

Notes about Captain James Allen Pettes and Relatives, collected by J. G. McHone as of 6 March 2010:

On Feb. 24, 2010 our carpenter found a hand-written label on the heavy paper beneath old lap siding on the front of our cape-cod style house at 9 Dexters Lane, in North Head. The label reads "Capt. Jas. Pettes, Grand Manan" and it is apparently a shipping label for building materials sent to our location. We have found a 3 cent American coin dated 1865 between floorboards, so it is possible that our house was built around then, corresponding to the time that James A. Pettes became an inn keeper of the Marble Ridge House not far up the hill. In fact, our old deed for the house gives it a street location on Marble Ridge Road, which is now Dexters Lane. I have been researching Capt. Pettes, hoping to learn if and when he actually built and lived in our house.

Based on the information below this section, I can construct a partial history and fill in some gaps with guesses.

It starts with James B. Pettes, born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1791. He married Catherine, a woman from Maine who was 20 years younger. They lived in Boston, but in 1828 Mr. Pettes started to travel frequently to Grand Manan for his trading business. Their son James Allen Pettes was born on May 15, 1836, while their daughter Elizabeth had been born four years earlier.

As he had a small ship, James B. Pettes was called "Captain" Pettes. In 1841, the family emigrated to Grand Manan, where Capt. Pettes built a house and business at Cameron's Cove, which today we call Pettes Cove. The business included a store where merchandise and groceries were sold. He also bought hake and other fish from local fishermen, processed them on site, and sold them in Eastport and probably elsewhere. At that time there was no way to keep fish except by salting, drying, or pickling them before transportation and sale.

On November 29, 1858, James Allen Pettes married Mary Ann Burnham, who was also an American (from Calais, Maine) who as a child in 1841 had moved with her family to Grand Manan. He also developed a profession of buying and selling fish, along with fishing himself for herring and other types. In addition, in the mid-1860s he and his wife became inn keepers of the Marble Ridge House, which had about 10 rooms and was located in what is now open field across from Robert Moses' house. The lane to it was Marble Ridge Road, now Dexters Lane.

Because the Marble Ridge House was not also a residence for the owner, sometime in the 1860s James A. Pettes built the house I now own at 9 Dexters Lane as a home for himself and wife Mary, a short distance down the hill from the inn. It was a standard Cape Cod style, 2 large & 2 small rooms under 2 medium & 2 small rooms, with a central stairway. A large addition with two more rooms and an attic was added to the back of the house sometime in the 1920s.

Because James A. Pettes had his own good-sized sloop for trading fish, he was also called Captain. Capt. Pettes was a busy man; in addition to keeping his inn, he fished during winters, and from 1871 to 1875 he ran a packet boat (a regularly scheduled small ship or sloop to carry goods and passengers) between Grand Manan and Eastport, Maine. While away, his wife Mary did the inn keeping. Although they had no children of their own, they eventually adopted a girl who was born November 10, 1883. No name or information about her is recorded, so perhaps she did not survive to adulthood.

By 1898 Capt. Pettes owned the Marathon Inn, which he expanded by moving the Marble Ridge House close to it (now The Annex) as well as his father's house from Pettes Cove (now The Captain's Quarters). His father had died in 1866, and his mother in 1881. Capt. James A. Pettes died 10 Aug 1910, and Mary

died 26 Aug 1919. They are buried in the Anglican cemetery in North Head, along with their parents. They left no heirs.

Source Information:

From the 1871 census for Grand Manan:

Pettes, James, age 37, member Church of England, race English,
occupation Trader

-----, Mary, age 35, member Church of England, race English

1861 census

Pettes, James B, Male, Head, age 67, b. Connecticut, occupation Merchant

-----, Catherine, Female, Wife, age 47, b. Maine, occupation Spinster

[and their son]

Pettes, James A, age 25, b. Boston, Mass., occupation Merchant

-----, Mary A., Wife, age 26, b. Calis, Maine, occupation Spinster

1851 census

Pettes , James, age 55, born USA, Family Head, Merchant, arrived 1828

-----, Catherine, age 38, b. USA, Wife

-----, Elizabeth, age 19, b. USA, Daughter

-----, James, age 15, b. USA, Son

Recorded at the North Head Anglican Church cemetery:

James Allen Pettes - died 10 Aug 1910, age 75 years

Mary A. Pettes, his wife - died 26 Aug 1919, age 84 years

[and his parents]

James B. Pettes, born in Hartford, Connecticut 1791 - died 8 Feb 1866, age
75 years, 1 month

Catherine, his wife - died 19 May 1881, age 68 years, 6 months

From "Report on the Fisheries of the Bay of Fundy" (1851) p. 92:

Cameron's Cove - This is a narrow cove ... southward of the "Swallow's
Tail"... At this place, Mr. J. B. Pettes, an American citizen, has a neat
fishing establishment, and a store for retailing merchandise and
groceries. It is alleged, that he manages to transact a profitable
business, without himself entering into the fishery, by purchasing green
fish from the fishermen, and curing them on his own premises.

From the Grand Manan Genealogies website

<http://kencarrico.tripod.com/index.htm>:

Mary Ann Burnham [daughter of Abraham Burnham] was born July 08, 1836 in
USA, and died (Unknown). She married James Allen Pettes November 29, 1858.

He was born May 15, 1836 in USA, and died (Unknown)

[see above for death dates]

More about Mary Ann Burnham:

Fact 1: 1841, Immigrated to Canada

More about James Allen Pettes:

Fact 1: 1841, Immigrated to Canada

Fact 2: Inn keeper

Child of Mary Burnham and James Pettes is:

Daughter Pettes, b. November 10, 1883; d. Unknown; Adopted child.

More about Abraham Burnham, Mary's father:

Abraham Burnham was born 1807 in New Hampshire, USA, and died May 21, 1881 in Grand Manan N.B. He married Catherine C. Belmore August 1832 in Calais, Maine. She was born 1816 in St. Andrews, N.B., and died February 16, 1900 in Grand Manan, N B. Abraham immigrated to Canada in 1840.

I see no record of a Pettes marriage on Grand Manan in the 1850s, although I assume her family lived on Grand Manan after they immigrated to Canada from Calais, Maine in 1840 or 1841.

From county shipping records, Mary Pettes is listed as a co-owner of the "Anglo-American," a 93 ton sloop built somewhere in Charlotte County, NB in 1866. It was wrecked in 1871. From a web page I saw that Capt. Pettes' sloop was named "Farmer."

James A. Pettes testified under oath for a U.S. Fisheries Commission in 1877 that he was 41 years old, lived in North Head, was born in Boston, and moved with his parents to Grand Manan when he was 7 years old (i.e. around 1843). Also that he had been a hotel keeper for "10 or 15 years" and was still a U.S. citizen, not naturalized, and that he had run a packet boat between Grand Manan and Eastport from 1871 to 1875. In the winter he fished for herring, and also bought/sold local fish, carrying them to Eastport and other places. The commission questioned him about the local fishing industry, about which he knew a lot, but they badgered him about his estimates of total annual values.

From Jim Leslie, owner/operator of the Marathon Inn:

His wife Mary kept their inn called "Marble Ridge House" [near the top of Marble Ridge Road, now Dexters Lane] when James was away. This hotel was built in the 1860s, and legend has it that Capt. Pettes won it in a poker game. He moved this building in 1898 to become the "annex" of the Marathon Inn, which has been open since 1871. The annex does not have quarters for the owner, so apparently Capt. Pettes did not live there while running it. The Marathon Inn was named after Byron's poem about Isles of Greece. He obviously owned both inns. and his house at Pettes Cove was also moved to the Marathon in 1898, where it is now called the "Captain's Quarters." During these moves three local men were apparently killed (their names are recorded at the Inn), but the actual circumstances are not known and oddly, no news reports have been found about it.

Some travelers described a visit to Grand Manan on Oct. 22, 1881 in the Boston Evening Transcript, in which they arrived at the Marble Ridge House around midnight (walking from their landing at Whale Cove) but had no trouble rousing Captain Pettes to let them in and to provide a meal. I don't know if he was also running what is now the Marathon Inn at that time. Pettes and his wife were complimented about their hotel service, in a St. Andrews Bay Pilot news article dated Aug. 22, 1878, as were the W.B. McLaughlin's for their inn in Seal Cove.

In the 1878 Harper's Monthly travel story: "Until recently visitors have had to depend on such chance hospitality as the plain homes of the islanders could

afford. Two small public houses have now been opened at Flagg's Cove [North Head]. They provide comfortable accommodations and a fair table at reasonable prices." It seems likely these were the Marble Ridge House and the Marathon Hotel, as the Marathon is reported by Jim Leslie to have started in 1871.

In the 1912 Harper's Monthly story, only one "tavern" in North Head was open. According to the "buxom" landlady: "The other hotel has closed," she said. "It was a larger house than this one, but the folks got old and didn't want to bother with strangers anymore. No, I don't think the house will be opened again - not right away." The Marathon Inn was probably the largest, as it is now.

A note from Karen Dunham:

"The son James was b. about 1835. d. 10 Aug 1910. Married Mary Burnham 29 Nov 1858. He was a hotel keeper, a ship owner, owner of one of the first livery stables. His family lived at Cameron's Cove, just south of Swallowtail."

Cameron's Cove is the present Pettes Cove where James B. Pettes kept his store and fish curing business, and where James A. Pettes was raised. Presumably his mother Catherine continued to live there after the elder Capt. Pettes died in 1866. Also presumably, their house is the one moved by the younger Capt. Pettes to become part of the Marathon Inn in 1898.

Sometime after his marriage to Mary Ann Burnham in 1858, James Allen Pettes probably built the house that we now own at 9 Dexters Lane, and by the 1860s he was running the nearby Marble Ridge House, in addition to other business and shipping ventures.

In 1884, he and John Anson Ingersoll sailed to New York and bought the "Flushing" for use as the first steamboat packet or ferry for Grand Manan. It served from 1884 to 1900.