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PROVINCIAL REGIMENTS.

The Queen's Rangers.—The King's American Regiments.—The New York Volunteers.

[NO. 36.]

Many of the Loyalist corps that have seen active service in the revolutionary war, at the peace in 1783 went to Upper Canada and became the pioneer settlers in what is now the noble province of Ontario; others found an asylum in the peninsula of Nova Scotia and in Prince Edward Island. Of those that came to New Brunswick all but two corps were disbanded on the river St. John; these two were the King's Orange Rangers, commanded by Major Samuel Bayard, who settled at Quaco Head in the parish of St. Martins, and the Royal Fencible Americans, commanded by Lt. Col. Joseph Gorham, who settled at St. George, in the county of Charlotte. Some twelve corps in all came to the St. John river and were the pioneer settlers on that part of the river above Fredericton. The task that lay before them on their arrival in the wilds of New Brunswick was no light one, but the spirit that in the past had animated them manfully to uphold the principles in which they believed and in the end to sacrifice their all in the fruitless endeavor to maintain the unity of the empire, nerved them to begin life anew in the land of their adoption, and to spend the residue of their lives in laying the foundations whereon their children were to build. The descendants of these sturdy old pioneers are numerous throughout the counties of York, Carleton and Victoria, and such of them as are readers of THE DISPATCH will be interested in a brief description of the Loyalist regiments in which their forefathers did such gallant service.

THE QUEEN'S RANGERS.

This celebrated Loyalist corps in efficiency and discipline equalled any regular regiment of the British line. It was organized by Col. Robert Rogers of New Hampshire, a veteran officer of the old French wars. The men were enlisted chiefly in New York and western Connecticut, a large proportion of the rank and file being of Irish nationality while the majority of the officers were of Scotch descent. The corps at first consisted of ten companies which later on were increased by the addition of another company of infantry, five troops of cavalry and a battery of artillery. Under the distinguished leadership of Lieut. Col. John Simcoe who commanded it the battle of Brandy wine the corps became noted for discipline and bravery. It was usually the van guard of the retreating army. Under all circumstances it could be relied on to give a good account of itself. Perhaps the hottest fight in which the Queen's Rangers ever engaged was the battle of Brandy wine where the British gained a victory which if it had been energetically followed up by General Howe would have resulted in the annihilation of Washington's army. At Brandy wine the Queen's Rangers lost 72 killed and wounded, 11 of whom were officers. Among the wounded were Captain John Saunders, afterwards Chief Justice of New Brunswick, Captain John McKay, who married Chief Justice Saunders's sister and was for years a prominent magistrate in what is now the parish of Southampton where he died in 1822; Lieut. Stair Agnew, who lived at "Moncton Point" opposite Fredericton and was for 30 years a member for York County in the House of Assembly; and an Ensign Hugh McKay, who settled at St. George and was for over 30 years a member for Charlotte in the House of Assembly, for more than 50 years colonel of militia, and at the time of his decease in 1848 aged 97 years the oldest magistrate in the province. Throughout the revolution the Queen's Rangers were actively employed. One of their most noted achievements was a raid on the 29th, October 1778 in which they marched some fifty miles into the heart of the enemy's country in the teeth of the American forces. The corps led by Colonel Simcoe in the course of the expedition destroyed a large number of boats and military stores at one point, released a number of Loyalists imprisoned in Somerset court house which with a quantity of stores there collected they burned, and finally after a sharp encounter with a considerable body of the enemy whom they charged and dispersed, returned to their head quarters. The boldness of the stroke created a sensation at the time in both the British and American camps. The Queen's Rangers in 1871 accompanied General Benedict Arnold in his raid on Virginia where they quite maintained their reputation. Afterwards they served under Lord Cornwallis in the unfortunate campaign in the south ending in the capitulation of Yorktown, October 19th, 1781. At the close of the war they came to New Brunswick and received grants of land in parish of Queensbury which derives its name from the Queen's Rangers. In all, three tracts of land were laid out for the accommodation of the corps, one on the Main river above Bear Island in Queensbury, another above the mouth of the Nackawick, and a third on the opposite side of the St. John between the Meductic rapids and Eel river. Among the settlers near Bear Island were Capt. Daniel Morehouse and Capt. Eves Shaw; near the Nackawick were Major Richard Armstrong, Capt. John Whitlock, Sergeant Roger Tompkins, Sergeant John Tompkins and William McLaughlan. Further reference will be made to those settled below Eel river when we come to speak of the early days of Woodstock.

THE KING'S AMERICAN REGIMENT.

This corps was organized in the year 1777 mainly by the efforts of Governor Tyrone of New York and his son-in-law, Col. Edmund Fanning. Tyrone was commissioned Major-General and commander-in-chief of all the provincial troops enrolled in the king's service during the revolution. Col. Fanning was a celebrated North Carolina Loyalist. To assist in the organization of the regiment £2000 was subscribed in New York, £529 on Long Island and £500 on Staten Island. About 500 men were enlisted and the corps soon attained a good degree of efficiency. It formed a part of the expedition which captured Forts Clinton and Montgomery on the Hudson river in October, 1777. In July,

1779, it served under General Tyrone in the expedition against the Connecticut towns along the coast, in which New Haven was plundered and Fairfield and Norwalk reduced to ashes. The hardest fighting was at Norwalk where the American militia were defeated with severe loss. Like most of the loyal corps the King's American Regiment experienced its most arduous service during the campaign in the Carolinas. It was present at the capture of Charleston in 1779, and at the disastrous battle of King's Mountain in which 334 Loyalists of various corps were killed and wounded, and a large number taken prisoners. It recovered sufficiently to take part under Lord Rawdon in the great battle at Camden, South Carolina, on the 7th April, 1781, where the Americans under General Greene were defeated with the loss of seventy officers and two thousand men killed, wounded and prisoners. Those of the King's American Regiment who settled in New Brunswick were not very many and they had no particular tract reserved for them. Among the most prominent of these corps were Capt. Abraham De Peyster of Mougerville, afterwards appointed provincial treasurer, and then changing his residence to St. John; Captain Peter Clements, who settled in the Parish of Douglas, was a very respected magistrate and died in 1833, aged 94 years; Henry Nase, who lived at Westfield where he was colonel of militia, a respected magistrate and a prominent churchman up to his decease in 1836, at the age of 84 years. Colonel Edmund Fanning, who commanded the regiment, was appointed Governor of Prince Edward Island in 1786, and held the position for nearly nineteen years. The chaplain of the corps was the Rev Samuel Seabury, afterwards first bishop of Connecticut.

THE NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS.

This was one of the first Loyalist regiments organized, the commissions of some of its officers dating back to January, 1776. It saw plenty of hard service. The first two companies that were gazetted consisted chiefly of loyal refugees who were mustered at Halifax while New York was still in the hands of the Americans. The companies accompanied General Howe's army in August, 1776, and were present at the taking of Long Island. Captain Archibald Campbell, a very brave officer, and one of the first to fall in the revolution, was killed in a skirmish at Westchester, New York, March 19, 1777. The New York Volunteers were victorious, but could ill afford the loss of their brave leader. As the war progressed additional companies were formed and the whole placed under the command of Lieut. Col. George Turnbull, who was transferred from Colonel Beverley Robinson's Loyal American Regiment. The New York Volunteers particularly distinguished themselves as the capture of Fort Montgomery on the 16th Oct., 1777. They were then about 300 strong and were enrolled in three companies under Major Alexander Grant. The muster roll of the corps at this period is now in the writers possession. Opposite some of the names are written the words "killed at Fort Montgomery." Among those so named is the name of their brave leader Major Grant. The New York Volunteers fought well in the gallant defence of Savannah, September, 1779, and gained fresh laurels at the taking of Charleston by Sir Henry Clinton in the following April. The siege lasted twelve days and ended with the capture of the city with 5,618 prisoners of war and 400 pieces of artillery besides a great quantity of spoils. Shortly after the corps was attacked at Rocky Mount, on the Wateree river west of Camden, where they were in garrison, by a superior force under Colonel Sumpter, but the latter was handsomely defeated. Col. Turnbull and his men fought at Camden in the great battle of the 16th August, 1779, in which the Americans lost 70 officers and 2,000 men killed, wounded and prisoners. On the 25th April following, Lord Rawdon with 900 men, the New York Volunteers included, gained a brilliant victory over General Greene at Hobkirk's Hill. Again at Eutaw Springs on the 8th September, the corps behaved well. Major John Coffin had honor of opening the battle on behalf of the King's troops, which he did in gallant style, and a very essential service was rendered by Major Sullivan and another portion of the corps which at a critical moment threw themselves in a brick house from which they could not be dislodged, thereby holding in check the advance of the enemy's right wing until the victory elsewhere was assured. At the peace the New York Volunteers came to New Brunswick and were allotted lands along the upper valley of the Keswick. Quite a number of the corps made their influence felt in the country of their adoption. Major John Coffin was for years a member for Kings county in the house of assembly and a member of the executive council. In the war of 1812 he raised and commanded a regiment, and eventually rose to the rank of Major General. He died at the Nerepis in 1838, at the age of 87 years. Captain Archibald McLean was distinguished for his bravery at Eutaw Springs. He was a member of the house of assembly for York county, and one of the old magistrates. He died at his residence on the Nashwalk in 1830, aged 76 years. Lieut. Garret Clopper of this corps was the first recorder of deeds and wills for York county. He died at Fredericton in 1823 at the age of 67. His son Henry G. Clopper was the founder of the Central Bank of New Brunswick and his portrait is now engraved on the five dollar notes of the People's Bank of Fredericton.

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