's name was William Hale Fauntleroy.

In trying to understand why Captain Fauntleroy should have been so completely overlooked in the annals of the Northwest, several thoughts have suggested themselves. The *Massachusetts* arrived in Puget Sound on February 24, 1856. Her commander, Captain Samuel Swartwout assumed direction of naval matters here, relieving the *Active*, which had been helping to guard the defense works at Seattle during the Indian war troubles. *Northern* Indians proving troublesome, the *Massachusetts*, still in command of Captain Swartwout, severely punished those Indians on October

21, 1856, in what has since been called the Battle of Port Gamble. The surviving Indians were taken to Victoria on the *Massachusetts*. Some of them returned for revenge and on August 11, 1857, they killed Colonel Isaac N. Ebey at his home on Whidbey Island and carried away his head as a trophy. These events probably linked the name of Captain Swartwout to the *Massachusetts* in the minds of pioneers to the exclusion of the names of subsequent commanders of the steamer. Furthermore, the name of General Scott would overshadow all others in the international negotiations carried on from the deck of the *Massachusetts* in 1859.

Revival of interest in Captain Fauntleroy's career came about indirectly. His son, while visiting in Seattle, noticed that the new name of Lincoln Park seemed to be supplanting that of Fauntleroy Cove. He sought information as to why this was being done and incidentally asked if Fauntleroy Cove had been named for his father who had commanded the *Massachusetts* during the San Juan Island negotiations of 1859. He was promptly informed that Fauntleroy Cove had been named in 1857 by Captain George Davidson in honor of the United States Survey Brig *R. H. Fauntleroy*, in which he was at the time surveying the waters of Puget Sound for the United States Coast Survey. He had named the brig in honor of Robert Henry Fauntleroy and during the surveys of that summer he also named three Olympic peaks—Constance, Ellinor and The Brothers—after other members of the Fauntleroy family. In 1858, Captain Davidson went to New Harmony, Indiana, and was married to his sweetheart, Ellinor Fauntleroy, for whom he had named one of the mountains.

After supplying such information to the son of Captain William Hale Fauntleroy, it was suggested that it might be found that the two Fauntleroy families were related to each other. In the meantime, he was requested to lead the way toward further information about his father. This he very cheerfully did.

The family had cherished two official letters expressing gratitude for the quality of service rendered by Captain Fauntleroy. Copies of these letters were supplied. The first one on behalf of General Winfield Scott is as follows:

Head Quarters of the Army,
U. S. Propeller Massachusetts,
Novr 8, 1859

Sir:

In the period of more than two weeks, during which your ship has been employed under the personal orders of Lieutenant General Scott and occupied by himself and staff the General has had so much occasion to admire the energy and good order displayed in the conduct of the ship, and to be grateful for personal courtesy and kindness, on the part of yourself and officers, that he begs to tender to yourself and all, on the eve of separating, his cordial thanks and best wishes. In these expressions the officers of his staff heartily unite.

I am, Sir,

Very Truly & Respectfully,

Yr Obt Servt,

George W Lay,

Lt. Col. A. D. C.

To

Capt. W. H. Fauntleroy,

Comg U. S. Propeller Massachusetts.

The second letter, also full of praise, on behalf of Brigadier General William Selby Harney, is as follows:

Head Quarters, Department of Oregon,

Fort Vancouver, W. T.

December 16th, 1859.

Captain:

Your communication of the 19th ultimo, from Steilacoone, was duly received, and in accordance with your suggestions the General commanding has given the necessary orders for the repairs of the Steam ship Massachusetts in San Francisco.

I am desired by the General commanding, to express to you his satisfaction in noticing the able manner in which you have commanded the Massachusetts during the time she has been under your charge in Puget Sound; and it is with pleasure, I communicate to you the great confidence the General entertains in your qualifications as a commander on this coast.

During the detention of the Massachusetts at San Francisco, for repair, the General would be pleased to know the indulgence you ask, has been extended, the interests of the Service at the time permitting.

I am, Captain, very respectfully

Your Ob't. Servt.

A. Pleasanton,

Cap't. 2nd (or U S) Dragoons,

A. Ass't. Adj't. Gen'l.

Captain William H. Fauntleroy
Commanding
U. S. Propeller Massachusetts
Fort Vancouver
W. T.

In 1868, the United States Government published a book entitled *The Northwest Boundary*. It contains a large number of orders, letters and other documents. The two letters above reproduced do not appear in the volume but on page 203, in a letter from the office of General Scott to that of General Harney, under date of November 9, 1859, appears the following paragraph:

"Captain Fauntleroy represents that the Massachusetts leaks badly, and that repairs are necessary, which can better be done at San Francisco this winter. The General-in-chief concurs, but gives no orders on the subject."

The above documents thoroughly establish the fact that Captain William Hale Fauntleroy commanded the United States Propeller *Massachusetts* during those important two weeks in 1859. One omission is regretted. The pioneers apparently forgot the name of the captain, but they retained in memory, perhaps only as a tradition, a very courteous service rendered. General Scott was a man of great bulk, weighing well over three hundred pounds. The state-rooms on the *Massachusetts* were small. The tradition is that the captain removed a partition, throwing two of the rooms into one for the use of General Scott. It is probably too much to expect such a human-interest fact to find its way into public documents.

The son of Captain Fauntleroy spells his name differently by the use of more capitals. It may be that he is harking back to the older European form. His address is Joseph Faunt Le Roy, 545 Arlington Avenue, Berkeley, California. His first inquiry was dated July 27, 1926. The lapse of a year is accounted for by a series of events, which, in turn, will explain some of the difficulties encountered when a piece of research like this is undertaken. In his first letter, Mr. Faunt Le Roy said:

"My father, William Hale Fauntleroy, was appointed a Quartermaster by the Governor of Oregon and served during the campaign against the Walla Walla Indians. He was also in command of the *Massachusetts*, which General Winfield Scott used as his headquarters at the time of the dispute with the British over San Juan Islands. An account of these operations is con-

tained in an autobiography of the members of the Territorial Pioneers of California of which society my father was a life member and a director."

The problem seemed a very simple one. Request was promptly sent that photostat copies be made of all the pages of the autobiography. Right there Mr. Faunt Le Roy encountered difficulties. The precious old manuscript book was no longer in its accustomed place. With others it had been sold. He finally found that the purchaser, Mr. Cowen of Los Angeles, had sold it to Mr. Howell of San Francisco who, in turn, had sold it to Edward Eberstadt of New York. Mr. Eberstadt sold the book at auction in the Anderson Galleries, New York, in November, 1922. He was kind enough to furnish the information that the final purchaser was the Huntington Library.

During these searches it was found that the book was known as the Burch Manuscript, two hundred pages being devoted to Burch's record of crossing the plains. The Fauntleroy writings, in a fine bold hand, occupied but nineteen pages and were evidently esteemed lightly by the several purchasers.

The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery is rapidly entering into popular appreciation as one of the great institutions of America. It is usually thought of as being in Los Angeles but its mail address is San Gabriel, California. The officers in charge proved perfectly cooperative. They caused photostat copies to be made at a reasonable cost and also gave permission to have the manuscript published by the *Washington Historical Quarterly*.

This autobiography consists of five unconnected segments, each one signed by its writer. Only one of the segments relates directly to the San Juan Island dispute. The last paragraph in this segment gives the nearest clue as to the date of the writing. Since the decision of Emperor William as arbitrator was given on October 21, 1872, Captain Fauntleroy must have written his autobiography sometime after that date.

The entire autobiography is here reproduced. In addition to the San Juan Island portion there is found records of participating in the Mexican War, Coast Surveys and a campaign against the Walla Walla Indians. All will help to restore the record of one deserving remembrance in the annals of the Pacific Northwest.

Following are the segments of the autobiography as written and signed:

Autobiography of Captain Fauntleroy

General remarks in relation to the cruise of the U. S. Brig Lawrence, in the Gulf of Mexico, during the years of 1844-45 and 46, and during the early days of the Mexican War.

The Lawrence, a 16 gun Brig, Commander W. H. Gardner, sailed from Norfolk Va. about the 4th of April 1844. Subsequent events showed that she was intended as a dispatch vessel between Pensacola and Vera Cruz. On account of the delicate relations between the United States and Mexico at this period, the U. S. Government deemed it advisable to refrain from any appearance of Menace, and had as a general thing withdrawn all Naval vessels from the Gulf. The Lawrence was generally engaged in carrying dispatches and conveying Ministers. The leisure time was mostly spent in the harbor of Pensacola.

When Genl Taylor was collecting his forces at Corpus Christi, we found ourselves off that harbor, awaiting his movements, when he marched across the Nueces toward the Mexican frontier, he changed his base of supplies to Brazos Santiago, and the Lawrence convoyed about 65 sail of Schooners laden with supplies from the former point to the latter. The officers & crew of the Lawrence were already engaged in piloting and delivering these vessels inside of the latter harbor in safety. When performed, a force of armed sailors was posted on each vessel under charge of Midshipman W. H. Fauntleroy to repel any attack which might be made by Mexicans. In two or three days the Depot was established at Point Gabel, a promintory point jutting into the bay of Brazos on the south side, some 5 miles further up the bay, where the vessels made their way and discharged their freight. The force of sailors was then increased by a squad of Marines making a force of about 500 men, which was ordered to report to Major Monroe commanding the Post, and thereafter became a part of the garrison, they were engaged in intrenching about a month, which was completed. About 3 days prior to the battle of Pallo Alto & Resacca de la Palma the U. S. Squadron, under Commodore Connor anchored off the Brazos, when the force from the Lawrence was withdrawn, and a large force from the Squadron thrown on shore, probably in the event of disaster to the forces of Genl Taylor. The Lawrence was then ordered to blockade the mouth of the Rio Grande, which was officially performed for more than a hundred days. After the fall of Matamoras she was ordered to New York where she arrived in

Sept 1846, after a cruise of two and a half years.

The innumerable incidents of the cruise would be of no public use.

W. H. Fauntleroy

[*San Juan Island Dispute*]

Remarks concerning the cruise of the U. S. Steamship Massachusetts, in Puget Sound, during the difficulties in relation to the occupancy of San Juan Island, in the year 1859-60.

The Massachusetts was a Propeller Barque rigged, of about 900 tons, carrying 8 guns and 70 men. She was turned over from the Navy to the Quarter Masters Dept in May 1859. I was appointed to the command, her duties were incidental—transport and Military.

After fitting out at the Mare Island Navy Yard, we proceeded to San Francisco, where we recd a cargo consisting of Gun equipments, Munitions of war, and Military supplies. And sailed for Fort Vancouver W. T. in June, where we arrived in safety. After discharging we sailed for Puget Sound during the first days in July, having on board Brig. Genl Harney Comdg that Department, together with his staff. We arrived promptly at Port Townsend and anchored at the Military Post on that Bay. After a few hours we sailed for Fort Bellingham. After communicating with that Post, and coaling ship we sailed for Fort Steilacom and then for Olympia. Genl Harney then left the ship and proceeded to Fort VanCouver overland, leaving the ship under waiting orders. In a few days I recd dispatches to be opened after passing Port Townsend. I found them to be, to proceed to Fort Bellingham, to report to Capt. Chas.* E. Pickett, to break up that Post, and to land the company on San Juan Island; and to cooperate with Capt. Pickett, which was promptly done with great dispatch. When this movement became known to the British Authorities at Victoria it created a great commotion, and English men of war were speedily dispatched to the Island, and the Royal Marines from the Provinces of VanCouver Island and British Columbia were immediately concentrated at the Island. The English force soon consisted of a Frigate, sloop of war, two Gun boats and about 500 Royal Marines, demanding occupation of the Island, which Capt. Pickett refused. After about two days of diplomacy the English informed us that they intended to land, and was promptly told that if they did the responsibility would rest on them. I then visited and parted with Capt. Pickett for as we thought the last time. I repaired on board and cleared

the ship for action—with springs in the cables, and we remained in this position three days about—night and day, awaiting some movement on the part of the English which would bring on a conflict.

Our anxiety was relieved by the timely arrival of a British Admiral from Chili, to relieve the one who had been in command. This officer could not see the necessity of precipitating a war between England & America without the concurrence of his Government, and so there was a cessation.

Genl Scott was sent out by the U. S. Government, arrived in Oct. made his Headquarters on board of the Massachusetts, settled the difficulties by Joint occupation, and left the ship about the 10th of Nov 1859 to return to Washington.

Emperor William of Germany was named by the two Governments as arbitrator, who decided in our favor.

W. H. Fautleroy.

The Battle of Walla-Walla 1855.

After several years of arduous duties on the Coast of California, Oregon and Washington Territories, in command of Steam Vessels in the Mercantile trade, from 1849 to 1855, being unwell and desiring a trip to the interior, I visited the Dalles in Oregon. While there Indian disturbances broke out, and a company of U. S. troops had a fight with the Yakima Indians which resulted disastrously. There was then a general concentration of the Indian tribes—the Yakimas, some Klikitats, the John Days, Umatillas, Warm Springs, Snakes, some Nès Perces, and all the disaffected from every quarter. Governor Curry of Oregon equipped and sent into the field the First Regiment of Oregon Mounted Volunteers, under the command of Col Nesmith, with Lieut Col. Kelly. Col Nesmith marched from the Dalles into the Yakima Country with one Column, And Lt Col Kelly into the Walla-Walla country with the other Column, about the first of November 1855. I was appointed by the Governor Asst Quarter-Master, and Commissary of the Regiment, in consequence of the Regimental Quarter-Master taking post at the Dalles.

We marched to the Umatilla river, where we constructed a stockade, where the entire force remained until about the 12th day of December, making preparations for the expected conflict, when it was ascertained with some certainty that the Indians were in force in the vicinity of Walla-Walla valley. We commenced our March about dusk with a force of about 325 men.

We crossed the Walla-Walla river next day, and encamped on the main road up the Walla-Walla. The scouts reported Indians during the day, and we sent 100 men to the northward, about night we recd orders for a reinforcement, but just as it was about to depart the force of 100 returned bringing as prisoners the Yakima* Chief "Peu-Peu-Mox-Mox," and four other Indians, one lad, who after being in camp an hour under guard, made an attempt to escape, but was caught. At daylight, I think of the 14th, Indians appeared on the hills across the Touchet, and the order was given to arms, and then commenced a running fight for three miles towards the East. The Indians made a stand, on the North of the Walla-Walla river, about one half mile below the old Whitman house, in large force, and our forces being slow getting into the field, the few troops in advance suffered considerably for a short time. Four Captains and one first Lieutenant being killed or wounded before the battle had fairly commenced. When the prisoners arrived under guard, and the troops were generally engaged, the guard or others shot the prisoners, a most atrocious act. I had been in the early part of the fight, but when I heard of this deed, and the fire having slakened in my vicinity, I rode to the rear to resupply the troops with ammunition. It was then I saw these dead prisoners, lying on the ground—shot to death.

We fought more or less, on the same ground, for three days, when we received a reinforcement of 200 men. When this came the Indians broke, having previously started their women & children, for the crossing of Snake river. We followed, but it came on to snow, and we encamped that night at Brook & Bumfords, and next day we returned to the battle field. The Indians escaped us. We lost in killed and wounded about 27, the Indian loss was supposed to be greater. The troops remained in the field until the following spring, when they were disbanded.

W. H. Fauntleroy.

Memorandum.

As Captain, I sailed several sailing vessels from San Francisco Southward in 1849-50-51. In 1852-53 the Steamer *Multi-nomah* in the Oregon waters. In 1853 I sailed under Capt. Jas. M. Alden in the Steamer *Active*, and participated in the U. S. Survey of the harbors on the North Coast of California, and in Oregon & Washington Territories. In 1854-55 commanded the Steamship *America* in the North & South coast of Cala, also the Steamers *Sea Bird* and *Goliah*. In 1856 Captain of the *Sea Bird*

6 months on the South Coast in the service of the "Cal. Nav. Co." In 1857 Capt of the Commodore—afterwards the "Bro Jonathan" 8 months to C. City and Portland. In 1858 Capt of the Santa Cruz chartered by me, Also in 1855 the City of Norfolk chartered by myself. In 1859 Capt of the Steam Ship Massachusetts in Cal., Oregon & Wash Territory waters,—over two years. in 1866 Capt of the Steam Ship Del Norte on the North Coast 8 months. In 1859 Agent for the Surprise on the South Coast. After retiring from the command of the Massachusetts in 1861, I went to my residence in Humboldt County, Cala, where I remained with but little intermission until 1875 when I lived in Oakland nearly a year. In 1877 I found employment in Del Norte Co. Cala. And in 1880 went to San Luis Obispo Cal. with the view of finding a permanent home—feeling the necessity of retirement on acct of approaching old age, and health very far from being satisfactory.

I sailed in the Line of Battle Ship Delaware in 1840-41-42-43 and 44, on the coast of Brazil and in the Mediterranean Sea. In the U. S. Brig Lawrence, U. S. Steam Frigate Mississippi, and U. S. Store Ship Electra—in the Gulf of Mexico, in 1844-45-46-47 and 48—during the Mexican War.

W. H. Fauntleroy

"Territorial Pioneers of California"
Gentlemen.

I have witnessed with much concern the efforts and throes of this Association, since I became a member of it, and therefore beg to dedicate to you some suggestions, with the earnest hope that they may be found beneficial, in your efforts to make this Society successful and perpetual.

Quoting from the constitution, Article 1, Section 1. The objects of the Association are declared to be "Social, benevolent, Historical, Literary and Scientific", and to "form a more perfect union of the Pioneers of California in the bonds of friendship, and to cultivate social intercourse between them."

I believe that it is usual and necessary to legislate a constitution into effect. have you done so? have you done so in regard to any one of the declared objects? I think that you have not. You are literally at sea without a compass, I may say that you are overboard without an object to swim for. Such a position brings utter disconsolation and hopelessness. How different if by wise legislation you place an object and incentive before you.

I will now show you how easy it is to place this object before

you, and then I will draw you another picture.

We will now take up the above mentioned objects in their order as near as possible.

Social, Members when in this hall should scrupulously refrain from the use of word or manner calculated to offend any one, and thus preserve their own self respect. Kind and social conversation will enhance the dignity of this society, while the success, we hope for, of its noble objects, will afford us great satisfaction.

Benevolent, This is the greatest object of all. Have you done anything? not one thing! but you have done the contrary. You struck from your roll near two hundred members. for what? because they did not pay their dues. Do you call that benevolence? I call it uncharitableness. Have you provided for the possible sick or dead? No! In fact you have done nothing in this direction.

Historical, Literary and Scientific. Have you done anything in this direction? No! nothing of great value; but these objects will be greatly fostered by success in the others.

Now I will state how these objects can be at once obtained. Appoint committees on these objects, Pass the necessary resolutions to carry them into effect. Pass a resolution to reinstate all members heretofore stricken from the roll of membership. Appoint a committee to care for the sick and the dead. Appoint a member, to attend funerals, for a stated time. Pass a law that when a member dies leaving a widow and children in destitute circumstances, or partially so, that this Society will pay to such widow and children, or either, the sum of Five hundred dollars, or as much thereof as will make up that sum together with the amount that they may be possessed of—other than their household furniture of the value of Two hundred dollars—to be determined by a Committee appointed for that purpose. The said amount to be apportioned among the members and collected with the first dues, if said sum be not in the Treasury at the time of said death. Pass a resolution to collect dues quarterly in advance. After the secretary is paid, also office rent, fires, papers, servant to clean the room daily, and such other small things as the directors may order. Then place the ballance in a sinking fund. Those you call paying members now, say about 200, will pay in about \$1200. each year. The expenses named above will be about \$800, leaving you at the end of the year \$400. for the sinking fund. And none of this must be paid for celebrations or for

socials, those objects can both be obtained by other means. Rescind the resolution giving the Secretary 25% of collections, I think that legislation is not conducive to our interests, but in any event it would not conform to the order of things herein described, because the receipts from the restored members, and from all new members who would surely and speedily come to us, would be greatly enhanced, and the prosperity of this society would be assured. How gratifying this would be to us. Pioneers! Men who have been trained in an age of great deeds, with intelligence quickened by unusual events and adversities, looked up to by our children, and by all people, to show example, to conceive and to execute. With the very greatest desire for the success of this Society, and for the welfare and happiness of each and every person connected therewith,

I am, Very Respectfully,
Your Obt Sevt.

Wm. H. Fauntleroy.