

nothing but a big rifle, but secured a specimen with a hard-nosed bullet.

These observations establish one nesting record for the Surf-bird, but we may venture to infer from the meager data obtained that this bird nests, though perhaps rarely, on the high mossy slopes in the region between the Yukon and Tanana Rivers. These mountains are generally not rugged, but rounded, with timber confined in many localities to the creek valleys. The birds seen in the high Alaska Range were not nesting, but their presence there may be suggestive. Many of these high mountains have slopes covered with the same type of vegetation as that on McKinley Creek, and it is probable that later observations will prove the Surf-bird to be a summer resident of that section.

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A VISIT TO TOM LINCOLN'S HOUSE WITH SOME AUDUBONIANA.

BY CHARLES W. TOWNSEND.

ON June 27, 1833, Tom Lincoln brought to Audubon at Natashquan, Labrador, a sparrow he had shot which was at once recognized by the naturalist as a new species, and was named by him Lincoln's Finch. Tom Lincoln's name is well known to ornithologists only in this connection, and little is known about the man. In a recent visit to his son, Dr. Arthur T. Lincoln, at the old homestead at Dennysville, Maine, I found many memories of him and of Audubon and of the Labrador trip.

In 1636, Tom's ancestor, Thomas Lincoln, came from the west of England and built a house at Hingham, Massachusetts, a house that is still standing and still occupied by a Lincoln. Tom's grandfather was General Benjamin Lincoln of the Revolutionary war. His father, Theodore, with James Russell and Thomas Lowell in 1786 bought two townships about the mouth of the Dennys River near Eastport, Maine. Here Theodore, called the Judge, built his house on a knoll that commanded a beautiful view

down the river towards Cobscook Bay, and up the stream to the lumber mill in which his fortunes were built. Here Tom was born on March 27, 1812.

It was probably through the Shattucks of Boston that Audubon came to know the Lincolns, and through the Lincolns the schooner *Ripley* was engaged in which Audubon sailed from Eastport for Labrador on June 6, 1833, taking with him Tom Lincoln, George C. Shattuck, William Ingalls, Joseph Coolidge and his own son, John Woodhouse Audubon, all young men.

Mrs. Audubon, who had come to see her husband off on his Labrador trip, spent most of that summer at the house in Dennysville, and there is a tradition that they had both visited the Lincolns the summer before. A worsted lamp mat, far from artistic it must be confessed, is treasured as an example of Mrs. Audubon's handiwork during her second visit. A small horn spoon, a gift of hers, is the only other tangible memento of her visit, but one can easily picture the great naturalist sitting before the blazing logs in the huge fireplace, eagerly discussing plans for his long contemplated trip, and his fine and devoted wife patiently waiting in the old house for his return.

The house is large and built on generous but simple lines, a plain peaked-roofed house with the door in the middle of the broad side. The rooms are large with great open fireplaces—there were at one time sixteen in the house—high wooden mantelpieces, and wainscotting, and they are filled with fine old furniture—secretaries, highboys, four-post beds and the like. Old portraits and engravings hang on the walls, but Tom's likeness, such was the austere modesty of the man, is represented only by an old Daguerreotype, the sole portrait he reluctantly permitted to be made of himself.

The old kitchen is kept as it was in Audubon's day. There is an open fireplace where one can look up and see the stars through a chimney where Swifts roost in great numbers, heedless of the smoke; there is an immense brick hearth where, in Tom's day, Passamaquoddy Indians often slept before the fire, entering the doors which were always hospitably left unfastened; there are cranes and skillets, great iron pots and huge frying-pans with handles nearly four feet long, broilers and toasters, bellows and tin lanterns and tallow dips.

A journal, kept by Tom on the Labrador trip, reveals him as a man of considerable scientific attainments as a naturalist, while a few of his water color sketches of shells and of birds show that his artistic talents and regard for accuracy and detail were of superior quality. These characteristics of the man are generally unknown and they fully justify Audubon in honoring him in naming the new sparrow.

Dr. Lincoln told me that his father was extremely modest about his own attainments and that he had destroyed many of his sketches and had cut from the book the pages of his journal, intending to burn it, but, fortunately, part of it was saved. It is all interesting reading and I have transcribed a few passages:

"June 18 [1833]. We left the vessell [at American Harbor or Natashquan] this morning and proceeded along the shore among the Esquimaux [Mingan] Islands towards the south west. We soon came across three small islands on two of which the *Sterna hirundo* bred in considerable numbers—they lay two, seldom three, eggs much resembling in form and colour those of *Larus marinus*—they lay in the grass without forming any nest, keep up a great outcry when disturbed, flying over our heads above the reach of our guns."

"July 4. Mr. A. finished a drawing of a new finch which I shot at Esquimaux Islands, there are several rare and beautiful plants peculiar to the country represented upon it."

"August 6. John Audubon, Coolidge and myself went about four miles to the river which is put down on the Chart as the largest on the coast [Blanc Sablon] and found it a mere rocky brook. . . . [There is] a beautiful little waterfall of about thirty feet. Like true Yankees we cut our names in the rock that if perchance some luckless fellow should wander so far away from the habitable part of the earth he should find that he was not the first outcast."

"Aug. 9. Today in a small brook near our vessell we caught a mess of the finest trouts we ever saw but paid dearly for our sport being nearly destroyed by the black flies and musquitos."

"Aug. 11. We bid adieu to Labrador without much regret probably never to see that wretched country again. We had been disappointed in every thing concerning it. Indeed we had never the truth told us concerning any one thing and it was only the

outrageously exaggerated accounts and in many cases stories wholly without foundation that induced us to come hither. We were told that the sea birds of nearly all kinds that live on the coast of Maine were so abundant at Labrador in the breeding season that we should have no difficulty at any time of getting any number we might want. The Esquimaux were represented to us as innumerable, and it was constantly reported that Chevalier [at St. Paul River] had more than two hundred constantly in his employ. The Moravian settlement which makes such a figure in the accounts of Labrador and which is reported to have made such an improvement in the condition of the Esquimaux, and to be of such magnitude and importance in the country was equally magnified in our eyes before learning the true state of the case. But instead of all this the birds excepting two or three species were *exceedingly* rare, so scarce that with all our exertions we failed in getting one fifth as many as we intended. As to the Esquimaux, we did not see *one* and there was not one within a thousand miles of us. The hopeful 'Moravian Settlement' consists of five miserable wretches who being clothed and fed by those who know no better are content to lay torpid like toads in their holes; they cannot do the Esquimaux much harm for there is not one within two hundred leagues of them. As for the latter it is no wonder that there is none on this part of the coast: it is impossible for them to exist. For the Hudson's bay Company have destroyed every living thing on the land. . . . When the fish are destroyed as according to present appearances they soon will be and the birds too, what will then be in Labrador. The destruction of fish by the cod fishers, of the birds by the *eggers* and men employed in getting feathers is too *wicked*."

Dr. Lincoln has some interesting reminiscences of his father whom he always thought looked like Abraham Lincoln, and, curiously enough, wrote like him. In his later life he almost never used a gun but kept up an interest in birds and everything else in nature until the day of his death, although this interest was eclipsed by his work in the antislavery cause. Once, in his early youth, the Doctor asked his father what sort of a man Audubon was, to which he answered after a moment's hesitation, almost as though to himself: "He was a nice man but Frenchy as thunder."

"In after years," said the Doctor, "I asked him about his 'Frenchy' remark and came to the conclusion that he referred only to that emotional manner that so many of that race have."

I was shown a pamphlet autographed by J. J. Audubon entitled "An account of some experiments made on the habits of the vultures inhabiting Carolina, the Turkey Buzzard, and the Carrion Crow particularly as it regards the extraordinary powers of smelling, usually attributed to them" by J. Bachman. This pamphlet confirms Audubon's experiments which show the lack of the sense of smell in these birds, an opinion which was severely criticised abroad.

The following letter from Audubon to Tom in Dr. Lincoln's possession shows Tom's interest in birds and other objects of Natural History, as well as Audubon's affection and respect for Tom.

Charleston, S. C., November 7, 1833.

My dear Thomas—Your letter of the 22d Octr gave me much pleasure and I thank you for it—Since here we have found the *Wood Wren* in Winter quarters and pretty abundant—My friend John Bachman presented me with a new *Sylvia* and Doer Townsend of Phila with a new *Emberiza*; the latter quite a handsome species—I have added 4 species of Water birds to my collection since I saw you—These although not new are very rare in our Country and never were seen before although they had been indicated—I am glad that *Parus hudsonicus* is found in your vicinity, and I assure you that I should be grateful to you for a few good skins of that bird—as many of the Pine Gros beak, White winged, and common Cross beaks and Canada Jays as you can or will spare me—I am sadly in want of Northern Owls and Hawks also—I think that we have 2 species of *black headed* Titmouse (*Parus*) in the U. S. and believe that the northern one differs from that found in the South—be so good as to shoot a few and send the skins and *measurements* taken before the birds are skinned—

You paid John your portion of the Lepraux expedition expenses—In a few weeks I will ship you a box of *Southern* bird skins which I hope will be welcome to you, as they will all be new to you—Should you meet with the Willow Grouse, let me know—I hope that your Brother & our friend Harris have had good success in Hunting and fishing with old Clark—I have written to Ed Harris to join me in my next expedition but have got no answer—I am sorry that you cannot come for I think it would be an excellent oppy for you to see the Country &c—how is your Brother the Doer? remember me to him and to the rest of your family—remember me to Wm Curtis also and to Capn Emery & Coolidge, as well as to Joseph—what is he doing—ask of him to write to me at this place promptly—

You will receive some shells from the Floridas along with the Bird skins in a few weeks—

Adieu God bless & prosper you—

Your friend

J. J. Audubon.

To

Thomas Lincoln Junr Esq

Dennis-ville near Eastport Maine

98 Pinckney St., Boston, Mass.

RECOGNIZING INDIVIDUAL BIRDS BY SONG.

BY ARETAS A. SAUNDERS.

IN the past few years considerable interest has arisen in those problems of bird life that can only be satisfactorily answered by tracing the movements of individual birds. The method of trapping and banding birds has awakened much interest, and results from such work are now appearing. In this connection a question has occurred to me, and probably to others. Is it not possible to recognize and trace the movements of individual birds by other means than banding?

I do not mean to propose any substitute for banding, for no return record by other means can be so satisfactory and indisputable as that of a bird bearing a definitely numbered band. But it would seem entirely possible to supplement the work of banding by other means, that, even though less satisfactory in a general way, would prove of value, and might solve problems that could not be solved by banding.

Occasional individual birds differ so distinctly and peculiarly in song from all others of their species that the species of the singer is not recognizable till the bird is seen. Once such individuals are known they are clearly marked, and returns to definite localities can be obtained from them. Similar returns might also be made from birds of unusual plumage. Some returns of this sort have been put on record in ornithological literature. (For example see Mailliard, Condor, XXII, pp. 38-39.)