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## THE MILITARY SETTLEMENTS.

(CONTINUED)

[No. 85.]

In the opening chapters of his "Seventy years of New Brunswick Life," Lieut. Col. Baird gives some very interesting reminiscences of the two years spent by his father's family on the banks of the Upper St. John. Although eight years had elapsed since the time of the journey made by Sir George Head in 1815 of which an account was given in a former article, the facilities of travel had only slightly improved and Mr. Baird and his family were obliged in order to reach their destination to make a winter journey of one hundred miles in an open sleigh upon the river over a badly drifted road the route marked out in the usual way by fir bushes planted in the ice. On arriving at their destination the family found a home for a short time at the house of George Morehouse Esq., near the mouth of the Muniac stream and shortly after moved into their own house on the opposite side of the St. John river where a partial clearing had been made by a squatter.

Among the settlers on the east side of the river at that time were George Morehouse and William Haller, magistrates, Messrs. John McDonald, John Grant, John Donaho, Alex. Marcheson, Richard Inman and Jonas Fitzherbert, the latter the only blacksmith for miles around. On the west side of the St. John were Messrs. James and Joshua Bishop, Peter McDougal, John Larlee, John Linentine, Oliver Holmes, Moses Holmes and others.

The nearest grist mill was at River de Chute. It was owned by Hilkiah Kearney "whose hospitality to travellers was proverbial."

Even at that early period lumbering was beginning to be carried on with some energy and occupied the minds of the people in a way that hindered materially the improvement and cultivation of their farms. There was a large lumbering establishment a few miles below the Tobique river owned by Messrs. Peters and Wilmot and known as the "Concern Place." William Wilmot, of this firm, was the father of Hon. L. A. Wilmot late lieutenant governor of the province. In those days the only lumber thought to be of much account was white pine timber and for many years it was cut in the most prodigal fashion. It is perhaps not too much to say that the general effect of the lumber trade upon the inhabitants of the Upper St. John region has been rather demoralizing. Mr. Peter Fisher in his little work on New Brunswick clearly shows that the lumberer of 1825 made little money out of his winter's operations and meanwhile the farm was being neglected and his morals degenerating. We quote from his book the words that follow:

"A great drawback to the prosperity of the province is the great consumption of ardent liquors partly occasioned by the present mode of conducting the timber business. The amount of spirituous liquors imported and consumed in the province in 1824 at the least calculation was £120,000 exclusive of the County of Charlotte; and add to this amount the cost of the transport of the liquor to the interior and the enormous charges on the article in the distant parts of the province the cost to the consumer may be fairly reckoned at treble the amount (or \$1,440,000) for ardent liquors alone consumed by the inhabitants of the province being nearly twenty gallons on an average for every male over sixteen years of age."

Mr. Fisher's book contains some very sensible observations upon the folly of cutting pine timber in so wasteful and prodigal a fashion by speculators which, owing to the limited space at our disposal cannot be here inserted.

We learn from Col. Baird's book that there was in 1823 no highway road suitable for summer travel above the River de Chute and no regular postal communication. The courier of the day, one Martin a Frenchman, used to make a trip monthly between Fredericton and Quebec, travelling in winter on snowshoes with dog and toboggan. The Baird family after a residence of two years in the wilderness during which the father divided his time between improving his property and teaching school, returned to Fredericton. Mr. Baird sold his land to his cousin Henry and the latter having been joined by his brothers Adam and George formed the well known settlement of Bairdsville. Adam and George Baird purchased their lands from the original grantees Peter and Isaac McDougall. Senator T. Baird is a son of the George Baird just named. After his return to Fredericton John Baird conducted the Madras National School established there for twenty years and then retired to spend his declining years on a property he purchased a few miles below Tobique village where he died in 1858.

To the list of the early settlers on the river between Presquise and Grand Falls given in our preceding articles the following names may be added namely:—John Andrews, John Alt, Thomas Barry, Michael Collins, Robert Cuffman, John Cuffman, Thomas Cox, Alexander Cowan, John Finmor, Mark Freeman, Hunter, James Lloyd, George Milberry, George Manzer, Nathan Mipecks, George Morrison, William McCray, Charles McLauchlan, Jonathan Parks, Wm. Tomlinson, Joseph Valley, Wm. Wharton, Richard Wharton, Nathaniel Woodman and James Wright.

Among the families settled farther up the river in early times were those of Messrs. Hitchcock, Bowmaster, Merrit, Watson, Austin, Brayall, Whitehead and Rowbotham. The two last named were school masters. It is said that William Brayall who died a year or two ago at the age of over eighty years was the last survivor of the original settlers. He was but a boy of seven years of age at the time his father came there.

The local government of the day looked with much interest upon the formation of the Military settlements. Lt. Gov. G. Stracey Smyth in his speech delivered at the opening of the legislature Jan. 21, 1818 said: "I look forward to consequences of no small utility which may be confidently expected from the new Military Settlements on the line of communication with Canada by the disbanded soldiers of the Regiments raised in this province." Governor Sir Howard Douglas on his

arrival showed a like interest in the settlement and promised the Rev. Mr. Dibblee to assist the settlers to the utmost of his ability.

In January 1819 the magistrates of the County of York, convened at Fredericton at the court of General Sessions of the peace, appointed the following officers for the as yet unorganized district extending from the White Marsh to the Tobique river, viz. J. A. MacLauchlan, George Morehouse and Thomas Emerson, Commissioners of highways; John Giberson and William Bishop, Surveyors of highways; Richard Wharton, Thomas Grant and James Lloyd, Constables. On the 20th March, 1821, all of the County of York north of the parish of Wakefield including both sides of the river was by Act of Assembly erected into "the Town or Parish of Kent." This enormous parish—since subdivided into sixteen, was at first divided into the lower district and the upper (or Madawaska) district. A list of the first parish officers appointed for the lower district will serve to indicate some of the more prominent settlers. James Murphy, Thomas Barry, Jabez Squires, Trustees of Schools; Samuel Bishop, Chas. McLauchlan, Geo. Milberry, Nathaniel Woodman, Asa Kinney, Surveyors of Highways; Mark Freeman, Overseers of poor; Jabez C. Squires, Assessor; James Giberson, George Morrison, Richard Hopkins, Constables; Geo. Robertson, Jabez C. Squires, Overseers of fisheries; Charles Stewart, Town Clerk.

About this time emigration began to play an important part in the development of the upper St. John region. The House of Assembly as early as 1816 voted \$4000 for the purpose of encouraging emigration from Great Britain and Ireland. Many of those who crossed the Atlantic were very destitute upon their arrival in the country and the House of Assembly was called upon in various ways to vote money for their assistance. Here is an instance in point taken from the journals of the House under date March 17, 1821 "Voted to Charles Stewart, a resident at the Grand Falls £20 to reimburse him for expenses incurred in affording relief to Thomas Croghan and other indigent emigrants travelling that way."

With the increase of population and the development of the timber trade it became a matter of some importance to improve the navigation of the St. John main river and petitions to that end were presented the House of Assembly by the people interested. Governor Smyth must have sympathized with the petitions for at the next session, in 1823, he says, "In consequence of our increasing population and the number of new settlements constantly forming upon the banks of our rivers it becomes daily more necessary to render their navigation easy and safe, more particularly in the upper parts of them by removing obstructions and forming towing paths along their banks which will materially facilitate the transportation of the internal trade of the country."

The passion for lumbering continued to develop itself. The fees charged by government for pine timber cut on Crown Lands was at this time only one shilling per ton. The Grand Falls were early recognized as an obstacle to the lumbering interests. One of the first of the many mooted projects to remedy the difficulty was that of Moses Shaw who was concerned in saw mills at Grand Falls. We find from the House of Assembly journals that on March 1, 1823, John Allen, M. P. P., presented the petition of Moses Shaw praying for pecuniary assistance to enable him to make a tunnel through the isthmus near the Grand Falls for the more easy conveyance of timber from the upper part of the said river to the basin below. The following year Messrs. William Peters, Samuel Peters and William Wilmot applied to the legislature for a loan of £2,000 "for the purpose of enabling them to cut a canal through the Great Falls for sluicing timber and other lumber in safety from above the said Falls to the river below." Nothing however was done at this time.

In the year 1824 considerable improvements were made by George Morehouse in the navigation of the river between Presquise and Grand Falls by removing rocks and making towing paths.

Thus little by little the upper St. John region became more accessible and its development became more rapid. Its inhabitants increased in numbers and their circumstances rapidly improved.

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