September 2015

Albert B. Donworth Correspondence

Albert Bernard Donworth 1867-1955

Hilda McLeod Jacob

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DONWORTH, ALBERT B.

Machias, 1867 -
Albert B. Donworth was born in Machias on April 11, 1867, but has been a resident of Houlton for many years. He attended Bowdoin College and received his B.S. Degree from West Point in 1891. He was a First Lieutenant in the Spanish-American War and is at present Judge Advocate of the United Spanish War Veterans, Department of Maine. He was admitted to the Maine Bar in 1900, and is a member of the American Bar Association, the Aroostook Bar Association, and of the Sons of the American Revolution. He has been Chairman of the Republican District Congressional Committee since 1936. He is a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity, the National Geographic Society, and of the Houlton Lodge of Elks. In 1932 he was a delegate to the International Congress of Comparative Law held at the Hague, Holland.

In recent years Mr. Donworth has traveled extensively.

---Adapted from article in (Machias) Union-Republican, April 25, 1940 and "Who's Who in New England".
April 30, 1940

Albert B. Donworth, Esq.
Houlton
Maine

Dear Mr. Donworth:

Requests are coming in for your book, THE REASON WHY COLUMBUS SAILED, and we are of course adding it to our order list; for we purchase for lending all non-fiction by Maine authors.

We write to you at present, however, in regard to the Maine Author Collection. You perhaps know of this exhibit, comprised of about a thousand inscribed, presentation volumes, written by Maine persons. We also gather all available information regarding our authors; and the whole increases in interest and value each year.

We hope that you will wish to inscribe and present a copy of THE REASON WHY COLUMBUS SAILED; and also send us some biographical information.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of the new book, which according to accounts is sure to please many.

Very truly yours,

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

BY

hmj

SECRETARY
Secretary
Maine State Library
Augusta, Maine

Dear Mrs. Jacobi:

In reference to the book of which I am the author, "The Reason Why Columbus Sailed", your letter of April 30, has been duly received. I was away for a few days and received this letter upon my return. I will be glad to furnish an autographed copy of my book for your library and also send you one of the reviews of the book. My name is also in "Who's Who In New England". The book is going by express today. Enclosed is a review of the book. Thanking you for your letter.

Very truly yours,

Albert B. Donworth

Kindly remember me to Mr. Hall the librarian as I have had a number of pleasant calls at his office.
May 10, 1940

Albert B. Donworth, Esq.
Houlton
Maine

Dear Mr. Donworth:

Your prompt and generous response to our recent letter delights us. It is easy to realize, upon only glancing at the book, why it is making a favorable impression, and we are particularly pleased to add it to the Maine Author Collection.

Thank you, too, for your kind letter and the review of your book. These are most interesting additions to our files.

Please accept our sincere thanks for the inscribed exhibit copy of THE REASON WHY COLUMBUS SAILED, and our best wishes for its success.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

HMJ

SECRETARY

Mr. Hall sends his regards.
Historical Book, “The Reason Why Columbus Sailed” Work of Albert B. Donworth, Houlton

“The Reason Why Columbus Sailed,” 130 page volume written by Albert B. Donworth of Houlton, has recently been received at the Porter Memorial library in Machias as a gift from the writer.

Mr. Donworth is a native of Machias, but has been a resident of Houlton for a number of years. We are printing below story of the publication.

That Christopher Columbus learned from the exploits of the Norse seamen the information necessary for his voyage across the Atlantic leading to his “discovery” of America is the theme of an historical book recently completed by Albert B. Donforth, local attorney. The interesting 130 page monograph, printed by Thomas Todd Company and published by Chapman and Grimes, Inc., Boston is the latest addition to the growing list of publications by Aroostook authors, and is entitled, “The Reason Why Columbus Sailed.”

Although the work was completed in September of 1939, residents of this section of the State have not heard much about the volume because Mr. Donworth decided to put his book to the acid test of reception by strangers before submitting the publication locally. But this has already obtained favorable comment from large metropolitan papers and from the history departments of various colleges.

Attracts Attention

The Boston Sunday Post gave a complimentary notice and the history department of Northeastern University has said the “point of view concerning the journey to Iceland is interesting and vigorously maintained.” While not all historians may agree with the conclusions drawn in this work, especially those who have previously committed themselves to various other explanations of the facts concerning Columbus’ journey, enough has already been said concerning Mr. Donworth’s viewpoint to indicate that the new propositions advanced by him have been and will continue to be very seriously considered.

Proof that the work is attracting the attention of recognized historians and men of letters is found in a letter to Mr. Donworth from Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the famous arctic explorer in which Stefan's information revealed by the son inquires further about some of book.

New Views of Facts

It is not the purpose of this review to delve into the technical information of the delightful little volume. Each step leading to the eventual journey of Columbus to this continent is clearly defined in the book; but the principal point brought home is that Columbus journeyed to Iceland, where he learned about a new continent from the sailors he talked with in the book; but the principal point brought home is that Columbus journeyed to Iceland, where he learned about a new continent from the sailors he talked with there; that his fund of information necessary for the trip across the Atlantic was chiefly gained from the Norsemen; and that Columbus’ view of the rugged, glacial coast of Greenland altered the entire course of Columbus’ life. There are many other points brought out all of them based upon accepted evidence, in which the reader will find entertaining and instructive reading.

The story is told tersely and the author does not mince words in bringing out his points. Perhaps this is due largely to the fact that Mr. Donworth’s original manuscript is about three times as long as the book. For publication purposes the author decided to present only a monograph which tells much of the material used is viewed by the author in a new light, exactly what the title implies, “The Reason Why Columbus Sailed.” The historically familiar facts are passed over only lightly as which have been told so many times. Mr. Donworth chooses rather to unearth new views on a subject which means so much to the New World and which is still open to controversy on many moot points.

Long Research

When questioned as to how he happened to become interested in the subject and decided to write the book, Mr. Donworth answered that more than a decade ago, when his son was in High School, he heard the latter recite a quotation from Washington Irving’s book on Columbus in which the statement was made that Columbus ordered his ships to sail 700 leagues west of the Canary Islands. This started Mr. Donworth to believe perhaps he had a new point. He noticed that Columbus knew the width of the Atlantic Ocean before sailing from Spain. To the development of this point the author has devoted much time and research.

The Boston Sunday Post of February 25 gives the book the following comment: “Albert B. Donworth a prominent lawyer of Houlton, Me., is the author of an interesting book entitled, “The Reason Why Columbus Sailed.” Step by step the incidents of the discoverer’s life are described. The letter to his son about the visit to Iceland in 1477 is discussed and fully explained. In this letter Columbus reported, says Mr. Donworth, ‘Iceland to be farther north than it really is,’ but he says the reader will notice that it was the westerly location and westward navigation that Columbus had prominently in his mind.”

Traveled Extensively

A native of Machias, Mr. Donworth has been a resident of Houlton for many years. He attended Bowdoin College and received his B.S. Degree from West Point in 1891. He was a First Lieutenant in the Spanish-American War and is at present Judge Advocate of the United Spanish War Veterans, Department of Maine. He was admitted to the Maine Bar in 1900, and is a member of the American Bar Association, the Aroostook Bar Association, and of the Sons of the American Revolution. He has been Chairman of the Republican District Congressional Committee since 1936. He is a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity, the National Geographic Society, and of the Houlton Lodge of Elks. In 1932 he was a delegate to the International Congress of Comparative Law held at the Hague, Holland.

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(Machias) Union Republican, April 25, 1940