April 9th, 1938

Dear Mrs. Eckstorm:

Because you know a great deal about Indians in Maine, I venture to write to ask you about the following matters: I have a hobby of collecting unusual epitaphs from gravestones, and because so many of them are faked, I try to get photos of them, for which I pay my "spies" three dollars apiece. I've picked up several good items from Maine, including an excellent picture of the "ghost" on the stone of Heavenly Crown Rich, and I have no doubt that there are a lot more that I haven't even heard about. There are, however, these three that are quoted time and again in epitaph books, and which seem to have a ring, or odor of verisimilitude about them, but the alleged locations are either non-existent, or else inaccurate.

Firstly, here is one to

"ORONO, chief of the Penobscots
    died 1801, aged 113 yrs.

Safe lodged in his blanket here below
Lie the last relics of old Orono
Worn down with toil and care he in a trice
Exchanged his wigwam for a Paradise."

The town of Orono was named, I suppose, after this historical chieftain, but nobody in Orono nor in Oldtown seems to know where the old chief is buried. I was up there last summer and talked with various local antiquarians who admitted it was queer that the old chief's last resting place was unknown, but could offer no suggestions. I even tried to telephone to Princess Wauwatosa (?) who, I was told, is well up on tribal history, but she was not at home.

Secondly, in a mythical "Gridiwokag" Maine, is alleged to be this:

Here Betty Brown her body lies
Her soul is flying in the skies
While here on earth she oft times spun
Six hundred skeins from sun to sun
And wove one day her daughter brags
Two hundred pounds of carpet rags.
And in the same place:

"Beneath this stone now dead to grief
Lies Gridi the famous Wokag chief
Pause here and think, you learned prig
This man was once an Indian big
Consider this ye lowly one
This man was once a big Injun
Now he lies here you too must rot
As sure as pig shall go to pot."

I can find, nowhere, a place called "Gridiwoke" or "Wokag" or evensuch names as applied to Indian tribes. It has ocurred to me that possibly the name "Gridiwoke" is the name of a cemetery, but even if that were true it doesn't help me any.

Lastly, Eric Kelly, a professor at Dartmouth, who writes books - novels - told me that there is an account of the famous silver image that Rogers' Rangers took away from St. Francis in 1759, in some book, he thought it was one of yours (which account relates how the image was taken up past Moosehead Lake) but though I have looked through all, I think, of your books, I haven't found that. If you should happen to know where it is, I would appreciate learning about it.

Back in the late '60s an Indian named Archie Annance found a rich gold mine in Tilton, P.Q., and was done out of it very neatly and scurrilously by a politician named Pope, who worked it profitably for a long time. Archie went down across the NH line onto Indian Stream and found himself another but no one could ever find just where it was. And never have. All the old timers up there knew Archie. I think he died in 1985. I wrote to Henry Masta, who was head man on the Odanak reservation, some years ago, about it and Henry went out and found "un ancien sauvage" he wrote me, who remembered Archie, and who asserted that whenever Archie needed money he went away "dans la montagne" and got all he needed. Henry said there are Annances still living at Od'town, and when he took a trip down there he tried to find them, but they had gone off to Moosehead Lake to trap, so there's the end of my story. But there's a sort of a "plot" for you, if you want to make a real story of it.

If you can give me any information about these three eps (or any others, for that matter) or about the silver image story, I shall be duly grateful.

Sincerely yours,

Robert E. Pike

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