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Weave Baskets for a Living

Two Indians, a Brother and Sister Proud of Their Ancestry, Have Made Home on Thompson's Point in Charlotte for 45 Years

CHARLOTTE, Nov. 15 — A brother and sister, whose Indian parents settled on Thompson's Point in Charlotte in a tent more than 50 years ago, are still carrying on their native trade of making baskets from the same area.

William Obunsawm and his sister, Marian, have supported themselves entirely during the years, their 45 years they have lived on the shores of Lake Champlain in the small house which was built for them by their father.

Harder to Get Wares

They admit, however, that it is becoming increasingly difficult to sell their hand-made wares. Says the brother:

"We don't sell baskets like we used to. It is increasingly hard to get around and as many other people are making products now."

His sister adds: "We used to pile the baskets right on our table here and sell a lot of them to the summer people. Now there are all new people though and they don't buy. We place our baskets around in different places though."

The brother and sister take great pride in their baskets, just as they do in the Indian ancestry.

The Obunsawm's get the material for their baskets from Canada, using brown ash and sweet grass. They color the sweet grass themselves to give the baskets an added attraction.

Born on Canadian Reservation

Both the brother and sister learned their basket weaving as small children while living on the Indian reservation in Canada where they were born. Their mother died when they were very small and they were brought up by an aunt.

Their father set out to find a place to settle, rowing down the Missisquoi River into Lake Champlain. The son recalls now that his father first spent two winters on the shores of Lake Champlain in Burlington, then went over to Lake George, N.Y., before finally settling down on the scenic Thompson's Point in Charlotte.

This was at the turn of the century. There were seven or eight Abnaki Indian families in a colony on Thompson's Point, all living in tents.

It was about 40 years ago that the young Obunsawm's joined their father. The latter says when they arrived, the father had a wooden house all built so the children could live there. This is the same house now occupied by the brother and sister.

Proud of Background

Extremely proud of their background, the Obunsawms always speak Indian to each other, even though they can talk both English and French. Miss Obunsawm says: "We would never want to forget our beautiful language so we talk it to each other all the time." They learned to speak French and English while attending school in Canada.

Although they are the only Indians left in the area, the Obunsawms are members of their tribe from time to time. Another sister, Mrs. Dan Boyce, lives in Montpelier, and other relatives live in Albany, N.Y., and Connecticut.

Of the Abnaki tribe, William says:

"The ones who were here have all died off. The rest are scattered all over the country, but quite a few are still living near Lake George."

His sister added:

"We like it here and it is our home. That is why we have stayed on. We have always been able to support ourselves. Times have changed some though."

ABNAKI INDIANS—William and Marian Obunsawm, brother and sister, sit in their Colchester home where they settled more than 45 years ago. They make the baskets which they are showing and have supported themselves entirely by this occupation which they learned as children on the Indian reservation.

Although William has trouble with his eyes and his sister is not able to do as much close work as she used to, the two continue to make as many baskets as they can sell.

Miss Obunsawm says:

"The people can tell our baskets. They are real good ones, made just like the way we were taught when we were young babies."

The two Abnakins have seen many changes in the 45 years they came to Charlotte and they both say quite frankly:

"One way of life is becoming a thing of the past. But we just want to be able to work on our own ears our own way. Weaving baskets is about the only thing we can do."

Deaths and Funerals

MRS. WILSON VIGEANT

MONTPELIER, Nov. 15 — Mrs. Marie Vigeant, 58, wife of Wilson Vigeant of 21 Fisher St., a native and life long resident of Montpelier, died Sunday morning at 4 o'clock at Heaton Hospital where she was taken Saturday night. Although in poor health for some time, Mrs. Vigeant had been able to be about her home until she was stricken Saturday night.

Born on May 28, 1896, Marie (Buckner) Vigeant was one of five children born to Albert and Kathrine Buckner. The mother died when she was a child and she was brought up by the family of Remi Guyer.

In November, 1922, she was married to Wilson Vigeant who survives her. She also leaves a son, Francis Vigeant and a daughter, Miss Ruth Vigeant; one sister, Mrs. Leona Brown of Montpelier; a brother, Percy Ledebroy of Northfield and a nephew, Earl Brown of Barre. Mrs. Vigeant's eldest brother, Charles Buckner, died suddenly just four weeks ago in Bristol, Conn.

Mrs. Vigeant was a member of St. Augustine's Church.

MRS. MARIAN JONES

WINCHENDON, Mass., Nov. 11 —Mrs. Marion Thomas Jones, 57, Pleasant St., Winchendon, Mass., died unexpectedly at her home Saturday night. She was the wife of the late Donovan B. Jones.

She was born in Richford, Vt., Dec. 11, 1896, the daughter of Lafayette Thomas and Alden Brown Thomas. She has lived in Winchendon 35 years.

She graduated from the University of Vermont in 1924. She taught school in Montclair, N.J.

Plainfield. Mr. Kizer was a carpenter by trade and had worked for many years in Barre and Montpelier. For the past four years he had been employed at the Shelburne shipyards.

On June 5, 1939 he was married to Gladys M. Knapp in Plainfield by Rev. A.W. Hewitt. Mrs. Kizer survives her husband and he also leaves two sisters, Mrs. Burt (Sadie) Fowler of Plainfield and Mrs. Bernice Martin of Lawrence, Mass., a half brother, Clarence Kizer of Barre and a half sister, Mrs. Edward (Margaret) Martin of Windsor, several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2 from the Barber and Lanier funeral home in Montpelier. Rev. G.R. FitzPatrick will officiate and burial will be in the Green Mount Cemetery in Montpelier. Friends may call at the funeral home Tuesday from 2 to 4 and from 7 to 9 p.m.

MRS. EMILY PETERSON

SALISBURY, Nov. 15—Mrs. Emily Philipsen Peterson, 82, died this morning at Porter Hospital following a long period of ill health.

She was born in Copenhagen, Denmark on Oct. 31, 1872. She was the daughter of Will and Ina Philipsen. She has resided in Salisbury since 1898.

She leaves two daughters, Mrs. Maynard Hatch of Nantucket and Mrs. Tracy Kennedy of Hartford, Conn.; four sons, William of Hyde Park, James of Salisbury, Edard of Forestville, Conn., and Frank of Flushing, L.I., N.Y.; nine grandchildren. She also leaves two brothers, John Philipsen of Hardwick and Dr. Herman Philipsen of Boston.

Funeral services will be held at the Congregational Church in Salisbury on Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Burial will be in the Salisbury Village Cemetery. Friends may call at her late home.

FUNERALS

Funeral of Mrs. Stackpole

Funeral services for Mrs. George R. Stackpole were held yesterday in St. Stephen's Church, Winooski, with Rt. Rev. Mgr. William Crowley officiating at the requiem high mass. Rev. Daniel P. Lyons, SSS, of St. Michael's College was present in the sanctuary.

Mgr. Crowley read the committal prayers at the grave in the family lot in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

The bearers were Lester Cruse, Robert Fitzgerald, Maurice Fayette, Edward Huard, Louis Longe and Charles Fitzgerald.

Attending the funeral were teachers and students from Burlington High School and Memorial Grade School, Mrs. Stackpole's former home. Friends from Albany and New York City, N.Y., were also present.

Deaths and Funerals—Page 11

The world's largest smokestack belongs to the Anaconda Copper Co. at Great Falls, Mont. It is 585 feet tall with an inside diameter of 60 feet at the top.

'I'm Sick and Tired of the Treatment'

Aiken Irate over Transfer of Federal Immigration Offices from St. Albans

ST. ALBANS, Vt., Nov. 15 (AP)—Sen. Aiken (R-Vt) said tonight he will protest the transfer of Ernest E. Salsbury, district director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and his deputy, Percy Gee.

Salsbury and so successors were appointed after he had been ordered to take a similar post in San Antonio, Tex. Gee was appointed to Boston.

"We are not going to let our people be pushed around either," Aiken said. "If the administration wants war, there's one. But I am sick and tired of the treatment we're getting."

Salsbury left St. Albans tonight for his new post. His departure followed the visit here this week-end of General Joseph Swing, U.S. commissioner for immigration.

A committee of 10 persons made up of professional and industrial leaders in St. Albans has been formed to keep the district office of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service in St. Albans.

LOCAL BRIEFS

Mrs. Moore to Entertain — The Sigma No Mother's Club will meet today at 2:30 at the home of Mrs. Floyd Moore, 14 Kingsland Ter., to discuss Christmas gift plans. Mrs. Harold Williams will be co-hostess.

To Sew Dressings — Tuscarora Circle, Fisa's Daughters, will meet Wednesday at 2 p.m. instead of today, at the home of Mrs. Rhoda Rollins, 111 Lyman Ave. Sewing will be done on cancer dressings.

To Elect Officers—Auxiliary 23 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, will elect officers Wednesday at 8 p.m. at the K of P Hall, 82 Church St.

Exhibiting Stamps — Twenty-one local stores are cooperating this week with the Burlington Kiwanis Club is celebrating National Stamp Collecting Week. Exhibit frames covering nearly every phase of the world's most popular hobby stamp collecting, are being displayed in these store windows.

VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS

In the Mary Fletcher Hospital, to Mr. and Mrs. Donald Jean Hatch, 208 Pearl St., a son, Nov. 13. To Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Farmer of Hinesburg, a son, Nov. 13. To Mr. and Mrs. Francis Farmer of Hinesburg, a daughter, Nov. 13. To Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Prescott of Jericho, a daughter, Nov. 13. To Mr. and Mrs. Richard DeSorrento of Burlington, a son, Nov. 13. To Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Bushey of 12 Rose St., Nov. 13.

DEATHS

COTE—Mrs. Marion Thomas — Winchendon, Mass., Nov. 11, age 62. Funeral — Monday, Nov. 15, 10 a.m.

VIGEANT—Mrs. Wilson — Montpelier — Nov. 14, age 58. Funeral — Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2 p.m.

WHITCOMB—Mrs. Emily — Salisbury — Nov. 14, age 82.

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2 The Burlington Free Press Tuesday, Nov. 16, 1954

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1950 FORD CLUB COUPE—Radio, heater, gleaming 2-tone paint. Beautiful! Guaranteed. Cut $100 to $695 or $145 down!
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1952 CHRYSLER WINDSOR DELUXE — 4-door sedan, radio, heater, POWER STEERING. 4-tone green, automatic transmission. Guaranteed. Cut for this sale $250 below average to $1350, or $450 down.

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