

## PEMBROKE

**Ely Samuel Parker** (1828-1895) was born in Pembroke and was the grandnephew of the famous Seneca, Red Jacket. His early education was obtained at mission schools and private academies in Western New York. Choosing law for a career, especially to help the Seneca's, he devoted three years of study as a law clerk in Ellicottville, N.Y. Then he was thwarted by a Supreme Court decision depriving him and other Native Americans admission to the bar as "non-citizens." Parker next focused his ambitions on a future in civil engineering, taking courses at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, graduating in 1851.

During the Civil War, Parker was credited with raising 628 Iroquois volunteers, some of whom served as guards and nurses at the Union prison camp for Confederates at Elmira. In June, 1863 he was given a commission and worked as a division engineer with the 17<sup>th</sup> Army Corps. Three months later he joined General Grant's forces at Vicksburg.

From then on— at Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge and elsewhere, General Grant used him as one of the engineers who laid out entrenchment lines and battle fortifications. On August 30, 1864 he was made Grant's military secretary, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and became the officer who transcribed the articles of surrender at Appomattox. As of the date of Appomattox he was commissioned a Brigadier General of Volunteers and on March 2, 1867 he had the distinction of being brevetted in the regular army as a Captain, Major, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel and Brigadier General— all on the same day. He resigned on April 26, 1869.

When Grant took office as President, he appointed Parker as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Barely a year after he assumed office, Parker faced charges of defrauding the government, but was completely exonerated. A committee of the House of Representatives held lengthy hearings and cleared him. In its report, the committee stated it had "not found evidence of fraud or corruption on the part of the Indian Commissioner." Even though he was exonerated, Parker resigned what he called a thankless position, to "enjoy my declining days in peace and quiet."

His last position was as a supply clerk with the New York City Police Department. He died in 1895, and is buried beside his forefathers in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo.

Taken from: Daily Newspaper article dated July 2, 1976

**Alonzo B. Webster** is listed in the 1850 and 1860 census as living in the Town of Pembroke. He served three years in the 7<sup>th</sup> Michigan Calvary during the Civil War, and at the close of the war his regiment went to the Rocky Mountains with General Custer and was mustered out of the U.S. service at Salt Lake in 1866. During the late Indian Wars in Kansas, Mr. Webster was employed by the government as a scout at General Sheridan's headquarters and carried all dispatches between Fort Hays and Fort Dodge. He arrived in Dodge City in 1872 and was one of the original occupants, having viewed the town site before there was even a settlement. He was elected Ford County Treasurer in 1873 and was still listed as Treasurer in 1877 when Wyatt Earp was Marshall for

Dodge City. He was elected Mayor of Dodge City in 1881 and one of his first acts was to enforce an ordinance against carrying fire arms. He was ordered by the Governor of Kansas to stop a bull fight scheduled to be held on July 3 and 4 of 1884, in Dodge City. True to his reputation as a man of action and “Dodge City’s Fighting Mayor”, he replied to the Governor that “Dodge City isn’t in Kansas” and the fight was held. It was the only bull fight fought in the United States. In appreciation of Webster’s effort to bring law and order to Dodge City he was presented with a shotgun inlaid with gold trimmings. His obituary stated; “he was one of the best known and most-highly respected citizens of the State of Kansas”.

Submitted by Lois Brockway, Pembroke Historian

**James McGraw** (1860-1948) came to Corfu (Pembroke) in 1878 at the age of eighteen to teach at the Corfu Union School. In 1886 he was principal of the Corfu School and he resigned to sell trade magazines. In 1888, he purchased the American Journal of Railway Appliances. In 1902 he formed the McGraw Publishing Company in New York City and in 1909 merged his company with the John Hill Publishing Company to form the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. It would become one of the largest publishing organizations in the world. McGraw and his wife (Mildred Whittlesey of Corfu) would take occasional trips back to Corfu.

Submitted by Allan Starkweather, Town of Pembroke Co-Historian and Village of Corfu Historian

**John L. Childs** (1863-1953) was born in England and at the age of three his parents immigrated and settled in the vicinity of Indian Falls (Pembroke). At the age of thirteen he began working on various farms in the western part of Genesee County and when he was seventeen he entered the Batavia school. He became a school teacher and was appointed principal of the Greenville Academy at the foot of the Catskills. He contracted pneumonia, which left him with very poor health, necessitating a journey to a warmer climate. He relocated to California where he continued teaching. He changed careers and entered the newspaper business. For many years he owned the Crescent City News and after selling that paper he became owner of the Courier. In his own words he is “editor, owner, publisher, linotype expert, reporter and devil” on his paper.

He interested in politics grew and he joined the Republican Party. In 1892 he was elected County Clerk, serving two terms. While holding the office of County Clerk he studied law and was admitted to the bar. At the close of his second term he was elected District Attorney, serving four years. In the fall of 1903, at the expiration of his term, Childs was elected Judge of the Superior Court for the County of Del Norte and served for three successive terms.

There have been many attempts to form a new state comprised of northern California and southern Oregon. The secession movement of 1941 was supported by the local pioneering residents who had grown weary of unfulfilled promises to help fund highway projects. The abundant supply of timber and minerals were largely inaccessible due to the lack of sufficient roads and bridges into the rugged mountain border country.

On November 7, 1941 an alliance to obtain federal aid for the construction and repair of bridges and roads was formed. A local newspaper ran a contest to name the proposed new state and Jefferson was selected as the winning entry. Yreka was designated as the temporary state capital where the "State of Jefferson Citizen's Committee" was formed.

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, Judge John L. Childs of Crescent City in Del Norte County was elected governor. A torchlight parade with horses and marching bands in Yreka followed the inauguration which was held on the courthouse lawn.

The new proposed State of Jefferson was scheduled to be announced during the week of December 8, 1941 but on December 7<sup>th</sup> Pearl Harbor was bombed and as a result the secession was abandoned. The region eventually received good roads which were constructed to access the minerals and timber.

Submitted by June Chamberlain, History Department patron