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EARLY DAYS OF WOODSTOCK.

W. O. RAYMOND.

No. 22.

We continue in this article the consideration of the settlement of old Lower Woodstock by the disbanded soldiers of the King's American Regiment. The number of individuals in the corps certified as entitled to "the Royal Bounty of Provisions," when the regiment arrived at St. John, was 301 (exclusive of servants), viz., 153 men, 47 women, 101 children. The number of those who were mustered on the river the following summer was 144 men, 35 women, 96 children and 18 servants. A good many of the regiment pushed up the river to St. Anns shortly after their arrival at Parr-town.

Not many years ago, the writer of this paper had a very interesting talk with the late George Ingraham of St. John, whose grandfather, Sergeant Benjamin Ingraham, came to New Brunswick with the King's American Regiment in 1783. Benjamin Ingraham was born in Connecticut, but was living on the Hudson river when the war broke out. He was imprisoned and put in irons on account of his loyalty. He tried to escape to the "Northern Army," under General Burgoyne, but could not. He succeeded in getting to New York in December 1776, and enlisted in one of the companies of the King's American Regiment. He served all the war, first as private and later as sergeant. After his discharge Captain Clements gave him a written certificate, in which he speaks very highly of his conduct during the war, and says that he was universally esteemed by the officers of the regiment. Sergeant Ingraham was severely wounded at Camden, in South Carolina, and afterwards very nearly died of yellow fever in the general hospital at Charlestown. His brother Abijah was a corporal in the regiment. At the peace in 1783 Benjamin Ingraham was joined at New York by his wife and family, who till then had remained at their home on the Hudson. His property was seized and confiscated by "the rebels." After his arrival at Parr-town he was disbanded with the rest of the regiment on the 10th of October. Ten days later he arrived at St. Anns with his family. They came up the river in a row-boat and had a very uncomfortable and trying journey. On his arrival, Sergeant Ingraham pitched a tent at Salamanca, below the town plat of Fredericton, to shelter his wife and little ones. He made all haste to put up a log hut in the woods and moved into it on the 6th November, at which time six inches of snow had fallen.

The experience of the disbanded soldiers, who wintered with their families at St. Anns, was even more trying than that of those who remained at Parr-town. The month of October was cold and rainy, and those who went up the river in boats had a very miserable time of it. The majority were obliged to provide shelter from the approaching winter by building log and bark huts. "Scarcely," says Peter Fisher, "had they begun to construct their cabins, when they were surprised by the rigors of an untried climate; their habitations being enveloped in snow before they were tenanted. . . . The privations and sufferings of some of these poor people almost exceed belief. Frequently, in the piercing cold of winter, a part of the family had to remain up during the night to keep fires in their huts to prevent the other part from freezing. Some very destitute families made use of boards to supply the want of bedding; the father, or some of the elder children, remaining up by turns, and warming two suitable pieces of boards, which they applied alternately to the smaller children to keep them warm, with many similar expedients."

The awfulness of their situation may be readily imagined. Women delicately reared, and for their infants beneath canvas tents, rendered habitable only by the banks of snow which lay six feet deep in the open

spaces of the forest. Men, unaccustomed to toil, looked with dismay at the prospect before them. The non-arrival of supplies, expected before the close of navigation, added to their distress, and at one time starvation stared them in the face. "Strong, proud men wept like children, and, exhausted by cold and famine, lay down in their snow-bound tents to die." The poor settlers had to make frequent trips of from fifty to one hundred miles with hand-sleds or toboggans, through wild woods or on the frozen river, to procure a precarious supply of food for their famishing families.

Benjamin and his brother Abijah Ingraham had grants of land below the mouth of the Shogomoc, then known as "Little Eel river." Benjamin Ingraham had also a valuable lot of land a little below the river plat of Fredericton where he spent most of his days. The descendants of the Ingrahams are numerous and respected.

The tract drawn by the King's American Regiment contained much barren land, and many of the regiment who came and looked at it concluded to seek more desirable locations. There were some who made an attempt to settle on their lots but after a short time desisted. The early land memorials, submitted to Governor Carleton and his council, furnish a good many examples of this kind, a few of which may be quoted for the purpose of illustration.

"Woodstock, the 13th Feb'y, 1788. To His Excellency Thomas Carleton, Esq., etc., etc., etc.

"The memorial of William Lindop most humbly sheweth,—

That your memorialist is a settler on Block No. 4 in Woodstock, drawn by the late Kings American Regiment. That about two years ago he settled on lot No. 6 in the said Block, where he has been ever since, but finds his land too rough and stony, with all his industry to procure him a subsistence. Your memorialist therefore prays that a lot No. 79, in Block No. 7, nearly opposite to Captain Smith's, may be granted to him.

And your memorialist as in duty bound will ever pray, etc, etc.

Wm. Lindop.

The Governor in Council ordered that the memorial be complied with.

Obadiah Tompkins, late of the Loyal American Regiment, had a similar experience and sought a similar remedy.

"Woodstock, July 30, 1788.

To His Excellency Thomas Carleton, Esq., etc, etc, etc.

The memorial of Obadiah Tompkins of Woodstock most humbly sheweth,—

That your memorialist has a lot of land (No. 21 in the Township of Woodstock), and finding it impossible to get his living upon it, most humbly begs your Excellency's approbation to relinquish the said lot, and prays your Excellency would grant him lot No. 77 in the Township of Northampton.

And your Excellency's memorialist as in duty bound will ever pray, etc.

Obadiah Tompkins.

The Governor in Council ordered that Mr. Tompkins' memorial be complied with.

John Cox drew a lot of land with the regiment "whereon he could not procure a subsistence." He therefore cast his eyes elsewhere, and on August 2nd, 1788, memorialised the Governor in Council that he had made improvements and built a house on lot 16 in Block No. 9, surveyed by John Davidson for the 2nd Battalion of General de Lancey's Brigade, and asked for a grant of the same. The Governor and Council ordered that the land be registered for him.

The name of Isaac Atwood is inseparably connected with the founding of old Lower Woodstock. Capt. Atwood was a New Jersey Loyalist, one of the first to rally to the King's standard and to raise a company for the King's American Regiment. This company was a troop of Light Dragoons, and we may assume that its captain was an active and dashing young officer. But like many others his constitution was impaired in the arduous campaigns in the Carolinas and in

February, 1787, he was reported by a brother officer as being in a bad state of health. Nevertheless it was owing to his energy and perseverance that a settlement was established on the unpromising block of land drawn by his regiment in old Lower Woodstock. We learn something of the steps he took in this connection from his memorial addressed to Governor Carleton on the 1st of March, 1785, which states that as early in the year 1784 as the season would admit he proceeded with a small party up the St. John river, forty miles above St. Anns, and settled on the lands allotted them in their Regimental block. They were the first settlers so far up the river and their example in surmounting the difficult ascent of the Meductic rapids stimulated and encouraged the men of the 1st de Lanceys to undertake the settlement of their block of land at Woodstock—or "the Township of Meductic"—the same season. Captain Atwood's land included a tract of 700 acres below Sullivan's Creek, to which he gave the name of Bel-Viso and a tract of about the same extent at the mouth of Eel River which he purchased of his brother officer Lieut. Peter I. Smith. Capt. Atwood describes his land as "extremely rough and mountainous" and says that it would be much to his interest to accept the Governor's permission to take land nearer to St. Anns, were it not that he had already expended so much time and labor in improving that whereon he had settled to afford to relinquish it.

Anyone who has noticed the immense granite boulders scattered over the surface of the country near the Shogomoc stream will not be inclined to dissent from Bishop Seabury's opinion that "the allotment of the corps fell in too unfavorable a situation for present cultivation. At the time of his memorial to Governor Carleton Capt. Atwood says that no improvement of consequence had been made within fifteen miles of his property and that, although his land was indifferent he had bestowed more labor in building and clearing than any settler above St. Anns.

The task that had fallen to Isaac Atwood was indeed a difficult one. Some of the discouragements he had to encounter are mentioned in the following interesting letter to deputy surveyor Adam Allan:—

BEL-VISO, 15th August, 1785.

Dear Sir,—From the improvements that I have made with part of the King's American Regiment and others now settled on Block No. 4, I have every assurance of a Grant whenever a regular survey can be obtained. I beg leave therefore to request you, if consistent with your instructions, to oblige me in attending to this business as soon as you possibly can, and should any orders be necessary from the Surveyor General but what you have already received, I shall esteem it a particular favour to make such representations as your own knowledge will best dictate to procure them.

I have not suffered any one to take more than 20 rods front to a 100 acres, but the soldiers must consider it a hardship (and not without reason) that Refugees of all denominations, and but few of equal merit with themselves, should draw their land more than one hundred miles nearer St. John and twice the quantity of front.

Though we are 40 miles above the town of Fredericton, could those who receive but one 100 acres have 30 rods front, instead of 20, it would give satisfaction and be attended with good consequences, and we want some stimulative to encounter the Rapids, as yourself can judge. Please to favor me with an answer as soon as convenient, and believe me to be, sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,
I. ATWOOD.

ADAM ALLAN, Esq.: This communication having been laid before the Governor in Council by Surveyor General Geo. Sproule it was agreed that, as Block No 4 had been already surveyed, a grant should pass without delay for the actual settlers. However it was not until two years later that the grant was made. The reason for the delay will be given in a subsequent article.

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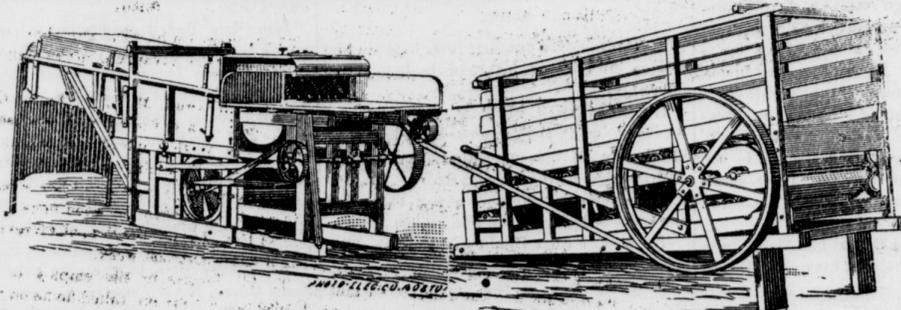
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