

I said my Indians were better than his Indians. Lewey Ketchum, whom I had known from babyhood, 96 if living today, told me "a skimmer". Lewey Mitchell, Passamaquoddy, 83 years old, said the same, both in letter and at Point Pleasant this fall. John Soctomer, Wachias, best man there, said "island" and Sebattis Tomer, Princeton, said the same, or that he did not know. (Please don't quote me these; I have my notes, but am not consulting them now and may make some mistake.) Old Clara Neptune, about 94 if living, gave me something else, and many years ago old John Neptune gave Cyrus Eaton still something else. In short, I had six of the best Indians we ever had at such things, not agreeing at all. I feel sure most of them never saw the place, but did what they could in analysis off hand.

Now the "skimmer" meaning gets a curious cross light from Champlain and Lescarbot; for when Champlain went on his exploring trip to the westward, somewhere near this island they saw Black Skimmers, and Lescarbot describes the very curious bill, with the lower mandible much longer than the upper. It has nothing to do with the name, of course, though in those days it was possible for the bird to nest upon the low islets connected with the Monhegan group, just as today they do on the islands off the Virginia coast.

You see I have not added anything to the sum of your knowledge. My opinion is not better than yours. Still I do not agree with you.

The Indians were not at all concerned with this island as a land-fall, since they would not approach it from the seaward side. So we cross off that count. They would have had a name for it, long before even the pasques came here. So it is hardly likely that they would have changed the name for any man-made alterations in it. That crosses off your fortification idea.

The one outstanding thing to me is that deep, narrow, singular little harbor among the rocks, cut entirely through the island.

I explained to Mr. Cabot that his idea of a "passage" between the island and the main would not work for anything smaller than a steamboat. Canoes would not go that way. In old times a canoe would never venture that long, grim stretch of coast at Pemaquid Point. They would land at New Harbor, carry perhaps two miles to Old Pemaquid and put into the bay there, escaping the ocean swell, the fog and storms likely to arise in passing the rocky coast of Pemaquid, where for miles a canoe could not land, even in calm weather. I spent two weeks in early July one year on that outer coast and never for a moment was the water line clear of a boiling white line of froth and a continual sound of the sea-- no place for a birch canoe. In calm enough weather they would venture it; but it would not be regarded as a "passage" even if less than eight miles wide.

I would suggest your talking this over with Mr. Cabot, who lives at 447 Marlborough Street. We would be glad to see

~~for Charlie Downs and went over to Amherst to see him again.~~