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CHAS. G. CONNELL, Pharmacist, Woodstock, N. B.

OLD MEDUCTIC FORT AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

[No 64]

The records connected with the Indian school taught by Frederick Dibblee from 1788 to 1792 throw some light upon the early history of Woodstock, but before proceeding to speak of these records a few final words may be said about the old Meductic fort and village.

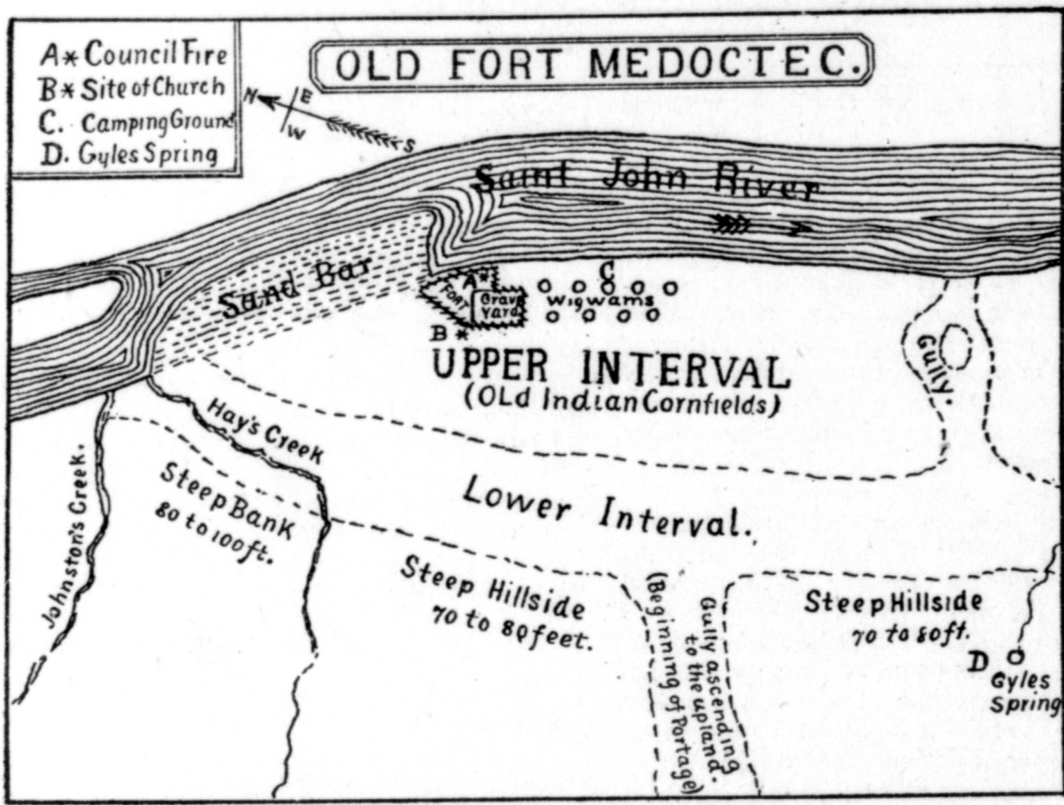
As many of the readers of this paper may be unacquainted with the locality, the cut given below will serve for the purpose of illustration. Little is now left to mark even the outlines of the old fortifications and it is difficult to determine with certainty the exact position of the stockade, the large wigwag or council chamber and other features usually found in an old Indian village.

The sketch reproduced in the engraving is in part the result of a careful personal inspection of the ground made in company with Messrs. Archie and Wilnot Hay in July last. The writer has compared with his own observations some notes and sketches kindly placed at his disposal by Dr. W. F. Ganong, who made a careful examination of the site some years ago; the whole has been corrected by such observations and traditions of the old settlers living in the vicinity as appear trustworthy.

In the oldest plans in the crown land office the site of the fort is called Meductic Point, and the island just above, Meductic Island. The point was undoubtedly a more prominent feature in olden times than it is today. A considerable portion of the bank directly in front of the old fort has been washed away by the freshets. Very probably when the Maliseets first planted their wigwags there the gravel beach shown in the plan was covered with soil and forest forming a little cove that served admirably as a landing place for canoes. Some years ago a part of the bank in front of the old grave yard broke away

arrival of the French on the Upper St. John. It was similar to those built by the Hurons and other Indians of Canada, which Parkman describes at length in his work on the Jesuits in North America, and was intended for the defence of the village from attacks of hostile savages, notably the Mohawks.

It must have been a very laborious task to construct the palisade in the first instance and nothing but stern necessity could have driven so naturally indolent and improvident a people to undertake it. The stout stakes of which it was built were cut, pointed and firmly planted with no better implements than the clumsy stone axe and like tools of prehistoric time. Between the stakes the savages contrived to interweave saplings so as to make a well high impenetrable wall which they braced as firmly as they could. Constructed as it was of very perishable materials it was necessary to rebuild from time to time, and in all probability after the decline of the Mohawk power it was not kept in as good repair as formerly. Tradition has it that several sanguinary battles occurred in the neighbourhood of the fort and that the bodies of many of the slain were buried, some in the old graveyard, and others on the opposite side of the river where many skeletons have also been found. Within the palisade stood the large wigwag or council chamber, some thirty or forty feet in length, spoken of by Gyles in his narrative. At the north east corner of the burial ground, marked A* in the plan, not far from the door of the old council chamber, is a mass of ashes and cinders with numberless bones scattered about; the indications point to this as the site of the ancient council fire. Standing at the spot the imagination of the visitor can picture the scene enacted centuries ago. Here the dog feast was held and the hatchet brandished by the savages ere they departed on their marauding expeditions to deluge the New England settlements in blood. Here at the stake the Mohawk captive yielded up his life and chanted his death song. Here Governor Villebon met the assembled warriors and exchanged belts of wampum in token of eternal friendship betwixt the Frenchman



exposing a number of Indian relics to view thus showing that a part at least of the camping ground has disappeared.

The only place where the old breastwork is now visible is along the south and east sides of the Indian graveyard where it is about two feet high but Mr. Wilnot Hay states that when his father purchased the property, there was an embankment four or five feet in height running, as marked in the plan, diagonally from the north west corner of the graveyard to the bank of the river. This was levelled by scraping it in opposite directions but with some difficulty as the Indians had made use of stones as well as earth in its construction. The old graveyard is thickly overgrown with hawthorn trees and is a perfect jungle which it is difficult to penetrate. Many holes have been dug by relic hunters and seekers of buried treasure, some of them since filled with stones carried from the beach.

The old fort and village stood on the west bank of the river St. John about four miles above the mouth of the Medoctec or Eel river: the land is now owned by Mr. A. R. Hay. The fort occupied quite a commanding position, protected from an attack on the east side in a measure by the steep bank of the river and on the remaining sides by a ditch and earthen mound on which stood a strong palisade. The site of the fort is a fine plateau extending back about fifty rods from the river, descending to a lower interval some twenty rods in depth and then rising abruptly sixty or seventy feet to the upland. At the time of the spring freshets this lower interval is overflowed and the elevated plateau then becomes an island. A curious natural depression or gully at one place affords an easy ascent to the upland and this no doubt was the beginning of the historic route or portage by which bands of savages, sometimes accompanied by their allies the French, in ancient days took their westward way to devastate the settlements of New England. By this portage it was not more than five miles from the Meductic village to Eel river.

The intervals about the centre of which stood the old fort comprises about 150 acres extending three quarters of a mile along the river side. At the fort the bank is now about 25 feet high. A small creek that enters the river a quarter of a mile above is famed for the beautiful fall about a mile from its mouth. The volume of water is small except in the spring time and after heavy rains but the height of the fall, 95 feet perpendicular, is remarkable surpassing by at least ten feet the Grand Falls of the river St. John. The place is a favorite resort for tourists and for picnic parties and is also sometimes visited by artists. Mr. John C. Mills of St. John made a sketch of the fall some years ago and called it "Moss Glen Cascade," but the people of the neighbourhood are content to call it "Hay's Falls."

Moses H. Perley in his report on the Indians of the St. John river in the year 1841 describes the camping ground at Meductic Point and quotes a tradition that the Indians built here in early times a very strong fort to repel the French. It is however almost certain that the fort was in existence before the

and the Maliseet. Here too good Father Simon and his successors taught the children of the forest as best they could the elements of our common christianity, and tamed the fierceness of their manners. Here when weary of fighting the hatchet was buried and the council fire glowed its brightest while the rival chiefs together smoked the calumet of peace.

The French and Indians regarded the Meductic village as their stronghold on the upper St. John and an important post on the route of communication with Quebec. During the prolonged struggle for the sovereignty of Acadia its defences were kept in good order. But afterwards and more particularly during the Revolutionary war they were neglected: many of the Indians abandoned the river St. John and went with Col. John Allan to Machias, others were with Pierre Tomah at Grand Lake on Passamaquoddy and in consequence the old village assumed a deserted aspect. When Captain John Munro visited it just before the arrival of the Loyalists he merely describes it as "A fine piece of interval in which two or three Indian families live, about the centre of this interval are the remains of an old breast work sufficient to contain two hundred men."

The fertile intervals at the Meductic village were doubtless cleared of trees and cultivated at a very early period. When Champlain first visited the shores of Acadia he found that Indian axes and other implements were of stone, and he speaks of the immense labor and difficulty encountered in felling large trees with such rude implements. Nevertheless they did manage to hack down trees with their stone axes and after burning the branches and trunk planted their corn among the stumps and in the course of time took out the roots. The corn they raised they either dried in the milk in the manner described by John Gyles or allowed it to ripen when they shelled it from the ear and pounded it in wooden or stone mortars and reduced it to meal. Out of this meal they made thin bread cakes which they cooked before the fire. Speaking of this fact in one of his lectures on early New Brunswick history, the late Moses Perley remarked: "And here, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have the origin of that very good thing to all true "blue noses," an Indian Johnny Cake!"

On the site of the camping ground just below the Fort, Mr. A. R. Hay, the present owner of the interval, has found the remains of wigwag fires, at some places in a very perfect condition; generally a little circle of stones about two feet in diameter, discolored and broken by the heat, and scattered about them bones, broken clay pipes, beads, etc. It is not unlikely these remains are of comparatively recent origin. There was at least a double row of huts or wigwags, one about fifty feet from the bank and another about the same distance back of the first.

The conclusion of our account of the old Meductic village must be deferred to another article.

W. O. RAYMOND.

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ORGANIZATION OF FARMERS. A FEATURE OF THE DAY.

James Rogers Speaks Earnestly.

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NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given that application will be made to the Legislature of the Province of New Brunswick for legislation respecting the following matters relating to the amendment of the Acts of Assembly relating to the Town of Woodstock: 1st. To amend acts in respect to collection of taxes from non-resident ratepayers. 2nd. To amend acts so that taxes will be a lien on real estate. 3rd. To amend acts so that a Mayor or Councillors cannot either directly or indirectly enter into any contract with the Town or have any bills against the Town while holding such office. 4th. To amend acts so that the Mayor and Councillors shall each be individually personally liable for all bills contracted without first obtaining the consent of the Town Council. 5th. To amend law in reference to holding the elections for Mayor and Councillors. J. C. HARTLEY, Town Clerk. Woodstock, N. B. Jan. 7th, 1896.

NOTICE.

Application will be made to the Legislature of New Brunswick at its next session for an Act to incorporate the village of Andover in the County of Victoria for the purpose of providing a system of water supply and for protection against fire.

NOTICE.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that application will be made at the next session of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick for an Act to incorporate the Becaguinaac River Driving and Boom Company. HARTLEY & CARVELL Solicitors for Applicants. Hartland, C. C., Jan. 6th 1896.

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RAILWAY TIME TABLE.

DEPARTURES.

6.30 A. M.—MIXED—Week days: For McAdam Junction, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Fredericton, St. John.

8.00 A. M.—MIXED—Week days: For Houlton.

10.50 A. M.—MIXED—Week days: For McAdam Junction, Fredericton and St. John.

11.05 A. M.—MIXED—Week days: For Aroostook Junction, etc.

12.25 P. M.—MIXED—Week days: For Fredericton, etc., via Gibson Branch.

1.04 P. M.—EXPRESS—Week days: For Presque Isle, and points North.

4.23 P. M.—EXPRESS—Week days: For St. John, St. Stephen, Vancleboro, Sherbrooke, Montreal, and all points West, North-West, and on Pacific Coast, Bangor, Portland, Boston, etc.

ARRIVALS.

8.55 A. M.—MIXED—Week days, from Aroostook Junction, etc.

10.35 A. M.—MIXED—Week days: From Fredericton, etc., via Gibson Branch.

10.45 A. M.—MIXED—from McAdam Junction.

1.00 P. M.—EXPRESS—Week days, from St. John, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Bangor, Montreal, etc.

4.19 P. M.—EXPRESS—Week days, from Presque Isle, Caribou, Edmundston, etc.

6.00 P. M.—MIXED—Week days, from Houlton.

10.45 P. M.—MIXED—Week days, from St. John, St. Stephen, etc.

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