

CHAPTER IILOG OF THE CASTALIA

On June 16, 1948, at the colorful Celebration marking the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the Scotch Colony at Kincardine in Victoria County, New Brunswick, a small souvenir book was distributed to those present. Essentially a portion of the report on immigration to New Brunswick in 1873, made by the Hon. B.R. Stevenson, Surveyor General, to the Honorable Samuel L. Tilly CB, Lt. Gov. of the Province of New Brunswick, it was of great interest to those present who for the most part were direct descendants of those who came over from Glasgow on the Anchor Line steamer, the Castalia, in 1873, to form the new colony in the new land.

Describing the embarkation by special train of the Caledonia Railway from Aberdeen to Glasgow, during which the colonists were gathered from their various homes en route, and telling of the sailing of the Castalia from the Firth of Clyde near Glasgow on April 26, 1873, and her 14 days at sea until her arrival at St. John on the morning of May 10, the booklet, which contained a complete passenger list, was of keen interest to those attending the 75th celebration of the founding of the colony, as well as to many others connected with Fraser Companies, today. For, numbered among the passenger list names were such familiar names as Fraser, Matheson, Davidson, Dunn, Forbes, Dunbar, Logan, Howie, McPhail, Tennant, Paterson, Cocker and others that strike a personal chord since so many in the Fraser Companies today are closely related to those men, women and children who came on The Castalia and formed the Kincardine settlement. From this nucleus, too, have come men and women who have taken high and honorable places in the present day life of other parts of the continent... men great in affairs and mighty in industrial life, as well as outstanding members of various learned professions both in the United

States and Canada, many gone far from New Brunswick to carry on their activities in proud keeping with the traditions of those original 587 men, women and children who came to the new land from old Scotia, who as Henry Van Dyke said "forsake the beaten track and reach out into the new strange uncertain cause for the sake of possessing a new world."

Today, in the Board Room of Fraser Companies in Edmundston, are six recently completed portraits by the renowned Canadian portrait painter Sherriff Scott. They were developed from faded family photographs and worn snapshots furnished by the various members of the family ^{lead} to Donald Fraser, grandson of the founder, who worked with the artist in recreating a likeness of these six men.

Over the fireplace, dominating the room is the portrait of Donald Fraser. His is a strong, kindly, serious face, yet one softened by the innate sense of humor and humaneness to which many stories of those who knew him, still testify. His portrait is flanked on either side of the room by five other portraits, - those of his two sons, Archibald and Donald Junior, both of whom carried on the activities of the company he founded until their death,... and the portraits of the two brothers, William and Thomas Matheson, and Andrew Brebner, - three other men who contributed so materially to the building of what became the cornerstone of today's many faceted companies known as Fraser Companies Limited and subsidiaries. Of these men, only Thomas Matheson is today living... to tell of those colorful and strenuous early days when the history of the companies was being made. Fortunately, his is the native ability to tell a story well, remembering both significant and simple happenings, related to the early days in New Brunswick and the Province of Quebec where the company got its start. This faculty for remembering has contributed materially to the preservation of the inspiring story for those who today follow after in a company which still preserves the concept on which those men built their early business success... that of a man's word being as good as his bond.

Inasmuch as all of these six men came from in and around Aberdeen, Scotland, and all but one of them was aboard the Castalia, when she set sail on the 26th day of April, 1873, a brief recounting of her voyage and the days which followed her arrival in the port of St. John in the new country, seem in order.

Donald Fraser's family consisted of four, - Donald, then a man of 31 years, his wife, Ann Reith Fraser, then a young woman of 27 who was to contribute so materially to the success of her husband and who was to become almost legendary for her kindness to all in the colony in those difficult early days, - their two small sons, Donald Junior aged 6 and Archibald, aged four.

Alex Matheson's family consisted of four children, too... his wife, Johanna Ross Matheson and their two sons, William, aged six, and Thomas, an infant of a little over three months old. Of the six men of the portraits only Andrew Brebner did not come over on the Castalia. He wasn't born until three years after she sailed, in 1877 in Aberdeen, Scotland and did not leave Scotland for Canada until he was a young man of twenty-two, when he disembarked at Montreal, in 1899, later to join Fraser activities, to assist materially in the building of the company, and finally to hold one of its highest executive posts.

Once the entire story of Fraser's unfolds, other portions of the passenger list of the Castalia have new significance. And now let's consider the ship on which these sturdy Scotch settlers embarked from the Firth of Clyde that April day, seventy-five years ago, with 586 passengers aboard, and which, before she had been at sea for 200 hours, added a new little passenger to her list, making the total 587. Perhaps the story of that child, born to John Morrison and his wife who had set sail with their four other children, would merit a book all of its own. The

The records show that she was baptised with the names Castalia Butler Ferguson Brown Morrison when the ship landed at St. John, by the Rev. Mr. Cameron,... her lengthy identification having particular significance... Castalia having been chosen because of the name of the ship, Butler for the Captain of the Castalia, Ferguson for the ship's doctor who delivered her and Brown for Captain Brown, sponsor of the colonization project and last, but by no means least, Morrison for her own good parents.

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And what of the ship for which this young passenger was named? Port records obtained from Glasgow reveal that her builders were Connell of Glasgow... that she had one funnel and three masts and was barque rigged... her tonnage 220 gross, 1660 net, 424 h. -. She was equipped with two compound cylinder engines 38 x 68 inches and is reported to have consumed 25 tons of coal a day. Her overall size 306' 6" x 34' 6" x 29' 2" indicates she was a fairly small craft to have braved the rough Atlantic which she crossed successfully carrying all passengers safely to St. John, in 14 days.

She had made her maiden voyage from Glasgow to New York in 15 days, embarking on March 12, 1873 and the voyage to St. John was her second, in which she bettered her time by one day. Other trips made by her in her eleven short years of service include a later voyage in 1873 from Glasgow to New York, then in August '74 a 50-day trip from Naples to New York via Masina - 34 days from Naples and 16 days from Gibraltar; two trips in 1877, from Glasgow and Liverpool in late September for Bombay, which consumed 30 days at sea and a return trip which consumed 32 days; a 22-day trip from London to New York in January 1879 and again in 1880 for the same destination; followed by a rather ignominious trip for one of her standing,

in September 1882, when she left New York for Alexandria with a cargo of mules which were discharged at Gibraltar for the Sudan war,... and finally her swansong, when upon leaving Valencia for New York April 20, 1884, almost eleven years to the day from which she carried the Scotch colonists to St. John, she was wrecked near Denia on the Spanish Coast.

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And now back to the report of Hon. B.R. Stevenson, Surveyor General of New Brunswick, published at St. John N.B. by the Daily Telegraph, Printing and Publishing Offices in 1874, which includes a description of the gathering of the colonists in Scotland, as written at sea by George Troup, Scottish newspaper man who made the trip on the Castalia, accompanying the colonists to New Brunswick.

The report tells of the parties of emigrants who began leaving their homes early on the morning of April 25, 1873. An agreement had been made to convey them by special train of the Caledonia Railway from Aberdeen to Glasgow. The first party consisting of 120 individuals from Kintore, left their homes by the Great North of Scotland Railway soon after six a.m. They were joined by a much smaller party at Buxburn, a station near Aberdeen, almost in the suburbs of the city, connected with the largest paper manufacturing works in the world. The report indicates that although the emigrants were engaged almost exclusively in agriculture, two were from the paper works, "who may some day assist in the conversion of New Brunswick's wooden pulp into paper, now that the process is found to be practical and profitable and is favorably regarded in the Province."

A large crowd gathered in the Aberdeen station to wish the emigrants a good journey. The train left Aberdeen at 8 a.m. Much interest had been felt for several months in the colonization plan, and farewell signals were hung out at various points or were waved from fields and farmhouses along the rail route. At various stations between Perth and Glasgow a few other families joined the special train. On arrival in Glasgow, the report states the train was met by omnibusses that conveyed the party at once through Glasgow to Mavis Bank on the south side of the Clyde, where the outbound Anchor Steamers were berthed. All the luggage had gone forward the previous day and by late afternoon the entire party of colonists had found their places on board the Castalia "a very fine steamer that had just completed her first voyage in and out." The report further states "The departure of Anchor line steamers from Clyde is a daily event, and very rarely indeed are the ladies, wives and daughters of the partners, seen on the deck of a departing emigrant steamer, but a feeling deeper than curiosity and nobler by much attracted several of these ladies who watched the proceedings with warm interest. Towards evening the Rev. Dr. Adams, the convener of the Free Church Colonial Committee, came on board the Castalia to bid the emigrants farewell. He read the 23rd Psalm, addressed them in kind and weighty words of both encouragement and warning and engaged in prayer for them and theirs, and for sage guidance to their new homes, their happiness and prosperity in them. Towards 11 p.m. the Castalia left its moorings at Glasgow and passed down the Clyde to the tail of the Bank opposite Greenock, remaining there until 11 a.m. on Saturday morning, April 26th..." "The Castalia is the first emigrant vessel that ever left a British port, the report continued, with an equal number of emigrants but without a single case of intoxication among them. No other ship since the arrival of the Mayflower has brought to America emigration so completely of a family character, and no vessel has ever conveyed so many young children to a port of America,

for the Castalia sailed with 198 children under 12 years of age, (arriving with 199). Its emigrants are almost exclusively in families and hereafter emigration to the new County of New Brunswick will probably be confined to families or married persons. No party of the same magnitude could have been more agreeable or so united."

The Castalia sailed on Saturday, April 26th, at 11 a.m. to the Firth of Clyde... passing beyond the point where Scotland struggled to break the north wind for her after dusk, and finally she passed the last light on European ground - the light of Tory Island. And so the colonists parted from Europe.

The following day, Sunday, the Castalia's first day at sea, was cloudy and cold, with heavy head winds causing rough going, and many were seasick. By evening, those who were able wished for a religious service which was held in the saloon. It was attended mostly by men, scarcely a woman being able to be present, for they were either ill themselves or caring for children or relatives.

The next three days at sea were cloudy above and the sea was slightly stirred by north and west winds. Convalescence was rapid and more of the passengers were able to be up and about.

On May day the sky was cloudless but the weather was cold and the wind continued high.

The pressing headwinds of the previous twenty-four hours had slowed the run of the Castalia in that period to 152 miles, or 100 miles under her capacity without any wind. In the twenty-four hours to noon on May 3rd, the run increased to a speed of 236 miles, then the wind in front of the steamer made a rough, tumbling

sea with plenty of pitching and rolling for some of the passengers' sea legs, and trouble was encountered with dishes of food because of the unsteadiness. As the day wore on the waves of the Atlantic rose in height and spread out in breadth and became streaked with white foam. During the night a heavy gale reduced progress to 105 miles for the day. The gale increased during the following night but early on that morning, the wind began to fall and turn a little to the north, then farther and at last got altogether out of the way - so that progress at noon was 135 miles. In these two days more than one complete day of the Castalia's average speed was lost. The sea did not sink quite as quickly as the wind. On the contrary, the Atlantic was tempestuous during the day. We had good meetings on that Sabbath, in the afternoon with the children and their parents in the large after-steerage, in the evening in the saloon. Monday came and the wind had a hold of the north. It was coming over ice, skilled men alleged, at the rate it was putting down or keeping down the sea and on Tuesday it was said to be coming over Newfoundland, but the day was good while Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were remarkably pleasant sailing days. "Nothing in the matter of floating could have been pleasanter," Geo. Troup concludes, "I remember no more beautiful weather on the water, than these three days with the Castalia skirting Nova Scotia. One of your pilots, Mr. Henry Spears, came on board at the head of your good bay (the Bay of Fundy) seventy miles from St. John, and brought the Castalia to anchor near Partridge Island at one a.m. on the 10th (of May)". This concludes George Troup's report as recorded by Surveyor General Stevenson. The crossing had taken fourteen days.