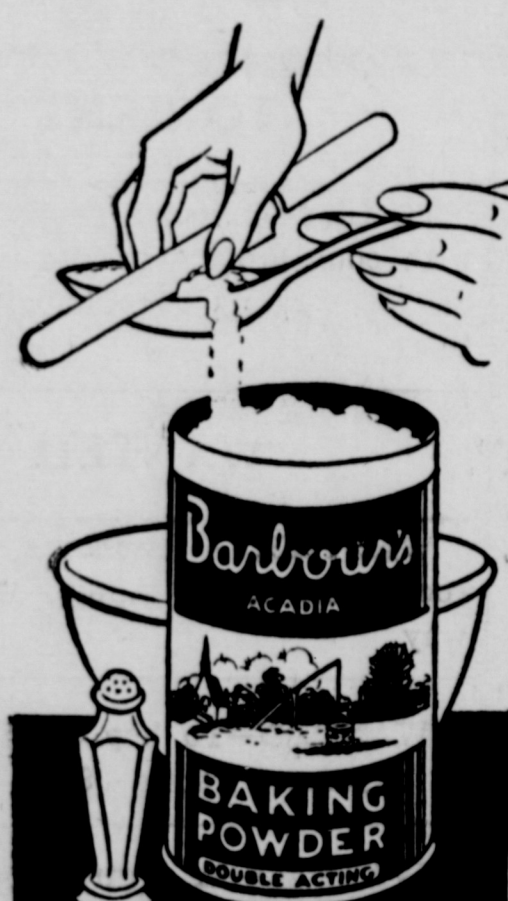


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Chased By the Wolves

By H. B. Scott, Meductic, N. B.

Well, boys and girls, and perhaps men and women too, who have read these short stories, some of them about the days before I was in existence, you have read some tales I have written about bears and the narrow escapes settlers had from them, hair raising stories of ghosts and spirits; stories of the old steam-boating and rafting days on the Saint John river; stories of deer hunting away back in the past, days which one thinks of with regret, memories that bring the tears to your eyes of times which we wish could come again.

This story will be about wolves. Of course people living here today know nothing of these animals, for they left this part of the country many years ago, probably never to return. In our old school books we used to read the story of the skater and the wolves, and how they chased him on the St. Lawrence river. Today I will tell the story of one of our oldest settlers that about equals the one in the school book.

This man was one of the early settlers on the banks of the Saint John river between Meductic and Woodstock. He prospered and raised a large family, of which the writer is a descendant. To get to the beginning of the story we have to go back to the days when this country was first settled and pretty much all they had to eat and wear was raised on the farm.

I can remember my mother shearing the sheep, spinning and carding the wool and making me a little suit complete with a little belt and whistle. How proud I was with my little suit and copper toed boots. One thing about that suit, there was no pattern to cut it by, so when I was any distance away one could hardly tell whether I was coming or going, for my pants were just as big behind as they were in front, but I thought I was a dandy just the same.

In those days most of the old folks were people who had immigrated to New Brunswick from the old country. The man I am telling about was my grandfather, Thomas Teeling. It was the custom in those times in the old country for boys to enlist in the army or navy for three years, so Thomas' father persuaded him to join the navy. Thomas had been used to having his own way as a boy and he did not take kindly to naval discipline.

His ship would at times anchor outside this or that port and remain for a while. One day the ship anchored off Newcastle, N. B. Thomas and a friend talked matters over and decided that as this was a new country it offered good opportunities and that their chances of being caught were small, so they made up their minds to desert. When they got a chance to go ashore they gathered up what food they could find and made their way to Boiestown.

At the first place they stopped the woman said she would keep them for the night if they would cut some wood for their board. They were both willing to work but they had never cut any wood before, or seen anyone else cut any, and when they finally had enough cut to do the night the sticks looked as if they had been gnawed by beavers.

The boys found farm work hard, but they were ready to do anything rather than go back to the navy, so they stayed around Boiestown for four or five years and got so they

could work on a farm or in the woods with anybody.

Finally Thomas married a girl by the name of Brown and after staying another year in Boiestown he started on an adventurous trip to the Saint John river. He went down the Nashua tramping and by boat. At Fredericton, as it was then called, they heard about land that one could get up river, so he and his wife got a canoe and poled and paddled upriver.

There were very few houses or hotels along the river in those days, and the country was pretty much all virgin forest with only corduroy roads. They landed at Franklin Eddy and found the place that was allotted them in what is known as the Teeling valley, now occupied by David Grant. They built a log house close to the bank of the river, for most people travelled by the river then, by boat in the summer and on the ice in the winter. It was nothing unusual for a man to pole his supplies up from Fredericton, and my father has done this as late as 1865.

Thomas did not have much money and very few things with which to start farming, but he was an industrious man who would always say: "Where there's a will there's a way." There was an abundance of lumber at hand, and he decided to go in for lumbering on a small scale. Within a few years he was able to get a team of horses in addition to his ox team.

Thomas and his wife raised a large family, two boys, Thomas and Isaac, and six girls, Mary Phoebe, Charlotte, Sarah, Nancy and Liza.

After a while he managed to place a crew of men in the woods on the rear of his farm, which ran back three and a half miles toward Benton. While this operation was going on he decided that he needed more salt pork for the crew, which included his two sons, Thomas and Isaac. The principal diet for woods crews then was salt pork and beans, molasses, sourdough biscuits and molasses cake.

As there were no cook stoves or ovens called bakers, open in front, were placed before an open fire place in the middle of the camp. The smoke escaped through a hole in the roof and the whole camp was heated by the same fire around which the men would gather and smoke and sing songs.

Thomas threw a bag over his shoulder and started off through the woods for the nearest store. His intention was to be back before dark, for he knew very well that the woods were full of wolves, and he also knew that they would not harm anyone until after dark, but at that time of the year, December, dusk fell pretty early.

The store in question was near the Jim Braden place, where George Purvis now lives. It was run by a man named Pearley, who sold rum as well as groceries and general merchandise. Of course as soon as Thomas arrived he had to have a drink, this being the custom of place and time. Then he had to have another. Then he kept on drinking and spinning yarns, until when he looked out he saw it was already getting dark. So he slung his bag of pork over his shoulder and started off down the trail to make the camp that night.

The trail ran west of where the main road is now. When Thomas was about at the place now occupied

by John and Allen Yerxa he first heard the wolves howl; a dismal howl which made his hair stand on end, as he was still a long way from camp, and by now it was quite dark.

His first thought was to grab a good stout club, and his next was to start running. It was a good thing he had the club for many times the wolves jumped at him with their teeth snapping like the jaws of a steel trap. Many times he swung his club and the brutes would dodge away, but they always jumped back. As far as he could tell there were about twenty in the pack, but by the howls he knew that others were coming up through the woods.

Thomas fought his way across the Johnston Brook and came to the bridge across Hay's Creek, where Gilmore Love's house is now. There he threw the bag of pork down on the ice, which gave him a breathing spell as the wolves left him and went to smell at the bag. They did not stay there long as they were not interested in salt meat and they soon came back after Thomas stronger than ever.

Thomas was getting very tired by this time and he said to himself: "If only the Lord will let me get nearer home perhaps someone will hear the howls and come with lights." As he kept swinging the club he could feel the froth from their hideous mouths against his hands.

At that time everyone had a canoe for fishing, complete with spears and flambeaus made of white birch bark for use in spearing salmon. Mrs. Teeling heard the howling, and said to the two older girls, Mary and Phoebe: "Those wolves are after your father. I know. We'll take flambeaus and light him up the trail, for the wolves will not face fire." They took some flambeaus from the side of the fireplace where they were kept, lit them and started down the trail. A good flambeau would burn for three quarters of an hour.

After they had gone a few hundred yards they came upon the wolf pack, just over what is now Purlong hill, near the present Gilbert, Brown place. As soon as the wolves saw the lights they backed up and they could see the fire in their eyes reflected from the burning torches.

Thomas took a few more steps and collapsed in a kind of faint. Still holding the flambeau, his wife bathed his face until he came to. His hat and mitts were gone and his clothes were soaked with perspiration. They were just wondering how they would get him home, for it was a bitter



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