THE MONTGOMERY SYNDROME

The Roots of Family and Personal Identity in Fact, Fable and Folklore.

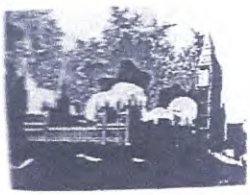
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HONESTY IS THE BEST POLITICS



No Montgomeries, to my knowledge, have been career politicians but have turned to politics after notable experience elsewhere and see politics as a continuation of altruistic pro-social public service.

In Britain, more of the Montgomery family have dabbled in politics in the House of Lords than have been elected to the essential seat of power in the House of Commons. Their political activity precedes the Union of Scottish and English parliaments.

Sir James Montgomery

A Covenanter ,fined, imprisoned, and denied office despite "great political ability and eloquence of speech", Ayrshire born. Baronet James Montgomery was a member of the Scottish Parliament in the 17th Century (the three estates) , representing the Commissioners of the Shires. At the time that William of Orange became King William III of England, together with the Duke of Argyll for the peers and Sir John Dalrymple for the burghs, James went to London to ask William to assume the Scottish crown and to administer the oath of office to him. No sooner was the new king installed than many reservations arose in the Scottish Parliament. Along with Fletcher, Lord Ross Earl of Anandale and Sir Patrick Hume, James formed a parliamentary group known as "The Club". James was elected President of this focus of Whig discontent and The Club became a very successful pressure group, practically ruling the Convention of Estates and confronting the King with a list of national grievances.
Although there were Montgomery supporters of both sides at the time of the Union of Parliaments, James was a close associate of "The Patriot" Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun. (Mackenzie 1935)

His confrontational style earned him some vituperative political opponents, some even objecting to his broad Ayrshire accent. He was never rewarded for his long public service by appropriate promotion. Late in his career, however, he was given the post of Justice-clerk which he regarded as a slight consolation for being by-passed for the Secretary ship of Scotland.

William Fergus Montgomery MP.

Fergus moved to Parliament after an effective beginning in education Educated at Jarrow Grammar School and Bede College in Durham University, his career took off when appointed to the committee of the Ministry of Education, headed by one Margaret Thatcher. A member of parliament at age 26, he shared an interest in family history with me and invited me to join him in discussion in the bar of the House of Commons.

On one occasion, when he had to depart to vote in divisions, he introduced me to **Commander Kerens**, the charismatic captain of the warship HMS Amethyst during the time of the famed Yangtse incident.



Fergus Montgomery at Election Time

Congress of the United States of America

The representation by Clansmen in the ruling Congress began early.

Joseph Montgomery (1733-1784). Born in Paxtang, Joseph was a delegate for his native Pennsylvania.

William Montgomery (1736-1816). Born in Chester County, he was a representative for Pennsylvania.

Thomas Montgomery (c1779-1828). Born in Nelson County, Virginia he was a lawyer in Stanford, Kentucky and represented that state.

William Montgomery (1818-1870). Born in Canton, he represented Pennsylvania in Congress and became an attorney in Washington DC.

Gillespie V. Montgomery (1920-2006)

The name of G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery will always be remembered in connection with that of the National Guard, the American equivalent of the Territorial Army of Britain. Widely acclaimed as a decorated hero of World War II and the Korean conflict, Sonny did not thereafter rest on his laurels but began his extremely effective political career.

Some 11 years after the war he was elected to the Mississippi State Senate and gained valuable expertise in politics that he put to very good use 10 years later when he was elected to the national Congress. A well-liked, popular but seriously efficient Congressman, he served for 30 years as representative of the East-Central District of his native Mississippi. He made good use of his military experience and was Chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee for well over a decade.

The Defense Secretary admired the way in which Sonny treated everyone with grace and respect and reminded all of his outstanding legislative triumph in passing the Montgomery Bill which bears his name. This bill is the Montgomery legacy to thousands, granting educational benefits to many past, present and future in the National Guard all-volunteer army.

After President Regan signed the bill, the US Army and Navy gave additional financial support and the original payment has since been increased. President Bush commented that it was among the most practical and cost-effective initiatives ever devised and his son, President W. Bush, arranged for Sonny to receive America's highest civilian award, The Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Major-General GV Montgomery was a tireless advocate for the well-being of countless veterans during his long political career and is well remembered by the great number of institutions named in his honour. He also was a loyal, long-serving member of the Clan Montgomery Society who added lustre to the name.

William John Alexander Montgomery MP (1821 – 1914)

Born in London of Scottish- Irish parentage, the Honourable William was educated at the "Inst" in Belfast . Around the 1850s, he set off to participate in the gold rush in Australia. With little success as a digger he tried his hand at husbandry but his foray into sheep-farming came to a dusty end with a total drought. He then set off again to pastures new in Canterbury, New Zealand and with his natural gift of leadership and communication soon made a mark in local politics.

At last he had found a career in which he flourished. He was then elected as member of the New Zealand Parliament for Akaroa but challenged on a technicality about an unacceptable commercial link with government agencies, he resigned only to be re-elected unopposed in 1874. He was an effective MP until obliged to retire in 1887 due to ill health. His legacy on the developing nation may still be discerned in many areas in modern New Zealand and many features celebrate his name such as the memorial "Montgomery Street" in Cheviot. NZ

The Honourable William John Alexander MP died in 1914 thus joining his wife Jane who had an early death in 1879. They left two sons Hugh and John to continue his line and their descendants follow the tradition of public service which has flourished across three centuries



Adam Montgomery
The town of Penicuik, Midlothian, Scotland is the site of the celebrated Edinburgh Crystal, maker of incomparable whisky tumblers and suchlike top grade, elegant glassware. When threatened with closure some few years ago the factory was saved by a rescue package cobbled together by Penicuik District Council. Foremost among the town leaders, Councillor Adam Montgomery served from 2003 to 2007 and since then has been appointed town Provost. He gains the respect of many in his home lands and many more of us will raise a charged glass of finest crystal to him in the traditional salutation: "slάinte".

Shirley Montgomery
Based in Cheshire, England, Shirley was leader of the National Boycott Movement which consisted of 8000 housewives who exercised effective, grass-roots control over unjustified retail price rises.

John Flournoy Montgomery
In democratic politics, some popularity and agreeable traits are essential to gain election. Montgomery public figures, however, are more often noted for outspoken candour and do not shy from the confrontational rather than showing much skill in diplomacy. A notable exception to the general tendency is evident in the career of John F. Montgomery who was appointed from 1933 to 1941 by President Roosevelt to the post of US Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Hungary John had lived in Hungary for 8 years and had acquired many friends there developing a true appreciation of the culture of Central Europe. His well-informed reports were presented to the President and gave a factual base-line to many cabinet decisions.

During the Nazi-Russian conflict of World War II. Hungary became a victim of the struggle and her unfortunate position as conscripted to the Axis war effort has been much understood. The complexities of the situation were examined by John in his book "Hungary : the Unwilling Satellite", published by Vista Books , New Jersey in1993.

Born in Sedalia, Missouri n, USA In1878, in 1904 he married Hedwig Wildi and together they lived a fully active hard-working life in business and in the diplomatic field. His flair for appreciating the viewpoints of others was the basis of his success in both areas.