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Some of Dartmouth's Indian Students - undated

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I. The White Indians.

Probably it has been asked, perhaps often, why, when Eleazer Wheelock was seeking for Indian pupils for his Charity School, he did not send to Maine or to New Brunswick and get children who could be brought by the easy trip by water—all the way by water, if they took boat up the Merrimack and made a short "carry"—instead of sending by the long wood's route to the vicinity of Montreal and conducting them overland. The question is so reasonable and the answer so curious that it is worth an extended answer, though, in its briefest form the answer is that some of them were not Indians at all, and perhaps all of them had English blood.

The year before our Revolution opened, when we were on good terms with the English possessions on the St. Lawrence, Preceptor James Dean went from Hanover to St. Francois du Lac—that is, on Lac St. Pierre, just below Montreal, and brought back with him to be the first Indian students at the Moor Charity School, three little Indian boys. The books not being accessible to me, Professor Eric P. Alley has kindly furnished me references to "The Memoirs of John Wheelock" and to "Chase's History of Dartmouth", which say that one of these was Francis Joseph Gill, "the son of Chief Joseph Louis Gill, who had in his ancestry two white captives brought from Deerfield about 1700". It is further stated that Francis Joseph Gill was afterwards known as Annance.

Later I may have something to say about the Annances, but in this paper the Gills will provide the subject matter.

Now neither of these books is correct in saying that the captives taken in 1700 came from Deerfield, and probably neither of the writers was aware that Chief Joseph Louis Gill was a white man, English to the last drop of his blood.
English to the last drop of his blood, and that the little boy, called by them "Francis Joseph", though half French, was white also. The authority these writers depended upon was that very weak read, the Histoire d'Abbe J.A. Maurault, author of "L'Histoire des Abenakis", published in 1866, a book, as Judge Charles Gill* said, is full of errors, "inventions pure and simple".

Also, Notes Additionelles a L'Histoire de la Famille Gill. 1889. pp. 30.
Also, a second supplement in March 1883, embodying the proof of the family origin in Salisbury, N.H., based upon the research of Miss C. Alice Baker, of Cambridge, Mass., for which see, New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 1893, XLVI;313, seq. "The Gill Family", by Prof. James D. Butler of Madison, Wis.

From the years 1693 to 1706 the Indians, instigated and aided by the French, fell with great fury upon the outer settlements of New Hampshire and Maine, slaughtering and taking captive hundreds of the settlers and their children, who were sold as bond servants or held for ransom, making it a very profitable trade for the Indians. So scattered was the population and so great the slaughter that of many no record is now known, or at the most that a man, his wife and all their children were destroyed or captivated. Among these nameless ones is the record left by Rev. John Pike, of Dover, N.H., that on June 10, 1697, a lad belonging in Salisbury, N.H. was carried off. Miss C. Alice Baker, by close reasoning and careful research, established the identity of this child. A curious old document which had come down in the Gill family in Canada and which had inspired Judge Gill in his own investigations, established the fact that the boy Parson Pike mentioned was the same for whom Sergeant Samuel Pike, of Salisbury, twice petitioned the government to secure "the redemption of his son Samuel Gill, carried captive by the Indians to Canada three years before". The petition is dated June 6, 1700, and lacks but three days of a full three years from the date given by Pike.
The boy Samuel Gill, it may be said, never was redeemed. He grew up among the Indians, married among them and died among them. But he married an English girl, like himself a captive, and their children were of pure English blood. Who this girl was has never been discovered. Her own name, probably unpronounceable to the Indians, was changed in baptism to Rosalie, and though Maurault says her father's name was James and that he was an English clergyman, no person answering these specifications has yet been discovered. The children had a tradition that the family was attacked near a mill and that she was taken "quelque temps après prise de notre père, près d'un moulin, dont toute la famille fut prise et ammenée en Canada à l'exception du père et de la mère qui furent envoyés sur le champ." Always there remained that picture of the mill in the wilderness and the dead father and mother lying in the mill-yard. Much more vivid it is than the shadowy "ministre de l'Evangile" of the Abbé Maurault; yet careful search of all the mills and mill-owners in south-western Maine has failed to bring to light any which answers the conditions, even when we suppose that the father's first name was "James" instead of his bringing his surname, or that his surname was "Parsons", instead of that representing his profession. Some little primitive mill-site on a now dwindled stream holds secret of a bloody story.

Seven children at least were born to the white captives, and these children must have been English at heart, with the true English love of race; for seventy-one years after the lad Samuel Gill was taken, four sons and three daughters unite in an enterprise to discover who they are. They decided to send one of their number to New England to learn what can be found out about their parents and a memorial is prepared, stating what they seek and asking the help and protection of officials to whom they apply.
This begins:

"Nous Joseph Louis, Francois, Joseph Piche, Robert, Magdelaine, Joseph et Marie,

"Ayant fait une assemblée entre nous et par conséquent pour en députer un d'entre nous, pour faire les perquisitions et recherches de parents du côté de notre défunt père qui estoit natif de La Nouvelle-Engleterre X, goëte on to relate what they knew about him. "Son nom estoit Same Gille; nous savons aussi que notre Grand père Sagen Gill a envoyé par deux différentes fois pour le chercher. Mais ayant été pris si jeune il s'était attaché à la nation et n'a jamais voulu les quitter; Et comme nous serions grandement flattez de connaître nos parents; nous souplions ces messieurs qui peuvent avoir connaissance de cette famille d'introduire notre frère que nous députons à cet effet, chez quelqu'un de nos parents." In like manner they ask for aid in seeking for their mother, relating the story of the mill and the slaughtered parents and the children carried off to Canada; but here no names are given. The document is signed by the three sons who could read and write, though oddly the one they send can do neither, according to Judge Gill.

It is endorsed by the old Jesuit missionary, who perhaps made out the paper;

J'ai soussigné ancien missionnaire certifie que les suanommes ont été tous baptisés au village de St-François, et que leur père et mère y avaient été mariés en face de l'église étant encore fort jeunes l'un et l'autre, je les ai vus et connus et instruits leurs enfants et petits enfants.

a Quebec ce 26 fevrier 1768

M. L. LeFranc, Miss. de la Compagnie de Jesus,

Francis Robert Gille is recommended to all whom the above may concern and that can assist him to find out his relations near Boston.

By the Lt. Governor's command
J. Goldpap, Dy. Secy.

GUY CARLETON
Castle of St. Louis Quebec
February 28th 1768
It is pathetic, this family of middle-aged Indians, as they are reckoned, sending one of their number a long journey into the land of his enemies, and that only a few years after Major Rogers' terrible raid had destroyed their village, burned their church and killed most of their friends, to seek proofs that they were white men. They can gain nothing by this long and expensive search except to find out something about Sergeant Sam and their father Sam Gill and to align themselves with the ancestors behind them. Truly English this; yet their children are not English—not one of them had married English blood. Two of the daughters had married Indians; one had married a half-breed German; two of the sons had married Canadians-French women; one had married first an Indian and then a Canadian-French woman, and the other had been married twice to Indians women.

At this point we get a curious side-light upon the Gill Family and the village of St. Francis in the story of the Captivity of Mrs. Farmer James Johnson, of Charlestown, N.H., which is told in the Emmerson Moore Historical Collections, (vol. I, nos. 3 and 4) and again is very sketchily translated in Maurault's book. It is a story of the extremest hardship, though Mrs. Johnson nowhere complains of intentional unkindness of the part of her Indian masters. On the 29th of August, 1754, she and her family was taken captive and carried by way of Lake Champlain to St. Francis. There her husband and some of the children were taken to Montreal, while she and her infant, born on the way, were left at in the village of St. Francis and her oldest son Sylvanus, a little lad was taken off with a hunting party. It was five years before the family got back to their home at Charlestown.

At Lkmx Saint Francis she changed masters, the one who had taken her giving her over to the chief of the village. "I was taken to the house of my new master, and found myself allied to the first family; my master, whose name was Gill, was son-in-law to the grand sachem, was
accounted rich, had a store of goods and lived in style far above the majority of his tribe. He often told me that he had a true English heart, but his wife was true Indian blood."

Mrs. Johnson's homely phrase "a store of goods," which any of us would understand to mean only that he had an abundance of possessions, being translated by Abbe Maurault as "il tenait un petit negoce" and by Judge Gill as "il tenait un magasin, rapporte Mme. Johnson," makes Joseph Louis Gill appear as a "store-keeper". The village of St. Francis she says, in unconscious rebuttal, "contained about thirty wigwams, which were thrown together into a disorderly clump. There was a church in which mass was held every night and morning and every Sunday the hearers were summoned by a bell." "Among my connexions," says Mrs. Johnson, "was a little brother Sabatis, who brought the cows for me, and took particular notice of my child. He was a sprightly little fellow and often amused me with feats performed with his bow and arrow." Those of the family whom she called sisters were probably the sisters of her master, Chief Joseph Louis Gill, and this child may possibly have been a very young brother of the chief; but more likely it is his oldest son by the Indian wife. But for what Mrs. Johnson has said about him his existence would have passed unknown by his own family historians, yet he plays a part in this tale of an Indian family. For, although Mrs. Johnson was at St. Francis less than two months of her captivity and wanderings, which covered almost five years, she had hardly returned to her old home at Charlestown on the Connecticut before she saw Sabatis again.

In the fall of 1759, in reprisal for some of the raids the Indians had made upon the white colonials, Major Rogers and his Rangers made a foray upon the Indian village of St. Francis du Lac. They attacked just after a night of feasting when the Indians were celebrating one of their own raids and the bringing in of captives. From a military
view-point the expedition was eminently successful. With several hundred whites and Indians, Rogers attacked the town, burned it, burned the church after rifling it of most of its treasures, killed most of the inhabitants and among their prisoners carried off the Indian wife of Chief Joseph Louis Gill, two of her children and the little Sabatis, now a boy of perhaps sixteen years. The chief's wife died on the retreat and a family tradition says that she was killed by the savage allies and eaten, and her own children forced to partake—a report which, like of Mark Twain's death, may be "greatly exaggerated". But the Rangers endured great hardships on their return, so that they divided into several parties, one of which, in attempting to pass up Israel's River, which flows through Lancaster, and so through the White Mountains, perished almost to a man. This had with it the great silver image of the Virgin, the chief treasure of the Indian Church of St. Francis, which it is said, they buried in the woods, of which mention will be made again.

Mrs. Johnson relates that soon after her return to her old home in Charlestown, Major Rogers and those who stayed with him came to the settlement. "He brought with him a young Indian prisoner, who stopped at my house: the moment he saw me he cried, my God, my God, here is my sister; it was my little brother Sabatis, who formerly used to bring the cows for me, when I lived at my Indian master's. He was transported to see me, and declared that he was still my brother, and I must be his sister. Poor fellow! The fortune of war had left him without a single relation, but with his country's enemies he could find one who too sensibly felt his miseries; I felt the purest pleasure in administering to his comfort"... "Sabattus went from Charlestown to Crown Point with Major Rogers. When he got to Otter Creek he met my son Sylvanua, who was with the army with Col. Willard; he recognized him and clasping him in his arms, 'My God', says he, 'the fortune of war!'— I shall ever
remember this young Indian with affection; he had a high sense of honor and good behaviour, he was affable, good-natured and polite. "But at the most he was only half Indian, and he may have been all white. Apparently he never got back to his home again; but the two children known to be sons of Chief Joseph Louis Gill's Indian wife, must have returned; for old men whom Judge Gill knew remembered them. They left no descendants and play no further part in the story.

So, in 1759, Chief Joseph Louis Gill has had his whole family taken from him by war. Three years later he married a French Canadian woman, Suzanne Gamelin-Chateauvieux, whose mother was a martel, name of dread upon our border. Joseph Louis himself lived to the good age of seventy-eight and a half years and was buried May 5, 1798. The statement in the "Memoirs of John Wheelock" and in "Chase's "History of Dartmouth" that in 1774 his son Francis Joseph ("afterwards known as Annance") was taken to Hanover to study, does not seem to be borne out by the family records of either Maurault or Judge Gill. There is no Francis Joseph among his children and there is no good reason why any child of his should be called Annance. Judge Gill writes: "Neanmoins Antoine Gill, fils aîné de Joseph-Louis et de Suzanne Gamelin, qui était un homme instruit, ayant étudié soit au college de Hanover ou de Harvard, États-Unis, comme l'un des trois titulaires a été choisi parmi les Sauvages d'une fondation dans ce college, épousa une Sauvagesse pur sang, la plus laide du village, avait coutume de dire mon grand-père".

If Judge Gill's grandfather knew personally this son of Chief Joseph-Louis Gill, who went to Hanover to study, and says his name was Antoine Gill, the record must stand approved. And Francis Joseph, called Annance, must be thrown out of the family at least temporarily. But Antoine Gill, as has been shown was of pure white blood, of an English father and a French mother; so this early Dartmouth Indian was only a white child brought up among Indians.
There must have been another Gill who went early to Hanover, if Judge Gill is right. He says that Robert Gill, son of Samuel the captive, the same, it will be remembered who was sent on the mission to find out about his family, married a Canadian-French woman and had two sons. One of these sons, "Paul Joseph, qui avait etudie à Terrebonne/ Hanover, fut instituteur a Terrebonne ou il épousa une Canadienne de bonne famille et eut des enfants qui sont aux Etats-Unis a present" (1837).

The Francis Joseph "afterwards called Annance", according to the Dartmouth historians, was probably another grandson of the original Samuel Gill. He would have been a half-breed cousin of the two Gills named. Maurault, (L'Histoire des Abenakis, p.364) says that Marie Appoline Gill, wholly white, who died in 1800, aged 71 years, a daughter of the original Samuel, married about 1755 an Abenaki. "Les Annances descendent d'elle". This is indirectly sustained by Judge Gill's statement that when his grandfather Joseph Thomas Gill, son of Joseph Louis was baptised 18 August, 1772 he had as godparents "pour parrain son oncle Joseph (Piche) Gill et pour marraine Dorothee Annance, une Sauvagesesse". A footnote says:"On les appelle a present les 'Annansé, la prononciation de-'as' final ayant un son nasal in Abenaki, on a fini par en faire 'anse'".

If Marie Appoline Gill, married 'about 1755' had a daughter Dorothy Annance, she might have been old enough to stand as godmother to her nephew in 1773, and the relationship would have a suitable one for the sponsorship of the Gill baby. It seems reasonable then to suppose that the boy mentioned in the history of Dartmouth was a nephew, rather than a son of Chief Joseph Louis. If so he was half white.

How many more there were of the white stock of the Gills can probably never be told; but if certain names occur in the list, they may be safely taken as indicative. Of the daughters of Samuel Gill,
Marie Appoline, as we have seen, was the ancestress of the Annance family, some of whom are known to have attended the school at Hanover. The daughter Josephte married an Indian and from her are descended the Wajos, which may appear in the translation of Mountain. The daughter Madeleine, or Jeanne Magdeleine as Maurault has it, married a German half-breed named Hannis and from her come the Hannis, the Obumsawins, the Gonzaguins and the Toksus families. It was an Obumsawin who was chief at St. Francis, when Peter Paul Osunkhirine, often called "Masta", a former student at Hanover, courted his daughter and to gain her reverted to Catholicism. The story of the romance may be made out by combining the notice in Pilling's "Bibliography of the Algonkin Languages" and Maurault's lively but perhaps not unprejudiced rendering of the facts in his History. Osunkhirine stayed some years at Oldtown among the Penobscots, and his son Silas, of whom an excellent account is given in Lucius L. Hubbard's "Woods and Lakes of Maine (1884)" spent eight years there. Among my father's business letters I have found one signed "Enus Masta", that is, Ignace Osunkhirine, showing that some other member of the family once stopped in Maine, if he did not live there.

An examination of the old records of the Wheelock school would show that that a large proportion of the pupils there, not only had white blood but were chosen because they did have it. In the first number issued of Farmer and Moore's Historical Collections of New Hampshire, 1823, (pp. 63, 64) a brief contribution says that in 1773, Rev. Sylvanus Ripley and Lt. Joseph Taylor, interpreter, went on a mission to the Indians in Canada and returned with ten Indian children "to receive an education in the school at Dartmouth College. Two of these children were taken by the Indians in former wars, while they were young, and were brought up in the language and customs of the natives. One of them
was a grandson, about eight years old, of Mr. Tarbell, who was taken
from Groton, in Massachusetts, in the year 1704, when he was about ten
years old. Mr. Tarbell was in vigorous health and the oldest chief in
the village. He expressed much joy in seeing Messrs. Ripley and Taylor,
and earnestly encouraged his grandson in leaving his Indian relatives to
receive the benefits of education. There was another youth, a grandson
of Mrs. Eunice Williams, who was taken captive with her father, the
Rev. John Williams of Deerfield, Feb. 29, 1704, that would have accompanied
them, but was prevented by indisposition. The number of Indian children
at the school at Dartmouth College in 1773, was eighteen."

Eunice Williams, it will be remembered, like many another white
girl, married an Indian and refused to leave husband and children when
urged to return home. Yet her grandson was free to come and acquire
the education which befitted his white ancestry. So of Tarbell's grandson
so of Samuel Gill's progeny. Something about their English blood
drew them back to the land they came from, and, as in Chief Joseph Louis
Gill's case, not even the recent ravages of war and the sufferings of
his own wife and children made him hesitate to send the first-born of his
his later marriage back to remain for years in the land of the enemies
of his tribe.

Seen in the light of these records Eleazer Wheelock's charity
does not appear quixotic or merely sentimental. Had he wanted Indians
merely because they were Indians, there were many much nearer. What he
reached out for was the little white captives, taken not so many years
before, and the children of those who had not forgotten the land of
their birth, whom he hoped to redeem from the ways of savagery and to
bring back to the faith of their fathers. His success in getting the children he wanted shows how well his
charity met a real need, recognized among the Indians themselves by
their ready acceptance of his unique and noble philanthropy.