

Robert Gore (1810-1854): Naval Officer and Diplomatist

Gore, Robert (1810-1854), naval officer and diplomatist, was born in Saunders Court, near the town of Crossabeg in Artramon parish, County Wexford, the fourth son of Colonel William J. Gore (1767-1836) and Caroline Pym-Hale (d.1853). Robert Gore's brother was the fourth Earl of Arran, Philip Yorke Gore (1801-1884). The family lived in a ten-bedroom house with an estate covering eighty acres of land.

On 4 September 1823 Robert Gore entered the Royal Navy and in 1832 was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. From 1832 to 1834 Gore sailed in the *Melville* and the *Andromache* under Admiral Henry Ducie Chads. Robert Gore saw action in combat with Malay pirates, and for this reason on 15 July 1837 he was presented with a sword by grateful British merchants and agents in Bombay. On 9 May 1839 Gore was promoted to commander and was put in charge of the *Serpent* at the West India station. He became MP for New Ross, County Wexford. The MP declared himself to be 'a cordial supporter of the Melbourne ministry, the only government that ever endeavored to do justice to Ireland'. Gore was an 'advocate for free trade and abolition of monopolies'. He insisted that 'Ireland should be placed on an equal footing with England and Scotland' (Stenton 1976). Robert Gore returned home to Ireland in 1841. On 23 October 1846 he was appointed chargé d'affaires at Montevideo, Uruguay. His most important intervention in the River Plate was in March 1848, when he successfully put an end to the Buenos Aires blockade that had been implemented by British and French forces since 1845. On 29 August 1851 Gore was appointed British consul at Buenos Aires.

Robert Gore is remembered in the River Plate for saving the life of Buenos Aires governor and totalitarian Argentine leader Juan Manuel de Rosas after the Battle of Caseros, and for facilitating his subsequent exile in Southampton, England. When he arrived home on the afternoon of 4 February 1852, Gore found Rosas sleeping in his bed. He spoke to Admiral Henderson, who consented to accommodate Rosas on the *Locust*. Rosas' daughter Manuelita disguised herself as a sailor, and on the night of 8 February 1852 the family fled Buenos Aires. British

merchants in Buenos Aires, who had a poor relationship with the consul, accused Gore of the receipt of a sum of money in return for aiding Rosas. After the fall of Rosas, in January 1853, Robert Gore was expelled from Buenos Aires when he alleged that arms and ammunitions were being distributed among British subjects. He returned to Montevideo.

Travelling from Uruguay, Robert Gore met with General Justo José de Urquiza in Entre Ríos province, who told him of his plans to develop Argentina, to open its rivers to the commerce of all nations, and to attract 'Saxon', that is, English-speaking, immigrants. In the conflict between Buenos Aires and the Argentine Confederation that ensued after the Battle of Caseros, Gore was perceived as a friend of the provinces. Robert Gore died on 4 August 1854 in Montevideo.

Edmundo Murray

References

- Escudé, Carlos and Andrés Cisneros (ed.), *Historia de las Relaciones Exteriores Argentinas* (www.argentina-rree.com), accessed 22 October 2004.
- Stenton, Michael, *Who's Who Of British Members Of Parliament, A Biographical Dictionary Of The House Of Commons* (Hassocks: The Harvestry Press, 1976), Vol. 1, 1832-1885, p.161.

Likenesses

- Alfred, Count D'Orsay, pencil and chalk, circa 1832-1848, National Portrait Gallery (London), NPG 4026(31).