

N.S. And N.S.W. Once Were Neighbors

Numbers of Nova Scotians, seeking their fortunes in the Australia of last century, carved out careers of distinction in the land "down under".

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THOMAS H. RADDALL of Liverpool has noted that away back in the last century the song: "Bold Jack Donahoe" was sung in Nova Scotia. This artless ballad about the bush-ranger (bandit) who robbed and raided in the Hawkesbury district of New South Wales between 1827 and 1830 has had a wide distribution both in time and in space in North America. The U.S. Library of Congress has a record of the song made in a transients' camp in California in 1940.

The song records the exploits of John Donahoe, an ex-convict transported to Botany Bay from Dublin. Donahoe, nicknamed The Stripper, was a fair-haired, blue-eyed little desperado, five feet, four inches in height. He was a bold and dashing brigand who became a hero to the convict population during his life, and legend after his death. The song was in circulation very soon after he had been killed—by a settler, not (as the song says) by "the horse police". The song was so popular and reckoned so subversive that it was made an offence to sing it in public-houses and such places.

It was, no doubt, carried to California by the thousands of gold-seekers, largely old lags (ex-convicts), who crossed the Pacific to California as "Fortyniners". As for Nova Scotia, it was no doubt picked up in Sydney, N.S.W., by Nova Scotian seamen. In the great days of sail Nova Scotia and New South Wales were, to all intents and purposes, next door to one another.

When the Australian gold-diggings "broke out" in 1851 they attracted many Nova Scotians. Amongst them were the men of Barrington, N.S., who sailed the home-built brig Sebim to Port Philip and went to the Victorian gold-diggings. An account of this voyage is given in The Halifax Herald of February 16, 1859. The master was Seth C. Doane. J. N. Crowell,

Joseph A. Doane and Arthur W. Doane were carpenters, and seamen were: Peter Coffin, jr., Arnold Doane, David and John Gabriel, Donald McDonald, William R. and Daniel Sargeant. The Sebim carried a number of passengers. Some of the Sebim gold-seekers returned to Nova Scotia, including Arnold Doane, who later wrote a history of Barrington. Some stayed in Australia; Joseph A. Doane was later Mayor of Ballarat.

Even more remarkable was the Australian career of Simon Fraser, born in 1834 at Lorne, Pictou County. When the first Ottawa Trade Conference was held in July, 1894, Fraser represented Victoria. In 1901 he became a member of Australia's first Commonwealth Parliament. William Moore, a gold-seeker from Nova Scotia, was six times a minister of the Crown in Tasmania.

So interested has the Prime Minister of Australia, Robert G. Menzies, become in the early links between Canada, notably Nova Scotia, and Australia, that he has approved a study of these. Some exceptionally interesting material about them is preserved in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia.

To this day letters addressed to Sydney and intended for Sydney, Australia, occasionally find their way to Sydney, Cape Breton Island. This is the older of the two cities. Both are, in a sense, step-children of the American Revolution. Sydney, N.S., was founded by Loyalists in 1784; Sydney, N.S.W., came into existence in 1788 as a place to which to take the convicts who could no longer be sent to the lost American colonies. Both places were named after Thomas Townshend, Viscount Sydney, Secretary from 1784 to 1789 of what was left of the British Colonies.

Even before Sydney, N.S., was founded, Lachlan Macquarie, later, (1809-21), the

greatest of all Australian governors and the second founder of N.S.W., served as a young ensign, (1780-81), at Fort Edward, Windsor. Documents concerning him are preserved in the Nova Scotia Archives.

The New South Wales Corps fought for Canada in the War of 1812-14. It had served in Australia for 20 years and had been largely recruited there. It was removed in 1810 after it had mutinied and overthrown Governor ("Bounty") Bligh. Renamed the 102nd Regiment, it took part in the amphibious warfare around Chesapeake Bay in the summer of 1813. It came to Halifax in September, 1813, and sailed for Bermuda on November 20. It was back in Nova Scotia the next year. On July 11, 1814, it sailed from Shelburne and captured Eastport, Maine.

Amongst the American vessels brought into Halifax in 1813 was the schooner Eunice of Boston, commanded by Abimelech Riggs. She had carried supplies from Norfolk, Virginia, for Wellington's forces in Spain and had a certificate from the Quartermaster-General in Lisbon. All the same, Captain Thomas Everard, of H.M. sloop of war Wasp, seized her. The case was heard in the Vice-Admiralty Court on July 15, and Judge Croke found her a good and lawful prize. Captain Riggs appealed to the Admiralty Court in London and seems to have succeeded.

In 1819 Riggs appeared in Sydney, N.S.W., as master of the sealing ship, General Gates, of Boston. For three years he played an active part in Australian waters. The General Gates was seized at the Bay of Islands, New Zealand, by H.M.S. Dromedary and sent to Sydney where Captain Riggs was fined £6,000 for carrying away convicts. Somehow or other he satisfied the judgment. In 1822 he landed at Hobart, Tasmania, a young seaman who founded a branch of the Mayflower descendants in Tasmania.

Other Nova Scotians who attained fame in Australia were John Ross from Halifax who, in 1854, built at Battery Point, Hobart, what was then the largest slip-way for ships south of the equator, F. H. Henry and others who pioneered the lumber trade in northwest Tasmania. Henry became a leading member of Parliament.

One way and another, Nova Scotians have left their mark in Australia.

NOVA SCOTIANS IN THE GOLD RUSH TO AUSTRALIA AND TASMANIA

History of Barrington Township, by Edwin Crowell, says:-

Page 350:- Warren Doane in 1849 built the brig Sebin, which he first sailed as master, and then sold to his brother Seth and others who had the Australia fever. This party, among whom was Arnold Doane, first Barrington historian, went in their ship to Australia and sold her there."

Page 360:- The Sebin was sold in 1852 to a group of men who went in her ~~to the~~ ~~diggings~~ to Australia, where they sold her and went to the diggings.

P.331:-Arnold Doane studied in London where he obtained a diploma, and then settled in Halifax, where he has been given the credit of laying the foundation of the musical taste of the Halifax of his day. On later life he returned to Barrington, where by private teaching and singing schools throughout the township he brought up the existing methods of music to the best standards.

(Note by THR:- I was told in Barrington, by Judge Doane and others of the Historical Society there, that Arnold Doane (1833-1911) made enough money in the Australian gold fields to pay his way to London, where he studied at the Royal Academy of Music. He returned to Halifax, and later to Barrington, bringing with him a piano with a rosewood case. Judge Doane (an expatriate Barrington man, a lawyer and later a judge in New York, maintained a summer home in Barrington. He entertained me there, and showed me Arnold Doane's piano, which he had acquired years before.)