THE LIBRARY

The Atlantic Neptune

During the past year the Historical Society has acquired the most important collection of maps, charts and views of North America published in the eighteenth century, namely, *The Atlantic Neptune, Published for the Use of the Royal Navy of Great Britain, By Joseph F. W. Des Barres Esq." Under the Directions of the Right Honble the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. London, 1774–1784.* The Society’s copy, from the library of Lord Alington of Crichel, Dorset, consists of four volumes bound in two tremendous pigskin folios tooled in gold. Each of the four volumes has its own engraved title page, engraved “Contents” sheets and “References” (conventional symbols used on the charts) besides a general title page for the entire work.

The war with France, terminated by the Treaty of 1763, brought home to the British government the deplorable lack of good maps and charts of North America. The late military campaign had more than once been jeopardized for want of accurate geographical information, and operations of the British Navy had been greatly handicapped by the absence of good charts of the coasts and harbors involved in the theater of war. Maps and charts of the newly-won territory were vital if the land was to be held, the harbors and fisheries protected and exploited.

Complaints regarding this lack of good maps and charts came from two general sources. The military engineers in charge of fortifications and land communications, all of whom had served in the late campaign under Wolfe, submitted detailed reports to military headquarters. These eventually found their way into the hands of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations. Meanwhile the Naval officers operating on the Atlantic station complained to Rear Admiral (Sir Richard) Spry, who in turn addressed his recommendation for new surveys to the Admiralty. Working more or less independently, both departments of His Majesty’s government decided
to remedy the situation. As a result, two surveying enterprises were initiated, with inevitable duplication of effort and confusion, not to say hard feelings. But the surveys were completed finally, and in 1774 the first charts were published, under the auspices of the Admiralty. In most cases these charts were attributed to and signed by Joseph Frederick Wallet Des Barres.

Des Barres was probably born in Switzerland in 1721. There he studied mathematics and physics under Jean and Daniel Bernoulli. He later went to England and finished the course at the Royal Military College at Woolwich, after which he was offered a commission in the Royal Artillery. Des Barres requested service in America, and in 1756 received a lieutenant's commission in the Sixtieth or Royal American Regiment then forming. Many of the other officers of this unusual regiment were of Swiss, Dutch and German origin, picked for their specialized training. Among these were Henry Bouquet, Frederick Haldimand and Samuel Jan Hollandt, who later changed his name to Holland.

After a recruiting assignment in Pennsylvania and Maryland, during which he enlisted over three hundred men, Des Barres was ordered to form his men into a corps of field artillery. This body was promptly attached to the First Battalion of the Royal Americans. During the next two years Des Barres carried out various assignments as surveyor and construction engineer. His skill and efficiency were such that Wolfe took him along on the Quebec campaign as a member of his staff of engineers, headed by Major Mackellar. During the battle of St. Foy, Mackellar was badly wounded, and Captain Samuel Holland of the Royal Americans took over the command as Chief Engineer. This appointment had a bearing on later events in which Des Barres was involved.

In 1763 General Amherst recalled Des Barres from Halifax, where he had been working on the defences of that important harbor. About the same time the Admiralty decided to act on the recommendation of Admiral Spry. After several officers had refused to assume the responsibility of making a large-scale survey of the coasts and harbors of North America, Des Barres was recommended for the job. He accepted the responsibility and was promptly released from his duties with the army. The Admiralty agreed to pay him twenty shillings a day and expenses. Although Des Barres had already
completed several detailed surveys of parts of Nova Scotia which would give him a running start, it should be remembered that he still held his commission in the Sixtieth Regiment and up to this time had worked under orders of his superior officer, Samuel Holland. None of his maps and charts thus far made had been executed from independent surveys. On the contrary, all of his work had been assigned and later passed on by Captain Holland.

In June, 1764, Des Barres wrote to General Gage, who had succeeded Amherst as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in North America, telling him that he had, in February, been appointed Deputy Surveyor General of Canada. He also told Gage, without restraint, what a good job he was doing on the survey of the coasts and harbors of Nova Scotia, but failed to mention similar work then in progress under the supervision of his superior, Captain Holland. For while Des Barres was getting his appointment as Deputy Surveyor from the Admiralty, Samuel Holland received a commission which named him “Surveyor General of Lands for making a survey of the Northern District upon the Continent of America.”

From 1765 to 1772 Captain Holland, with fourteen hand-picked men from the Sixtieth Regiment, carried on a detailed survey of His Majesty’s Northern District: the coastline including the gulf and river of St. Lawrence, the island of Cape Breton and the smaller islands and river courses as far south as the coast of Maine. Most of the maps and charts resulting from these surveys passed through the hands of General Gage, who forwarded them to the home government. In most cases they were deposited finally with the Board of Trade and Plantations. Des Barres evidently had access to these maps and charts, because many of them were engraved and printed for use in The Atlantic Neptune. Recognition of Holland’s contribution to the atlas appears, in Lord Alington’s copy of the Neptune, on the title page of Volume III, which reads, “... From the Surveys taken under the direction of the Lords of Trade. By Samuel Holland, Esq; Surveyor General of Lands and his Assistants who have been employed on that Service since the Year 1764.”

Other contributions to the Neptune are properly acknowledged by Des Barres, such as the “Chart of the Harbour of Boston, composed from different Surveys; but principally from that taken in 1769, by Mr. George Callendar, late Master of His Majesty’s Ship Romney.”
But many contributors were less fortunate than Callendar, and their work stands, at least by implication, as the product of J. F. W. Des Barres. This in spite of the fact that the handiwork of such prominent engineers and surveyors as Thomas Hutchins, Philip Pittman and Joshua Fisher is clearly visible on several sheets.

The first copper plates for *The Atlantic Neptune* were finished and proofs pulled in 1774, with Des Barres in London to supervise the final draughts and the work of engraving the plates. According to John Clarence Webster, Des Barres undertook to publish all the charts at his own expense, he to reap all profits, but the Admiralty finally decided to allow him thirty-five guineas for each plate. All charts received by the Admiralty were paid for and Des Barres was permitted to retain possession of the plates.

The charts which comprised *The Atlantic Neptune* were published one by one as they were completed. Apparently they were sold to naval officers and mariners in various combinations or related groups, some as single sheets and others in the form of an atlas, complete with title page, table of contents and added pages of descriptive material. Some copies of the *Neptune* were bound in tall narrow format with the charts folded the long way, so that the volumes could be stored in cabin lockers.

Numerous revisions were made from time to time in nearly every chart. Some plates were discarded entirely when more detailed and accurate surveys became available. Very few copies of *The Atlantic Neptune* exist in the publisher's binding, and the rebinding of these assorted collections of charts, the patching up and filling in of what are supposed to be imperfect copies of the standard four volumes, has caused great confusion among collectors and librarians. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a perfect copy of *The Atlantic Neptune*, unless it is one of the 1784 edition with table of contents to match the charts contained therein. But this combination did not include all the charts published by Des Barres and found in other copies of the *Neptune*. Likewise there is no such thing as an imperfect copy of the atlas, even though an engraved table of contents happens to be present, calling for a certain numbered group of charts. Each copy of the atlas should be taken for what it was originally intended to be: a collection of charts conveniently bound, for the use of the Royal Navy of Great Britain and for any others
who cared to purchase charts of the coast and harbors of North America.

Lord Alington's copy is a case in point. The four volumes contain ninety-one charts and twenty-three sheets of views, all that are called for in the engraved tables of contents plus thirty additional sheets. It is, in effect, an "extra-illustrated" copy assembled by Lieutenant Charles Hurst of His Majesty's Ship Assistance, the original owner of the volumes; and we may safely assume that these extra sheets represent the cruising ground of the Assistance while she was commanded by Lieutenant Hurst.

With the exception of one or two "Views" which were interesting merely from an artistic standpoint, the Neptune was designed as an aid to navigation. Even the beautifully tinted profiles of harbor entrances, such as the one of Sandy Hook with its lighthouse, and the one of "The South Shore of Long Island . . .," are included because they gave a navigator a picture of what he would see when approaching an unfamiliar harbor, "Bearing South East, Distance One Mile." Some of the charts give compass bearings as well as prominent features of the land whereby a seaman could fix his position or take a departure. Depth of water, the nature of tides and currents in different localities, in fact, all the information usually found in modern Coasting Pilots, is included on these charts whenever possible—some of it in the title cartouche, some in separate cartouches, and in one or two cases on separate sheets of letter press attached to the chart proper.

The surveying of the coasts and harbors of North America from Newfoundland to St. Augustine, Florida, which resulted in the publication of The Atlantic Neptune, was a cooperative enterprise, although there is little in the four volumes to indicate it. No one man, even with an able staff of deputies, could accurately survey so vast a territory in one lifetime, not to mention supervising the engraving of the plates and the final publication of the charts. Nevertheless, Joseph Frederick Wallet Des Barres must be given full credit for his energy and determination as well as his talent as an artist and successful publisher.

Peabody Institute of the City of Baltimore

Lloyd A. Brown
Preliminary Report Upon the Correspondence of the Indian Rights Association in the Welsh Collection.*

I

In 1937 The Historical Society of Pennsylvania acquired the Herbert Welsh Collection of manuscripts and pamphlets. The comprehensive breadth of Mr. Welsh's activities is reflected in the varied nature of his papers. A philanthropist and public-spirited man, his interests included, among other things, problems connected with civil service reform, Armenian and Syrian relief, international arbitration and the League of Nations.

However, it would seem that his outstanding contribution to public relations lay in the political hotbed of Indian affairs. Following a visit to the Sioux in the autumn of 1882, Mr. Welsh and a number of his friends formed the Indian Rights Association, in which he was active for the rest of his life. Like the earlier Women's National Indian Association, this was a Philadelphia organization; but unlike it, the Indian Rights Association maintained an active and capably managed agency in Washington with the avowed purpose of watching all developments of Indian policy, reporting thereon, and influencing legislation if necessary. Indeed, the long series of reports of the Washington agents constitute a chapter of unique importance to the student of Indian history.

In no sense a history of the Indian Rights Association, it is the intention of this paper briefly to survey that portion of the Welsh Collection which is designated as "Correspondence of the Indian Rights Association." Covering the years from 1877 to 1934, this file of material is especially full for the years from 1898 to 1902. Curiously enough, the year 1882, in which the Indian Rights Association

* Research work in connection with this paper was done under a grant on the Penrose fund of the American Philosophical Society.


2 Herbert Welsh, Four Weeks Among Some of the Sioux (Germantown, 1882).

3 Notably Henry S. Pancoast and Charles C. Painter. See Loring Benson Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren (New Brunswick, 1942), 84.

4 Founded in 1879. Priest, op. cit., 81.
was founded and in which one might reasonably expect to find a considerable number of important letters, is represented by but two items; 1887, the year of the Dawes Act, has but eleven. An examination of the correspondence after 1902 tends to show some decrease in the number of items per year as compared with the peak attained from 1898 to 1902, although showing an average increase when compared with the period prior to 1898. The difficulties arising in consequence of the maladministration of the allotment policy under the provisions of the Dawes Act, the part played by the Indian in the first World War, the attainment of citizenship in 1924, and the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934 might have been expected to have left rather deeper traces than appears to be the case. The total number of pieces in the Indian Rights Association correspondence in the Welsh Collection, 1877–1934, may safely be estimated as not far short of two thousand.

In this connection one more fact—a most important one—should be mentioned. In 1942 The Historical Society of Pennsylvania received several boxes containing the business papers of the Indian Rights Association. These have not yet been examined or catalogued. Although not a part of the Welsh Collection, undoubtedly they contain a rich storehouse of information that will add to and supplement it.

II

One is now in a position to inquire as to the nature and importance of the papers under review. To the last question, at least, a definite answer can be given. Their importance is such as to render them virtually essential to any study of Indian policy during the past sixty years. No phase of governmental relations was untouched by the Indian Rights Association, which had as a principal reason of its being the object of checking on political affairs. Whether the question involves a threatened war with the Sioux, destitution among the Navajo, a land grant for a school in Arizona, a request for food and medicine from a missionary at Mille Lacs, Minnesota, or the condition of the Iroquois on reservations in New York state, the Welsh Papers can cite chapter and verse.

Perhaps the best method of studying the nature of this collection

5 Priest, op. cit., 83–84.
is by a process of sampling. During the winter of 1894-1895 the Navajo suffered greatly from lack of food. Due to inept management and ignorance of the engineering problems of irrigation, the government seemed unable to alleviate a critical situation or to prevent a yet more serious crisis that threatened starvation by the following winter. The Indian Rights Association was informed of conditions in December, 1894. Alfred Hardy, “formerly a resident at the agency, acquainted with the country and inhabitants,” was sent to the reservation in February, 1895. He remained there until the end of June.

In a series of graphic reports that constitute a classic of their kind, Hardy pictured the desperate plight of the Navajo during his sojourn among them. The excessive cold of the winter of 1894-1895—it was twenty degrees below zero in February—decimated the herds of sheep which had been the staple meat supply of the Indians, thus forcing them to eat their burros and horses. “Some few have a very little corn left, but they are all eating horse & burrow [sic] meat & now their horses are dying of starvation so fast, that they will not even have horse meat much longer.” So reported Mary L. Eldridge in a letter to one Mr. Snyder, a Methodist missionary, February 11, 1895. Nor was corroborative testimony lacking. “The past winter entire flocks of sheep have been wiped out by snow and cold,” wrote W. N. Wallace, a business man of Durango, Colorado. “I took a trip into different portions of the Reservation this winter and saw immense numbers of horses and sheep dead and dying.” Joe Wilkins, the trader at Cottonwood Pass, reported a family of eight Indians “having no food for 2 days save that by taking off the outside bark of Pine trees & boiling the inner bark . . .”

The end of winter did not bring an end of the food shortage. Corn and wheat—the most essential of all—remained scarce. Thanks to

7 Alfred Hardy to the I.R.A., Fort Defiance, Arizona, February 12, 1895. MS. in Welsh Collection, I.R.A. corr. Same to same, February 14, 1895. Photostatic copy in possession of the author; original in Welsh Collection, I.R.A. corr. Same to same, April 22, 1895, ibid.; W. N. Wallace to Hardy, Durango, Colorado, April 11, 1895, ibid.
8 Eldridge to Snyder, Jewett, New Mexico, February 11, 1895. MS. in Welsh Collection, I.R.A. corr.
9 Wallace to Hardy, as cited above.
the lack of proper irrigation, the spring of 1895 found no relief in sight. Hardy placed the blame for this squarely upon E. C. Vincent, a civil engineer from Virginia,11 who had been in charge of construction work on the ditches since April, 1894.12 In the course of a conversation with Hardy, Mr. Snyder said:

That he went with Mr. V. in April to Albuquerque to see about buying needful tools, implements, wagons &c. but that it was August before these articles were bought & on hand & work on the Ditches begun. That they commenced work about August 1st with about 75 men, most of whom provided their own shovels, that Mr. Plummer did not like to have them using their own shovels, & thought the Gov't should provide them for that work. That Mr. V. discharged those men, & said he would not thereafter hire any such, and that from that time he continually reduced the working force till it reached 15 or 20, & that that was a fair average from that time on while he was with him into Nov. That when Mr. V. knew an investigation was to be had, he increased the force, & that work was finally stopped in Dec—he thinks the force was increased partly to finish up the ditch before frost & snow came.13

This dilatory procedure appears to have been continued, in an aggravated form, through the early months of 1895. At that time the San Juan Valley—in which irrigation was an imperative necessity—was sufficiently free from snow to permit operations.14 Instead, Vincent established his camp at Red Lake, where ditching at any time before the end of March or April was impracticable, and where irrigation in any event was less urgently needed than on the San Juan. Asked if he was planning to do any work on the San Juan in the spring, Vincent replied "that he did not know."15 "His excuse for not doing work on the San Juan was on account of the whites up there being interested to have the work done, so they could get the Indians' money away from them"16—a poor argument that would have applied with equal force to any part of the reservation.

Hardy's final judgment upon Vincent is contained in a letter to the Indian Rights Association, dated from Fort Defiance, Arizona, on April 22, 1895:

There is no question but Mr. Vincent is criminally negligent in not having been working upon the ditches on the San Juan from last fall, at least, considering the

13 Same to same, February 14, 1895, ibid.
14 Same to same, February 12, 1895, ibid.
15 Same to same, February 19, 1895, ibid.
16 Same to same, February 14, 1895, ibid.
amount and quality of the land that could have been under that system and cultivated this Season, and the vast number of people who could have been fed this coming fall, winter and Spring from Crops which could have been grown there, and the diversity of crops which could have been gathered—the rich bottom lands adapted to most any vegetable, or grain, and the mesa land for grain and alfalfa—to say nothing about himself and men and teams lying idle for weeks or months here...

The Navajo situation was somewhat improved by the combined efforts of their acting agent, Constant Williams, and the Indian Rights Association. It was upon his own responsibility that Captain Williams purchased ten thousand pounds of flour for distribution to the needy—an act greatly to his credit. Its cost finally was assumed by the government. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs authorized Williams to expend $100 for provisions for the poor on the San Juan and $500 for necessary seeds. Most important of all, Congress approved an additional appropriation of $25,000 for the Navajo. That the Indian Rights Association was instrumental in securing it cannot be doubted by one who has studied the documents.

It will be seen that although the Welsh Papers by no means give a complete history of the Navajo during the closing decade of the nineteenth century, they do throw a flood of light upon a not unimportant part thereof—a part, moreover, that is but inadequately documented by official correspondence on file in Washington.

III

Other examples of the work of the Indian Rights Association may be cited. Throughout the eighteen-eighties there was a considerable movement in favor of the appointment of local men as Indian agents. It was argued that a Dakota man, acquainted with the Yankton Sioux, would make a better agent than an appointee from Massa-

17 Same to same, April 22, 1895, ibid.
18 Resolution adopted at a special meeting of the executive committee of the I.R.A., Philadelphia, February 27, 1895, ibid.
20 "... a drop in the bucket ..." Hardy called it. Hardy to the I.R.A., Fort Defiance, Arizona, April 22, 1895, ibid.
21 J. R. Hawley to Herbert Welsh, Senate Chamber, Washington, D. C., January 22, 1895; Wallace to Hardy, Durango, Colorado, April 11, 1895; Hardy to the I.R.A., Fort Defiance, Arizona, April 22, 1895; all in Welsh Collection, I.R.A. corr.
chusetts or New York; that a Wyoming politician would handle the Shoshoni better than a Pennsylvanian. This was known as "home rule," and against it the Indian Rights Association took its stand.

However plausible might be the arguments adduced in its favor, it was subject to great abuse. First of all, the Indians were frequently hated cordially by local whites with whom they often had been at war, and upon whom they had committed depredations even in time of peace. Whatever the merits of the case, there can be no possible "doubt that Westerners lived in constant fear of attack by unruly Indians." The opinion expressed by E. W. Eastman of Eldora, Iowa, can be regarded as typical of the frontier from the Canadian border to the Rio Grande:

Sympathy with Indians is like milk spilled in the ground. It is lost. They are valueless & useless. We have 400 of them left over & domiciled in Iowa. They are tamed. But they are as worthless as so many tamed wolves. After 40 years they are, old & young, yet in their breech clouts, or some donated old clothes, hunting musk rats & fishing along the streams, literally scabs on the state . . .

The elder James George Wright, one of the most competent agents ever in the Indian service, wrote: "I think it will be difficult to find good men in Dak. who are not impregnated with the prevailing sentiment there, that the best place if possible for the Indians is somewhere out of that territory, & whose prejudice would prevent their working for Indian advancement or even to do them justice. . . ."

Again, it must be remembered that the Indians' land was coveted by the whites, particularly by his immediate neighbors. To place them in positions of power and influence would be to invite land grabs and precipitate war with almost mathematical certainty. A letter from Mrs. O. J. Hiles to Herbert Welsh, dated Milwaukee, Wisconsin, July 16, 1889, is of interest in this connection:

My opposition to "home rule" is total. What I can do I will do: whatever our Association can do, I feel sure will be done. But the case is well-nigh hopeless of results. So many years of labor dammed up with political debris, not easily dislodged. A great amount of damage can be done, and almost without exception will be done by the Agents within a short time. The people surrounding the reservations

22 Priest, op. cit., 89.
23 Eastman to Carl Schurz, November 18, 1880. Office of Indian Affairs, Miscellaneous correspondence, E 581/1880. Cited in Priest, op. cit., 89.
24 Wright to Herbert Welsh, Chicago, July 13, 1889. MS. in Welsh Collection, I.R.A. corr.
are ready to push measures as soon as the drawbridges of Eastern opinion are pulled up. And if opposition should in the end overthrow home-rule; things will be in a worse shape than they were when Grant first listened to the cry for Peace toward the Indians. Twenty years of fasting, partial fasting, has whetted the frontier appetite past restraining.  

Forebodings of this pessimistic hue appeared more than justified in 1890, when the ghost dancers so frightened incompetent agents, appointed under the spoils system, as to cause the latter to call upon the troops—and Wounded Knee was the result. The Indian Rights Association could do nothing but call again for the abolition of the spoils system in the administration of Indian affairs.

IV

Many other matters quite as interesting as those already discussed may easily be found in the Welsh Papers. Among them reference may be made to the letters, documents and reports regarding the arrest of a party of Bannock and Shoshoni Indians charged with violation of the game laws of Wyoming in 1895. In this incident—which nearly provoked open hostilities—the state exceeded its authority and itself violated the treaty of 1868, negotiated with the Indians by the United States. Investigations into the conduct of various Indian schools—Carlisle, Haskell and Lincoln—likewise have left a residuum of reports in the Welsh Collection. 

Theodore Roosevelt’s interest in Indian affairs is shown by the presence in the collection of at least six of his letters—one dated April 7, 1897, the other five in the first half of 1900. At least two of the latter are worthy of notice. In the first of these, dated February 10, is enclosed a list of New Yorkers who attended the Lake Mohonk Indian Conference of 1899. The second, dated June 13, contains a request that Welsh recommend five people to visit the Indian reservations in New York state and report to the legislature thereon. Last, but certainly not least, note should be made of a very sugges-

25 Mrs. Hiles to Welsh, July 16, 1889, ibid.
29 Same to same, Albany, N. Y., June 13, 1900. Typescript, ibid.
tive minute in the Indian Rights Association office report covering the month from February 4 to March 3, 1897:

Wrote to President-elect McKinley in regard to the selection of a suitable man for the position of Indian Commissioner. Suggested the appointment of Theodore Roosevelt, or Samuel B. Capen, of Boston; or, if for any reason either of these gentlemen could not be appointed, they would furnish the type of man needed for the place.\(^30\)

Further correspondence on this point, could it be located, might prove to be highly significant. Especially is this so when it is recalled that Francis E. Leupp, the Washington agent of the Indian Rights Association after 1895,\(^31\) became Commissioner of Indian Affairs in December, 1904, nine months after the inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt.\(^32\)

Thus the conclusion is reached. This paper, which at best can be regarded only as a summary, will have served its purpose if it has given an idea of the value, scope, and intrinsic interest of the Welsh Collection.

*Spring Mill, Pennsylvania*  
Alban W. Hoopes

---

