



DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY  
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA  
CANADA

INSTITUTE OF OCEANOGRAPHY

August 8, 1968

Mr. Thomas H. Raddall,  
44 Park Street,  
Liverpool, N. S.

Dear Mr. Raddall:

Some months ago I read with much interest and enjoyment your essay "Adventures of H.M.S. Blonde", published in "Footsteps on Old Floors". I thought you would be interested to know that a second H.M.S. Blonde was in service in the Royal Navy. It is mentioned briefly in J. R. Slevin's account "The Galápagos Islands. A history of their exploration", published as an Occasional Paper of the California Academy of Sciences in 1959. Slevin states that H.M.S. Blonde, Lord Byron commanding, visited Tagus Cove, Albemarle Island, in 1825, while on its way to Hawaii with the bodies of the Hawaiian king and queen, who had died in London. Apparently a full account is given in a book by Lord Byron, "Voyage of H.M.S. Blonde to the Sandwich Islands in the years 1824-1825", published in London in 1826, although I have been unable to locate a copy for more details and information on the ship.

In the early spring I gave a lecture on the Galápagos Islands, which I visited in 1966, to an audience in Halifax. In an attempt to add some local interest, I made a brief search here for accounts of visits by Nova Scotians to the Galápagos, which were visited regularly by whalers from about 1788 until the 1860's when the whaling industry in Equatorial waters declined. One of the two available journals in the Provincial Archives had an account of whaling in the Galápagos area and a good deal else besides which you might find interesting some time. It is entitled "Journal of a Whaling Voyage on board the barque Margaret Rait, 1840-1844 also the ship Athol, 1845 of Captain James Doane Coffin (1814-1885) of Barrington, Shelburne County, N. S. and Port Clyde, Shelburne Co." (4 vols).

This journal is a long one, and besides the account of a long, tough voyage from Nova Scotia round the Horn to New Zealand and into the Equatorial Pacific, it contains a ghost story (based on the suicide of a crew member) and more private

writings, apparently set down by the captain to overcome his loneliness. There is a fascinating and poignant account of his courtship of his wife, also a good deal of scattered doodling and random comment. I think a more careful reading of it would be worthwhile, if only for insight into the private thoughts of an intelligent and sensitive young man on his first voyage in command of a whaler.

I would be interested in knowing if you have any further information on the connection between Nova Scotia and the Galápagos Islands, and I hope you will find my comments above interesting.

Sincerely,

*Eric L. Mills*

Eric L. Mills  
Associate Professor

ELM/bh

*Answered Aug 14/68. Suggested reference to  
Sir Edward Belcher, P.N., who was  
born in Nova Scotia, son of Andrew Belcher,  
M.L.A.*