

MONTEZUMA'S SUCCESSOR: ANDREW DOWNS OF HALIFAX

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HALIFAX was the site of the first Zoological Gardens in America north of Mexico. There, near the head of the North West Arm, in 1847, Andrew Downs, 'born nature-lover' and field naturalist *par excellence*, commenced the project that brought him renown in Europe and America, and attracted numerous visitors from both sides of the Atlantic. It is reported that Montezuma had an immense aviary, which was supervised by three hundred attendants, and a large menagerie of wild animals, reptiles and serpents, in the capital of Mexico, at the time of its conquest by the Spaniards, and that at the same time there were an aviary and a fish pond in Iztapalapan. Nevertheless, from that date to 1847 no similar emprise appears to have been undertaken in America; and Downs's Zoological Gardens antedated the next American venture of this kind, which was established at Central Park, New York, by sixteen years, and were preceded by the London Zoological Gardens by only about two decades.

Andrew Downs, the proprietor of the Halifax Zoological Gardens, was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on September 27, 1811. His father, Robert Downs, had migrated from Scotland with the intention of accepting a position in Quebec. Not finding Quebec congenial at that time, he visited Halifax in order to collect some of his possessions that had been landed there, and then went on to New Jersey, where he lived for a number of years. In New Jersey, he married Elizabeth, a daughter of John and Catherine Plum. Having taken a fancy to Halifax, he made up his mind to betake himself and his family to that Atlantic port, and in 1825, when Andrew was fourteen years of age, took up residence in Halifax.

Even as a young boy in New Jersey, Andrew Downs had displayed a fondness for natural history, a proclivity that reached fruition in the formation of the Zoological Gardens at Halifax. The writer has been told that Andrew "used to mooch from school in New Jersey and go out into the woods to study birds." On excursions of this kind, which appear as interesting harbingers of things to come, Andrew obtained refreshment from the luscious fruit of the peach tree rather than from regular lunches. Subsequently, after reaching Halifax, he worked in the plumbing trade, for some time in association with his father,

and later on his own account. Natural inclination, however drew him to a study of natural history, and gradually he gave more and more time to the exercise of this bent. Eventually he devoted most of his energies to this study and to the preservation and propagation of birds and other animals.

Prior to 1847, Andrew Downs and a number of other Nova Scotians had exhibited a keen desire to promote education by fostering an interest in natural history. In the late 1820's the McCullochs began an embryonic natural history museum in Pictou, which was expanded until 1834, when it was taken to England and sold. The Halifax Mechanics' Institute, formed in 1831, also evinced an interest in the zoology of the province. About the same time, moreover, proposals were advanced for the establishment of a Provincial Museum. Between 1834 and 1867, when as Professor Harvey has shown, Nova Scotians' faith in themselves burgeoned into buoyant expression, Andrew Downs established and expanded his Zoological Gardens in their picturesque and appropriate setting near Halifax.

In the meantime, the expansion of the British Museum served to bring to the attention of Nova Scotians the importance of the subject of natural history. In 1837, Lord Glenelg, Secretary of State for the Colonies, was requested to instruct the Governors of the Colonies to take advantage of opportunities for securing "such rare and curious objects" as appear to be of sufficient importance to deserve a place in the Museum. Early in 1838 this matter was laid before the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia; and on April 14th a Select Committee of the House recommended "That the Members of this House will make known, through their respective Counties, the desire expressed by the Trustees of the British Museum for contributions of specimens of the natural curiosities of this Province to that Institution, and will use their best exertions to promote the wishes of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in that respect." That he was acquiring something of a reputation as a naturalist even as early as 1838 is evinced by the fact that in September of that year Andrew Downs, of Water Street, Halifax, (opposite Tobin's wharf), was empowered "to purchase living specimens of the indigenous birds and quadrupeds of this province for a gentleman desirous of presenting them to scientific institutions in England." This project led the editor of the *Novascotian* to make the following comment: "A proposition on this subject ought to direct attention to an interesting subject. It may induce some thoughts of forming a Provincial collection, before much time elapses, by

showing the value set on such specimens at a distance, and by leading persons to consider the many sources of interest and pleasure which a Provincial collection would include."

Others were of the same opinion. After the transfer of their natural history collection to London in 1834 and their own removal to Halifax in 1838, when Dr. Thomas McCulloch became Principal of Dalhousie College, the McCullochs began a new collection. At the same time, moreover, Andrew Downs was urging the establishment of a Museum of Natural History. His plan, which was circulated in November 1838, contained a definite proposal for a Zoological Garden. He referred to the formation of the Zoological Society of London about thirteen years before that date, and to the marked success of that institution. Of opinion that this achievement should be emulated in Nova Scotia, he described the utility as well as the pleasure to be derived from such an institution. His plan included a small neat gallery and garden,—“the former devoted to choice specimens, preserved with the greatest care, of the Zoology and Ornithology of the Province, together with such other good specimens of other countries as could be procured;—the latter to be appropriated to living specimens, carefully selected and attended to.” In addition, there were to be a collection of choice shrubs and plants, and, if possible, respectable pictorial illustrations of the haunts and habits of the specimens, as well as a small library illustrative of the same subject. In this way, it was hoped, “a most interesting variety, from the majestic Black Eagle to the beauteous and minute Humming Bird,—and from the broad antlered Moose to the delicate Ermine, might be grouped together,—and a School in Natural History, of humble pretensions, but not of slender value be formed.”

This plan was not immediately successful. Indeed, on March 1, 1841, when Dr. Thomas McCulloch solicited the patronage of the Legislature of the Province for a natural history collection that he and his family were making in Halifax, he stated that “it is a subject to which the attention of this Province has not yet been particularly directed.” Later in the same month a Select Committee considered McCulloch's communication. In their report, they stated that they had visited McCulloch's collection and observed that there were about four hundred of the native birds of the Province and a few of the quadrupeds, “all of which (were) beautifully and skillfully preserved.” They supported the idea of having a Museum of Natural History, which would be “at once an ornament to the

Province, and a place of instructive resort and of elegant recreation." This Committee recommended that an adequate sum be granted to Dr. McCulloch; and, shortly thereafter, this proposal was modified and a vote of \$250 was placed at the disposal of the Lieutenant-Governor to enable him to lay the foundation of a Provincial Museum.

The amount of this grant left much to be desired. Early in 1842 Lieutenant-Governor Falkland informed the House of Assembly that he had refrained from expending the grant until the subject should again be brought to the attention of the House. He was, he stated, quite aware that the foundation of a Provincial Museum would be highly honorable to the enlightened liberality of the legislature, and eminently serviceable to the Country, and that it would have a tendency to extend the information and refine the taste of the people. Nevertheless, he thought it proper to suggest that to lay the foundation of a Museum would require a much larger sum than that already voted. He also suggested what he considered to be a preferable mode of dealing with the matter. About the same time, Andrew Downs felt impelled to communicate to the Lieutenant-Governor his views on the same subject. For some years he had been endeavouring to establish a similar institution and, the House of Assembly having placed at the disposal of the Lieutenant-Governor a sum of money to be expended for that purpose, several persons had requested him to address the Lieutenant Governor on the subject. He did so "from an ardent desire to see the work carried out in a manner creditable to the Province." In his view, the amount voted was by no means sufficient to obtain an extensive collection of specimens but, if properly applied, would be enough to procure "nearly all the Ornithological Specimens of the country." Since such a collection alone would not command the attention of the public, he suggested the propriety of annexing it to the Museum of the Mechanics' Institute, "as at present they have a small collection of Birds, Insects, and Specimens of the Mineralogy of the Province, with a variety of Curiosities in all value about £400." Such a combined collection would, he thought, make a respectable appearance and, under the fostering care of a scientific institution, be a useful acquisition. If the Lieutenant-Governor should command his services for this project, it would (he wrote) be his "pride to give them in a calling I have followed from my earliest days."

When the matter was reconsidered in the House of Assembly in 1842, the proposition for a larger grant was negatived. In

the course of the debate a number of interesting arguments were presented. In discussing the object of such a museum, one member declared: "It was that their great grand children should see the frogs and butterflies that their great grandfathers ran after." He wondered at the House voting money in the last session for "the purpose of stuffing kingfishers and such things."

During these years Andrew Downs, eager to enhance the "mental riches and resources" of Nova Scotia, continued to be active in the Mechanics' Institute. By 1838, he was a member of its Committee. At the election of officers on May 7, 1845, he was chosen Assistant Curator, and John McDonald was selected as Curator. A year later, Andrew Downs became Curator and held that office until 1847, when he was succeeded by E. Boyd. Curator Downs was among those signing the Merchants' Institute's address to Sir John Harvey in 1846, in which they solicited the Governor's patronage. From the newspaper account of the picnic of the Mechanics' Institute on August 1846, one gets an interesting glimpse not only of the preserved specimens under the Curator's direction, but also of Mr. Down's connection with an exhibition of wild animals. In the announcement of the picnic by the *Halifax Times* on July 28, 1846, the object of this event was stated to be to raise funds to build an Institute Hall. Regarding the display of wild animals, the hope was expressed that none would be allowed to escape. The picnic itself was a great success. It was held at McNab's Island. Six thousand people were in attendance, and more than £200 net was obtained for the building fund. On display were stuffed birds from the museum of the Institute. "Some fine zoological specimens were also exhibited." These included two beautiful elks, two bears, a savage-looking young black fox, a wolf, a pair of ichneumons, "some pretty little foreign birds in cages, and a monkey which looked as if puzzled to find out what all the stir was for . . ." Undoubtedly public interest in this exhibition gave an extra fillip to Downs' efforts towards the establishment of his zoological gardens.

In the same year, the Mechanics' Institute gave additional encouragement to the study of zoology. It offered prizes for the best essays on "The Zoology of Nova Scotia" as well as on "Popular Education" and "The Improvement of the Common."

At the head of the North West Arm, Halifax, Downs began his Zoological Gardens in 1847. The location was appropriate, the setting beautiful. After showing his zoological specimens, Mr. Downs on occasion led his visitors to a rocky eminence

where, standing on a granite boulder, they could see, in a majestic sweep, the picturesque panorama that lay around them.

At the outset, Downs's establishment was five acres in extent, but by 1863 it was expanded to one hundred acres. Soon it became a resort for visitors; and, writing to the *Novascotian* in 1849, a contributor stated that "Straitened as we were for time, we could not resist the temptation, nor deny ourselves the pleasure of visiting Downs' retreat." This particular visitor examined with considerable interest Mr. Downs' "Curiosity Shop," which was then filled "with rare specimens of birds and beasts, both living and dead." Mr. Downs visited England in 1862 and brought back with him "several rare curiosities from the old world to add to the already numerous specimens of natural history that were to be found at his grounds." An editorial writer of *The Morning Chronicle* informs us that early in 1863 this charming spot[was], as yet, little more than the nucleus of a Zoological Garden," but at that time development was in progress, and this newspaperman "saw much to be gratified with" and to convince him that Mr. Downs "has accomplished wonders." In the next few years, moreover, many improvements were made.

Other accounts furnish detailed descriptions. In 1864 Major-General Campbell Hardy, R.A., and a St. John *Telegraph* correspondent, both of whom visited Downs's establishment, wrote newspaper articles about it. In 1893, Charles Hallock, of *The Fishing Tourist* and founder and proprietor of *Forest and Stream*, in an article entitled "The First American Zoo," gave a graphic sketch of the Halifax Zoological Gardens as they appeared about 1865.

Several hundred yards from the head of the North West Arm stood Downs' house, which might be reached by means of a circular gravelled road, shaded by interlacing firs. It was a Gothic cottage, a small, rustic residence with tall, sharp-pointed gables ornamented with trellis, its porch overhung with wood-bines and honeysuckles. Antlers of deer and moose surmounted the cottage on every side. Alongside the porch were tall poles, bearing bird houses whose feathered tenants fluttered around, while pigeons circled overhead, and strange noises were heard from the copse beyond. Near by were several rough boxes, filled with dry leaves and cocoons of many varieties, kept by the proprietor for experiment. Not far from the door a pair of the ribs and some of the vertebrae of a whale lay upon the lawn.

Inside the house, the parlor walls were decorated with engravings, illustrating botany, natural history, eminent men and

remarkable scenes and places. There were fine pictures of birds and flowers in water-colours, vases of dried grasses, busts and miniature sculptures. On the centre table were a number of books and a basket of visitors' cards, bearing the names of many a distinguished personage. A glass case contained the white kid glove that the Prince of Wales dropped on his visit here. From the bow window one could look upon the shimmering waters and lovely shore-line of the North West Arm stretching away to the open sea.

A visitor might see the naturalist himself in his shirt sleeves out in the yard feeding his poultry. Shaggy Skye terriers greeted the stranger, while the owner continued to scatter Indian corn amongst a greedy assemblage of every kind of fowl—"land-fowl and water-fowl, great thick-thighed cochins and diminutive bantams, hearty swans which come up to the banquet, with a hasty, waddling gait ill befitting their dignity, and fat, glossy ducks of every hue that at once suggest the idea of comestibles in the shape of green peas." There were wild turkeys and bright-hued pigeons, silver Hamburgs and bearded Polands, fowls from China and Japan, East Indian ducks, Chinese swans and Egyptian geese, and cages, coops, and shelter-houses on all sides. In cages close by, monkeys grimaced and marmosets chattered, while a large Brazilian monkey gave the visitor's coat a sly tug through the wires of a cage. Adjacent to the poultry yard were the wood ducks in their enclosure. Swallows were plentiful, and many other wild birds chose these grounds for their place of residence, while migratory birds spent the long winters there. There were wood-peckers and robins, song-sparrows and juncos, and many birds of other kinds. In the little lake at the foot of the lawn might be seen Chinese swans, Australian and Egyptian geese, and ducks, with uncouth top-knots, playing under the jet of a fountain. Tall cranes stalked along its reedy margin, herons stood motionless among the lily-pads, wood ducks hid beneath over-hanging bushes and wild birds darted in and out among the trees surrounding the water.

A rustic bridge spanned the cascade, which tumbled into the lake, and at its foot a rocky basin provided cooling refreshment for a large polar bear. Following the stream one reached a pond where a seal gamboled, and beavers, mink and otters could be seen in their enclosures. Over a rustic bridge and along a shady walk, one came to a bower with a table inside, formed from the bone of a whale's tail. Close at hand was a flower

garden, in full bloom, laid out in artistic design, and in an adjacent clump of trees were nesting birds, which received the naturalist's daily attention. Next were enclosures for Spanish, Mexican and Virginian deer, for elk and caribou, and for black bears. Thus, with Mr. Downs, who showed visitors through his hundred-acre realm "in his shirt sleeves as though he wore a dress coat and kids," one passed its alternate woods and open spaces, pausing to gaze on long-legged herons and long-billed bitterns, Himalayan, gold, silver and English pheasants, California quails with plumes growing out of their heads three inches long, cockatoos and peacocks, eagles and hawks, foxes, lynxes and prairie wolves, owls, Indian and Egyptian doves, tortoises from Nova Scotia, the West Indies and the Southern States, fancy rabbits, guinea pigs and squirrels and racoons, Chinese sheep and Angora goats.

Standing on one side of a small valley was the "glass house," a light and ornamental structure of painted wood-work and glass, which was used as a green-house and aviary, as an aquarium and museum. In this building could be seen stuffed birds in manifold variety, as well as live snakes, lizards and turtles, and many inhabitants of our lakes and streams, Among these were the silver dace and the cat-fish, the little terrapin and other amphibious reptiles, including yellow-throated and leopard frogs, and yellow-spotted salamanders.

Such were the Halifax Zoological Gardens at their best in the years 1864 to 1868. As a tribute to Charles Waterton of Walton Hall, Yorks., his "worthy master in ornithology," whose *Wanderings in South America* he found to be of absorbing interest, and whose home he visited in 1864, Andrew Downs named his own charming residence Walton Cottage. As Waterton "would sooner be in the woods than in the finest palace in Europe," so likewise Downs preferred the country to "all the pleasure and grandeur of the town."

As a source of intellectual enlightenment and refinement, and a place of great natural charm, the Halifax Zoological Gardens attracted visitors from far and near. In August 1860, the Prince of Wales spent part of an afternoon in the grounds of Mr. Downs, and received from their owner a splendid moose head and antlers. The Prince took a fancy to the quails at the Gardens, and Mr. Downs forwarded six of them to Windsor, England, where they arrived in good condition. Every effort

was to be made to cause them to multiply and thrive in England so that they might furnish an agreeable variety for shooting purposes. Other distinguished visitors included Professor Spencer F. Baird of the Smithsonian Institution, Major Campbell Hardy, King Victor Emmanuel's daughter, Sir Richard Grant the explorer, Charles Hallock, Prince Jerome Napoleon, and Admiral and Lady Seymour. Excursions of pleasure seekers, by coach or by steamer up the North West Arm, brought thousands of fellow-Nova Scotians and others to Walton Cottage. For several years, the Caledonia Club of Halifax held its annual Scottish gatherings at Downs's establishment; and Halifax anniversary excursions were generally well patronized. On occasion the Nova Scotian Institute of Science, of which Andrew Downs was a member, held a field meeting there. Other clubs and societies held picnics and outings at these Gardens. For the 1864 Scottish Gathering the *Micmac* transported more than a thousand visitors up the North West Arm. Among these were Lieutenant-Governor Sir R. G. MacDonnell, Admiral Sir James Hope, the Provincial Secretary, the Attorney General, the Chief Justice, the Mayor and other distinguished citizens. In the summer of 1865, excursions and picnics were held at Downs' by the Caledonia Club, St. Mary's Catechistical Teaching Society, the Corps in the garrison, the Tabernacle Sunday School and the Union Protection Company, as well as by other societies. About 2,000 persons attended the Scottish Gathering in that year, and more than 1,000 visited Downs's on the occasion of the celebration of the 116th anniversary of the settlement of Halifax.

While Andrew Downs achieved fame through his Zoological Gardens, he also acquired a reputation in taxidermy and considerable recognition for his work in poultry improvement and acclimatization. In taxidermy he was a deft and painstaking workman. At exhibitions at home and abroad he received awards for his taxidermic work. The most important of these were bronze medals at the International Exhibitions at London in 1851 and 1862, as well as at Dublin in 1865, and a silver medal at Paris in 1867.

At the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, the Nova Scotian exhibits included specimens of preserved animals, birds and insects. The birds, which were stuffed by Mr. Downs, were much admired, and Mr. Downs' skill in stuffing and preserving the plumage was acknowledged to be unquestionably clever and scientific. Queen Victoria gave particular attention

to one of Downs's cases. A moose head, contributed by Captain Chearnley and prepared by Mr. Downs, was in the Nova Scotian court.

Before being forwarded to London, the article intended for the International Exhibition of 1862 were placed on display in Halifax, in Dalhousie College and the Council Room of Province House. For several days these exhibits attracted much attention, and thousands availed themselves of the opportunity of inspecting them. In his letter of April 18, 1862, Mr. A. M. Uniacke, a Nova Scotia Commissioner in England, declared that "our articles have arrived all in good order, the only accident being the breaking of the glasses of Downs' case of birds. I had them replaced by new ones, and they look very well. He also stated that the moose, which was prepared by Mr. Downs, was an object of much attention, although "all who have seen the Moose in Nova Scotia are disappointed with its size . . ." In the Nova Scotian department at the 1862 Exhibition, Downs' articles included a bull moose, stuffed and mounted, a case of the game birds of Nova Scotia and a case of the wild ducks of the province. In the case of game birds were specimens of ruffed grouse, spotted or spruce grouse, woodcocks, snipes, Virginia rails, and rails; in that of the wild ducks were specimens of wood ducks, scaup ducks, eider ducks, king eider ducks, blue-winged teals, green-winged teals, harlequin ducks, ring-necked ducks, dusky ducks and shovellers. Mr. Downs' case of native game birds, among which were partridges with a brood of chickens, just discovered by a stealthy weasel, formed "one of the prettiest and most perfect things in the exhibition."

Andrew Downs was one of the Nova Scotian committee members for the Dublin International Exhibition of 1865. Dr. Honeyman, the secretary, in his report, stated that the province was much indebted to Dr. Gilpin and his associates, Messrs. Downs and Willis, for an effective presentation of our zoology and animal products. In classes 28 and 29, Mr. Downs received a medal "for excellence in stuffing and mounting a collection of Native Birds." Honeyman stated that this was "just what every one here and elsewhere would expect, his birds are always so beautiful and life-like. I was sometimes asked if they were hatching. The summer duck is always an object of admiration. It was most amusing to witness the incredulity displayed regarding the inmates of one of the cases. They were maintained to be merely specimens of stuffing—the birds being regarded as tropical; and how we could have birds of so rich plumage,

and humming birds in such a cold and foggy country as they conceived ours to be, they could not understand. I was obliged to assure them most solemnly that humming birds could be seen very frequently in our gardens, and that the nest in the case beside those exhibited was a veritable Nova Scotia production."

The articles collected in Nova Scotia for transmission to Paris to be exhibited at the Great Exposition of 1867 were displayed early in January in the Legislative Council Chamber in Halifax. The first thing that met the eye was a moose's head, with large antlers. This was one of Mr. Downs's contributions. Downs's collection of birds was reported to "embrace all those indigenous to the country, put up in glass cases with his usual taste." Miss Downs contributed a collection of butterflies and moths, while Mr. Downs's exhibits included stuffed wood ducks, partridges, hawks, snipes, sandpipers, warblers and snow-white warblers and a snow-white egret, which was an object of special notice in Halifax. In order to dispel the too common notion that Nova Scotia was frozen up all the year round, Mr. Downs contributed a case of stuffed humming birds, which had been caught in various parts of the province. While these articles were on display in Halifax, 3,000 Halifax school children attended on one day.

The Nova Scotian Court at the Paris Exhibition was under the management of Dr. Honeyman, but Mr. Downs assisted him in unpacking and arranging the exhibits. At the Exhibition, Downs's stuffed birds again aroused admiration, and for them he was awarded a silver medal. In an article on the Paris International Exhibition that appeared in *The Illustrated London News*, Professor Wyville Thomson, of Queen's College, Belfast, paid tribute to Mr. Downs' work. He wrote that in "the Nova Scotia Court there is a very beautiful little collection of birds stuffed by an amateur, Mr. Downs. These birds are nearly perfect in their way; perhaps there is a little too much stillness and and sameness in the attitudes, but the form and the proportions of the body are perfectly preserved, and there is scarcely a feather out of place."

When the Provincial Museum was organized, Downs's suggestion that the proposed collection be annexed to the Museum of the Mechanics' Institute was adopted. Efforts made by the province in preparing and forwarding articles to the International Exhibitions had aroused increasing support for the establishment of a Provincial Museum. A committee

was appointed in 1862 to confer with the government regarding the disposal of the exhibits of that year. In 1867, the project was revived, a room in the new Provincial Building was set apart for the Museum, and the natural history collections that had been sent to the Paris Exhibition were purchased for it. In 1868, the Mechanics' Institute Museum was formally transferred to the Provincial Museum. Downs's collection of 68 stuffed birds, which had won him a silver medal at the Paris Exhibition, was "the most beautiful and attractive addition" to the Provincial Museum in that year.

For several years prior to 1853 Mr. Downs had been endeavouring to establish a poultry yard for the purpose of improving the breeds of domestic fowl. The expense was considerable and, with all the means he had been able to bestow upon it, in 1853 he stated that "it can only be called a private Establishment and very limited in its usefulness." In that year, at the instance of several influential friends, he brought the subject to the attention of the members of the Assembly, and solicited such aid "as will form the *nucleus* of an Establishment alike creditable and beneficial to the Province at large." To improve the poultry of Nova Scotia would result in a "general benefit to the Province and to the *Farmer* in particular," for Nova Scotians would then be enabled to compete in the foreign poultry market. The necessity for improvement seemed evident in view of his statement that fowls weighing fourteen pounds and averaging eight had been produced at exhibitions in Great Britain and the United States, whereas in Nova Scotia their average weight did not exceed three pounds. If financial aid were granted, Mr. Downs proposed to import stock of the best specimens of domestic poultry wherever to be had and to dispose of the produce of the stock to persons in the province, at the smallest possible rate that would cover the expense. He suggested that annual exhibitions of poultry, with appropriate prizes, be held as soon as such a poultry establishment should be in efficient operation. He invited the members of the Assembly to visit his establishment and left to their discretion the amount of financial assistance that they might consider fitting. The committee on the preservation of game, to whom Mr. Downs's petition was referred, visited his grounds, admired his collection of birds and the attention paid to their breeding. They were of opinion that the object he had in view would be highly beneficial to the province, and that it was worthy of the encouragement of the legislature. About three weeks later, £100 was

granted and placed at the disposal of the governor, to enable Mr. Downs to improve the breed of poultry in Nova Scotia, "pursuant to the report of the committee on that subject." At the Nova Scotia Exhibition, which was held at Halifax in October, 1853, and for which Mr. Downs was a member of the executive committee, Mr. Downs was the winner of eleven prizes for geese, ducks and a variety of poultry. By 1854, Mr. Downs had expended £167/17/9 in importing several varieties of improved breeds of fowls from Great Britain and the United States, and in providing suitable buildings. This exceeded the provincial grant and the amount paid to him for fowl and eggs by £47/16/9. He then had on hand, purchased with provincial funds, 44 birds, "of the purest improved breeds." Mr. Downs having expressed to the Assembly committee his willingness to maintain these birds free of any further charge to the province and to use his utmost exertions in sending the several breeds into the several counties throughout the province, the committee recommended that he be allowed to keep the fowl, imported by provincial aid, as his own property, without further charge against the province. This committee also recommended a grant of £54 to the central board of agriculture for the distribution of fowl and eggs.

In 1854 Mr. Downs was again a member of the executive committee of the Nova Scotia Exhibition. At that exhibition Mr. Downs won 9 prizes in the class for poultry, as well as awards for the best collection of stuffed birds, the best specimens of taxidermy, and the second best collection of insects. The kinds of poultry he exhibited included ducks, wild geese and turkeys, Brahmah Pootrahs, Bolton Greys, Golden Hamburgs and Polands.

In the 1860's, Messrs. Downs, Harris and Leahy arranged several annual flower and poultry shows in Halifax. These were in accord with Downs' suggestion to the Assembly of Nova Scotia in 1853. In announcing that such a show would be held in the Masonic Hall in 1863, they stated that they would be happy to take charge of any birds and flowers that their fellow citizens might be inclined to exhibit on the occasion. The exhibition, which continued for three days and was "very highly spoken of," comprised a splendid collection of flowers and fowls, and a beautiful specimen of deer. In 1864 about 500 plant and flowers and a few dozens of domestic fowls were contributed by Mr. Leahy of Thornfield Nursery, while a number of rare birds and some wild animals, Chinese sheep and lambs, a tame

deer and monkeys were brought by Mr. Downs. At the 1867 show Mr. Leahy, whose *forte* was flowers and plants, exhibited about 480 distinct varieties, many budding and in bloom; while Mr. Downs's collection of animals embraced "innumerable species." The playful gambols of the monkeys formed an interesting feature for juvenile visitors. A Newfoundland seal also attracted some attention. In one newspaper account, there was an oblique reference to the subject of Confederation, then a controversial topic. "A cage labelled 'The Happy Family,' contains a rabbit, squirrel, dog, guinea pig, rat and several other species—all on the "Confederation" principle; but with them this fact does not seem conducive to happiness, as they wear rather an inanimate and sullen expression."

For the 1868 Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition of the Province of Nova Scotia, Mr. Downs was a member of the organization committee, a judge in the poultry class and a contributor in the natural history division. He was awarded the first prize for the largest and best collection of stuffed birds and quadrupeds of Nova Scotia, with popular and scientific names.

He had considerable success in his efforts at acclimatization. Major-General Campbell Hardy declares that to Downs the province owes the introduction of both the English pheasant and the Canadian red deer. In the acclimatization of pheasants, the legislature of Nova Scotia had assisted. In 1856 a bill for the preservation of pheasants was passed. In the same year, the Assembly resolved that the sum of sixty pounds should be placed at the disposal of the lieutenant-governor, to enable him to defray the expense of pheasants imported for propagation, and to enable him to procure eggs for the same purpose. This sum was paid in 1857; and in the next year £100 was granted to the Lt. Governor to repay the balance due to him in connection with the expense of importing and preserving pheasants. In 1856, Mr. Downs received from England a large assortment of living birds. These included English pheasants and silver pheasants, as well as Aylesbury ducks, whistling ducks, Black Hamburg fowls and silver pencilled fowls. In describing the "foul outrage" that occurred at Mr. Downs's cottage on the night of August 22nd, when someone entered the premises and killed five of the large pheasants lately imported from England, a Halifax newspaper reporter suggested that there was need for a vigilance committee. At that time, the number of young pheasants being raised by Mr. Downs was about thirty, nearly fifty having died "of the disease peculiar to them when very young."

Those that had survived were healthy and thriving, and a number had already taken to the woods in the vicinity of Mr. Down's cottage. By 1860, Mr. Down's practical experience in rearing foreign game birds was brought to the attention of the London Society for the Acclimatization of Animals, which was then about to introduce the American wood grouse into England. By 1863, success seemed to have crowned Mr. Down's efforts, for the pheasants had been acclimatized "till they now roost out all winter." We are well acquainted, wrote Campbell Hardy in *Forest Life in Acadia*, (1869,) with "the circumstance of the introduction and breeding of the English and gold and silver pheasants at Mr. Down's establishment."

Campbell Hardy also commended Mr. Down's for the introduction of the common deer. "The common deer (*Cervus Virgianus*), then, of Maine and the Canadas, and more recently of New Brunswick by spontaneous acclimatisation, or perhaps through the instrumentality of the wolf, appears to be perfectly adapted for an existence in the Nova Scotian woods . . . Indeed, it is already with us, for a small herd of healthy animals may now be seen at Mr. Down's gardens, to whom the country is already indebted for many an unassisted attempt at real practical acclimatisation."

He also tried to acclimatize English songbirds and European jackdaws, but his efforts with these do not seem to have had as much success.

In 1866, he solicited, from the legislature of Nova Scotia, a continuance of the small grant that since 1863 had been voted annually in aid of his Zoological Gardens. He was, he stated, continually adding to his zoological collection and if the grant, which had been used exclusively for the purchase of new stock, were discontinued, the Zoological Department would be greatly impaired. This special grant was approved for the last time in 1866.

In 1860 he had sought aid from the legislature in introducing an aquarium. The Assembly Committee, which reported on this matter on April 27th, stated that they were of opinion that Mr. Down had "good grounds" to ask the assistance of the House in aid of the laudable objects proposed in his petition. They were, they declared, well acquainted with his establishment near the head of the North West Arm, in the vicinity of Halifax, which not only reflected credit on his industry and scientific knowledge, but also presented attractions for the student of natural history such as were rarely to be met in the province.

They were also aware that his efforts in his peculiar department of science had attracted the attention of visitors from other countries, by whom his labours had been justly appreciated. The Committee thought that Mr. Downs should be encouraged in his plans to extend the usefulness of his institution by the introduction of a museum and an aquarium into his premises, and to improve the public taste by the exhibition of natural objects in a manner both scientific and popular. Such exhibitions, which permitted the habits of some of the lowest and, at the same time, most beautiful forms of animal existence to be leisurely studied, were exceedingly popular in Great Britain and the United States. The Committee were, accordingly, of opinion that they ought to be encouraged in Nova Scotia. They recommended that \$200 be granted to Mr. Downs for these purposes. That amount was voted in 1860 in aid of an aquarium, and a like amount in 1867.

Throughout these years, the indefatigable Mr. Downs expended time and money unstintingly in these natural history undertakings. The establishment and development of Zoological Gardens and aquarium, and his efforts in acclimatization, were carried on single-handed, and relatively unaided. Nevertheless, as we have seen, he did receive some assistance from the provincial government, and perhaps a little aid from benefit excursions to his grounds. The provincial legislature granted £100 in 1853 to enable him to improve the breed of poultry in Nova Scotia. From 1856 to 1858, it granted \$160 for the importation and propagation of pheasants. It voted \$200 in 1860, and the same amount in 1867, in aid of Down's aquarium. In each year from 1863 to 1866, it voted \$200 in aid of the Zoological Gardens. In all, therefore, Downs appears to have received from the provincial government about \$2500 in grants to aid him in these various enterprises.

Mr. Downs' attainments as a naturalist attracted such attention that he was proposed for superintendent of the Central Park menagerie, at New York, when that institution was commenced in the 1860's. It appears that Mr. Downs was first offered this position in 1864 but that "he would not abandon his own pet enterprise" at that time. One newspaper reporter expressed his admiration of Mr. Downs's decision in 1864, and declared that the "world will admire him for it too." In the latter part of 1867, however, it is said that he was recommended for the New York position by Professor Spencer F. Baird, of the Smithsonian Institution; and, in the following year, Mr.

Downs sold his natural history collection and his grounds and went to New York.

At a meeting in May 1868, the Nova Scotian Institute of Natural Science expressed regret at the forthcoming departure of Mr. Downs. Dr. J. B. Gilpin moved a resolution "expressive of the regret of the members of the Institute generally at the departure from the Province of Mr. Andrew Downs, whose name as an ornithologist was not only familiar to all Nova Scotians, but likewise favorably known to science abroad." It was seconded by the President, J. M. Jones, who, in congratulating Mr. Downs "upon his well-deserved and suitable appointment in the United States, expressed a hope, that although the Province and the Institute would greatly feel his loss, he would gain in his new home that respect and esteem to which his well-known talent as a naturalist, and his kindly disposition as a man, so well entitled him."

Similar sentiments appeared in the newspapers. In one account it was stated that "the departure from among us of our highly esteemed fellow-citizen Mr. Andrew Downs will be universally regretted. His interesting collection of curiosities in natural history, and the facilities which his grounds afforded for study and recreation will be much missed—especially by strangers on a visit to our city, who found in them a pleasant retreat. Mr. Downs, we believe, goes to New York to take charge of the Zoological gardens in connection with Central Park, at a salary of \$3,000 per annum. We congratulate the New Yorkers on their selection, and we can assure them that they will find in Mr. D. 'the right man' for the post they have assigned to him."

Mr. Downs' land and buildings were sold to Mr. Doull for eight or ten thousand dollars, and his natural history collection was sold by auction. The auction announcement, which is rather interesting, was as follows:

DOWNS' GARDENS

J. D. Nash

Will sell, on THURSDAY, May 28th, at Two o'clock, on the premises, all the Fancy Articles, Birds and animals on hand. Among the lot are: Many Beautiful Birds, of great variety; various animals, some rare and strange; a variety stuffed Birds and animals; a lot of Farm and Garden Implements; the various houses and cages for animals and birds, with quite a lot of curious things that have been for years collecting.

Everything will be sold, no matter what it may bring.

Mr. Downs leaves in a short time for New York to take charge of premises in that city.

TERMS CASH.

As Mr. Downs will, perhaps, meet many of his friends in his Gardens for the last time, I am instructed to say he will receive them kindly, treat them to a Dejeuner or Lunch, so that our last meeting may prove a merry and a happy one. Those who will not drink Wine or Champagne may have beer or water.

Mr. Downs went to New York in 1868 to accept a position at Central Park, but through some misunderstanding the appointment was not consummated. Nor did Mr. Downs remain long in that metropolis, for he and his family arrived back in Halifax by the steamer *City of Cork*, on January 1, 1869.

On his return to Halifax, Mr. Downs's chief aim was to establish new zoological gardens. Though he was disappointed in his keen desire to re-purchase his old property, in May 1869 he bought a new property at the North West Arm from Mr. George Taylor for \$4800. This place adjoined that which Mr. Downs had sold to Mr. Doull. This transfer of property and Mr. Downs's designs were of interest to his fellow-Haligonians. One newspaper reporter stated that we "understand it is Mr. Downs' intention to have the grounds beautified preparatory to his again embarking in the Zoological business. This intelligence will be received with pleasure by the community—the closing up of "Downs" having deprived pleasure-seekers of one of the favorite resorts from the dust and heat of the city during the summer months." Until he removed to this new place, Mr. Downs resided at the corner of Inglis Street and Tower Road. In the meantime, he erected a house on his new place at the North West Arm and started his new zoological gardens.

He maintained and improved his second zoological gardens for about three years. In the spring of 1870, he projected "many new tasteful and original improvements" and, finding that his own means had become exhausted and that his gardens were at that time unremunerative, Downs appealed to the City Council for aid in his enterprise. His main motives in devoting his life to such a career were, he wrote, "first of all a strong and enthusiastic impulse to study out the beautiful works of Nature—to read for the benefit of my fellow-countrymen, her marvellous lessons of the economy, the aptitude, the industrial value, and the ornamental variety of her forms of living creatures, and to promote among my fellow-men that intelligent consideration for the lower classes of animal life over which man has been en-

trusted with dominion, which constitutes one of the most helpful signs of the human tendency of modern civilization." It had been, he stated, his constant aim to conduct his establishment in a manner likely to form a "public attraction and a pleasant social resource for the citizens of Halifax," so that "to the workingman on his holiday, and to the wealthy man in his leisure hours, "Downs" Amusement Gardens might afford an opportunity for amusement instruction and for cultivating or gratifying a closer sympathy with Nature, and a clearer artistic appreciation of her productions." Despite this appeal and the support of *The Acadian Recorder*, whose editor stated that the new grounds were "naturally more beautiful and romantic than the old place in which so many days and hours of healthy recreation were so enjoyably spent," and that the aviary was much larger, adequate aid was not forthcoming. In July 1872, Mr. Downs sold his property to S.A. White.

After the sale of his Gardens, Mr. Downs lived on North Street until about 1878, when he moved to 200-202 Agricola Street, where he resided until his death on August 26, 1892. For the last twenty years of his life, he busied himself with his taxidermic work and his poultry and other birds, with his nature study and efforts at civic improvement. In these years he was an active member of the Nova Scotian Institute of Natural Science, of the Nova Scotia Dog, Pigeon and Poultry Society, and of the Western Halifax Agricultural Society. He was also an exhibitor, juror or prize winner at several Nova Scotian Exhibitions, as well as a committee member and juror at the third annual Dominion Exhibition in 1881. About 1890 he built a museum annex to his house and placed in it his fine collection of mounted native birds.

He was twice married, first to Mary Elizabeth Matthews of Halifax, who died in 1858, and secondly to Matilda E. Muhlig, also of Halifax. From the first marriage there were four daughters; from the second, one, who is still living.

Andrew Downs was genial and kindly in disposition, moderate in education. His modesty was, as Charles Hallock stated, "such that his name was hardly known outside of scientific circles, while his credentials he folded away, in a napkin." On the subject to which he devoted his life, he published little. At meetings of the Nova Scotian Institute of Natural Science, of which he was an early member, he read several papers. These were "On the Land Birds of Nova Scotia"

(1865-6), "Pied, or Labrador Duck" (1886), and "A Catalogue of the Birds of Nova Scotia" (1888). At a meeting of the Royal Society of Canada in 1888, he read a paper, which has not been published, "On the Birds and Mammals of Nova Scotia." He was a member of the London Zoological Society from 1862. Specimens of his taxidermic work were supplied to museums and private collections on both sides of the Atlantic. He is said to have stuffed about 800 moose heads, and he supplied King Victor Emmanuel and others with living animals, such as a polar bear, moose, and caribou, as well as with mounted specimens of many kinds. In 1864 on his trip to Europe, which he also visited in 1862 and 1867, he was given a free passage in one of H. M. war vessels, the *Mersey*. On this occasion he presented a number of specimens, living or mounted, to the London Zoological Gardens.

Such, in brief, is the story of Andrew Downs and his Zoological Gardens, which were the first in America after those of Aztec civilization in Mexico. It is, therefore, perhaps fitting to say that Andrew Downs was, in a sense, Montezuma's successor.