

THE FORT HOWE OF OLD.

IT WAS AN IMPORTANT MILITARY STATION IN EARLY DAYS.

Rev. W. O. Raymond Writes About the Time When the Loyalists Landed—The Troops at Fort Howe—St. John as a Fortified City Men Who Made History.

The post at old Fort Frederick being considered for many reasons unsuitable, steps were at once taken for the construction of a fort and barracks on the top of the high hill in Portland. This fort was named in honor of Sir William Howe, the commander-in-chief of the British forces in America.

The first garrison at Fort Howe was composed of a detachment of the Royal Fencible Americans under Major Gifford Studholm.

The absolute necessity for the establishment of a strong defensive position at St. John was soon apparent. Fort Howe was already complete when a band of about 600 Indian warriors assembled on the river at the Jemseg. The party consisted of Penobscots, Passamaquoddis and St. John river Indians. They sent a formal declaration of war and returned the British flag to Major Studholm. Their instigator was as usual Colonel John Allan de Machias.

At this juncture the talents of the Indian agent Colonel Michael Franklin were employed to good advantage. He had able assistants in Major Studholm, James White, James Simonds and last but not least in Father Bourg the priest lately appointed to minister to the St. John Indians. Through their united efforts a treaty was made at Fort Howe, the chiefs at the same time returning into the hands of Col. Franklin the presents which they had received from General Washington and then on bended knee taking a solemn oath of allegiance to his majesty King George the third. The inducements held out to them were by no means inconsiderable, the cost of the presents provided at this time being \$2,148, in addition to which \$160 was spent in entertaining the chiefs.

So faithful were the Indians that they assembled again in 1779 and were not appeased until they had received a promise of additional presents.

The following letter is of interest in this connection:

To the Chief Captains and Principal Indians of the River St. John: Brethren—I am much concerned, I cannot see you as I intended on the 25th of this month, but Major Studholm will meet you for me, who will tell you the sentiments of my heart.

Brethren—King George wants me for his ships and has employed people to provide them on the river, depending on you to protect the workmen in cutting them and conveying them to Fort Howe.

Brethren—The Governor sends you some presents, which Major Studholm will deliver you. They are intended to bind fast your promise that you will protect the workmen.

Brethren, King George my gracious master, has sent me a large quantity of presents for you; they are now on the water on their way to Halifax. When they arrive, I shall deliver them to you in person. These presents the king gives you for delivering up to me the treaty you had entered into with the council at Boston.

I salute you, and am your affectionate brother,

(Signed) MICHAEL FRANKLIN.

Windsor, 15th May, 1780.

This letter was accompanied by an invoice of the presents to be distributed amongst the Indians by Major Studholm as an inducement to protect the workmen in procuring masts for the king's navy, viz: 50 pairs blankets, 40 shirts, 4 pieces blue broad, 6½ yards blue and scarlet cloth, 100 rings, 200 flints, 54 yards of ribbon, 5½ cwt. shot, 1 bl. gun powder, 3 pieces white kersey, 60 milled caps, 40 worsted caps, 50 castor hats, 1000 shoes, 100 yards embossed serge, 1 cask of wine, sent by Mr. Franklin, for the squaws and such men as do not drink rum.

The goods were shipped at Windsor for Fort Howe in the schooner *Monnegash*, Peter Dousett, master.

It may be noted in passing that the *Monnegash* was built in 1770 at the upper cove (now Market slip) by Jonathan Leavitt. *Monnegash* was the name given by the Micmacs to the peninsula on which the principal part of the city of St. John now stands.

Masts for the King's Navy.

The first cargo of masts arrived at Halifax from St. John, Nov. 22, 1780. The business evidently proved satisfactory to the promoters for in the month of April following Sir Richard Hughes, governor of Nova Scotia, writes Lord Germaine that "upwards of 200 sticks for masts, yards and bowsprits have been cut, squared and approved by the king's purveyor at the river St. John in the course of last fall and winter and one of our navy transports is actually at Fort Howe embarking the second cargo of those stores."

The shipment of masts from St. John continued to engage the attention of Major Studholm for several years. Special interest attaches to this young industry, marking as it does the beginning of the vast lumber trade which has since then been carried on upon the St. John and its tributaries.

At the close of the revolutionary war General Haldimand sent Capt. John Monro, an officer in one of the Loyalist corps, to explore the route of a proposed road from Kamouraska to Fort Howe by way of Temiscouata lake and the valleys of the Madawaska and St. John. Capt. Monro arrived in St. John Sept. 26, 1783, and he found it a busy place. The Loyalists were erecting their future habitations on both sides of the harbor and no less than 700 houses were then enclosed. "On the river St. John," writes Monro, "are the finest masts and spars that I have ever seen. I saw at Fort Howe above six thousand pounds' worth. Two ships were loading when I left that place. I suppose there were masts sufficient there to load ten ships. The proprietors sell the pines standing for \$8.00 each tree. It will be the ruin of the loyal refugees, so many settling at Fort Howe and upon the sea coast as they can have no wood there but what they buy or carry from a great distance they would have done better had they gone into the woods."

Occasional glimpses of life at St. John in early times may be secured from a variety of sources and are always of interest.

Diary of Benjamin Marston.

A short time ago the writer of this article was kindly permitted by a lady in Woodstock to look over an interesting diary kept at the time of the American revolution by Benjamin Marston, a cousin of Judge Edward Winslow and subsequently first sheriff of the county of Northumberland. Mr. Marston was obliged to abandon his home and all his possessions at Marblehead in 1766 and cast in his lot with other unfortunate loyal exiles. To one of his active temperaments it was something unendurable. Accordingly in the year 1781 we find him in command of a small brig, the *Britannia*, engaged in the coast-

ing trade; a pretty risky business, owing to the seas being infested with French and American privateers. Capt. Marston sailed from Penobscot, Sept. 4, 1781, for St. John, under convoy of the sloop of war, *Vulture*. A few extracts from his journal will be of interest as showing the condition of things at Fort Howe at that period.

At Sea in the "Britannia," Thursday, Sept. 6th, 1781.—Last evening about sunset the *Charles* town left us with the *Vulture*. At 12 noon we are between a large long island and the main; the island, I suppose, is the Grand Manan, observed in 44° 30' N. lat. Fine pleasant weather and fair winds for the last 24 hours. 8 p. m.—The island is the Grand Manan; the *Charles* town has just now rejoined the fleet; weather fine, moderate wind, fair and gentle; sky serene and full-orbed Cynthia brightens all the scene.

Friday, Sept. 7.—About 10 a. m. arrived safely into St. John's river, went on shore and dined with Mr. Hazen whom I find to be the man I have ever heard him characterized.

Saturday, Sept. 8.—Dined with Mr. Hazen, sold him and Mr. White some tobacco, wine and chocolate. Mending sails today. Wind blowing very hard at N. W.

Sunday, Sept. 9.—Am in hopes of having a conveyance to Annapolis; shall know more.

Monday, Sept. 10.—Still waiting in hopes of a conveyance. Have a prospect of carrying some garrison stores to Annapolis, in that case shall have a party

of about 10 men.

Tuesday, Sept. 11.—Dirty—rainy—wind at noon S. and S. W.

Wednesday, Sept. 12th.—Went till 12 o'clock at noon to sail with the men of war and the masts.

Thursday, Sept. 13th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Sept. 14th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Sept. 15th.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Sept. 16th.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Sept. 17th.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Sept. 18th.—Went to the masts.

Wednesday, Sept. 19th.—Went to the masts.

Thursday, Sept. 20th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Sept. 21st.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Sept. 22nd.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Sept. 23rd.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Sept. 24th.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Sept. 25th.—Went to the masts.

Wednesday, Sept. 26th.—Went to the masts.

Thursday, Sept. 27th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Sept. 28th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Sept. 29th.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Sept. 30th.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Oct. 1st.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Oct. 2nd.—Went to the masts.

Wednesday, Oct. 3rd.—Went to the masts.

Thursday, Oct. 4th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Oct. 5th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Oct. 6th.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Oct. 7th.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Oct. 8th.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Oct. 9th.—Went to the masts.

Wednesday, Oct. 10th.—Went to the masts.

Thursday, Oct. 11th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Oct. 12th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Oct. 13th.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Oct. 14th.—Went to the masts.

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Friday, Oct. 26th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Oct. 27th.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Oct. 28th.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Oct. 29th.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Oct. 30th.—Went to the masts.

Wednesday, Oct. 31st.—Went to the masts.

Thursday, Nov. 1st.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Nov. 2nd.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Nov. 3rd.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Nov. 4th.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Nov. 5th.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Nov. 6th.—Went to the masts.

Wednesday, Nov. 7th.—Went to the masts.

Thursday, Nov. 8th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Nov. 9th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Nov. 10th.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Nov. 11th.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Nov. 12th.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Nov. 13th.—Went to the masts.

Wednesday, Nov. 14th.—Went to the masts.

Thursday, Nov. 15th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Nov. 16th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Nov. 17th.—Went to the masts.

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Thursday, Nov. 22nd.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Nov. 23rd.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Nov. 24th.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Nov. 25th.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Nov. 26th.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Nov. 27th.—Went to the masts.

Wednesday, Nov. 28th.—Went to the masts.

Thursday, Nov. 29th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Nov. 30th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Dec. 1st.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Dec. 2nd.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Dec. 3rd.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Dec. 4th.—Went to the masts.

Wednesday, Dec. 5th.—Went to the masts.

Thursday, Dec. 6th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Dec. 7th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Dec. 8th.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Dec. 9th.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Dec. 10th.—Went to the masts.

Tuesday, Dec. 11th.—Went to the masts.

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Thursday, Dec. 13th.—Went to the masts.

Friday, Dec. 14th.—Went to the masts.

Saturday, Dec. 15th.—Went to the masts.

Sunday, Dec. 16th.—Went to the masts.

Monday, Dec. 17th.—Went to the masts.

Fundy, (at Passamaquoddy is a settlement of Quakers), and considerably augmented those of Annapolis Royal and St. John's River; they are so numerous at the last mentioned place as to build two towns, Carleton and Clinton."

The name of Parr town was never very acceptable to the loyalists, and probably the period of its general adoption did not extend over a twelve-month.

In view of the fact that the name of St. John has been applied to our river and harbor for well nigh three centuries, the name Parr town, as applied to this city, must be regarded as a mere passing episode which has received more attention than it merits.

Col. Morse Describes Fort Howe.

The condition of Fort Howe at the close of the revolutionary war is seen in the report of Col. Robert Morse compiled in the year 1784 by direction of Sir Guy Carleton. Speaking of Fort Howe he says: "This little work was erected in the course of the late war in preference to repairing a small square fort (Fort Frederick) thrown up during the former war of which the position being low and com-

manded, and not so well situated for the protection of the few houses built in the cove of the bay, where two or three persons lived of a company to whom a large tract of land had been granted, and who carried on a considerable trade with the Indians and persons settled up the river. The ridge upon which the new fort stands was offered by them, and a work in which there are eight pieces of cannon, barracks for 100 men, and a small block house were accordingly erected, together with a larger blockhouse at the other end of the ridge. The blockhouse remains, but the work, which is composed of fascines and sods, is falling down, and the ridge upon which it stands is too narrow to admit of any useful works being constructed upon it."

Colonel Morse's report further shows that there were at Fort Howe eight iron guns, viz., two eighteen pounders, four six pounders and two four pounders; also two five and a half inch brass mortars, with a fair amount of ammunition. In the barracks there were twelve rooms for the officers and accommodations for one hundred men.

The old iron guns of Fort Howe would not prove of much practical service today, as far as the defence of St. John is concerned; they have a history nevertheless, and are identified with all the notable events in the early days of New Brunswick.

They welcomed with right hearty good will the arrival of the spring fleet of 1783. The shores of our harbor are said to have been white with snow on the 10th day of May, when Capt. Consett Wilson in the good ship, *Union*, the flag of Britain streaming from her masthead, led up to the anchoring ground beneath the protecting guns of Fort Howe the most notable fleet that had as yet entered the harbor of St. John. On board that fleet were upwards of 3,000 souls, but wearied as they were by their fortnight's voyage, they were not over anxious to land upon our chilly shores. The popular idea of an immediate and simultaneous disembarkation is quite erroneous.

Walter Bates, in his interesting narrative, mentions that the passengers of the *Union* were allowed to remain on board for some days, and he contrasts their good fortune with that of their fellows in some of the other ships, who were "precipitated on shore." By Sunday, the 18th of May, the work of disembarkation was completed, and that day has ever since been set apart for a yearly commemoration of the landing of the Loyalists.

The cannons of Fort Howe thundered a salute of 17 guns on the 21st day of November, 1784, when our first Lieutenant-Governor, Col. Thomas Carleton, disembarked from the sloop *Ranger* and landed at the Upper Cove.

With a royal salute of 21 guns they voiced the enthusiastic welcome extended by the loyal citizens of St. John in June 1794 to Prince Edward Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria. Once again they thundered forth a hearty salute when on the 25th of August, 1824, Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Howard Douglas, arrived—a man to whom New Brunswick never had a truer friend, and who in the course of his four and a half years residence in the Province made his name a household word.

When Governor Carleton arrived the 54th regiment was at Fort Howe. Among its members were three men who subsequently made some stir in the world, viz., Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Captain William Balfour and Sergeant Major William Cobbett.

The romantic career and tragic death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald are well known to the students of Irish history. Among the many delightfully interesting letters for which we are indebted to his biographer is one written to his mother at the time he was at Fort Howe with his regiment, of which he was the major. [A copy of this letter was published in a late number of the *St. John Globe*.]

Captain William Balfour, the second of the trio named, commanded the guard of honor that in 1784 received Col. Thomas Carleton. A quarter of a century later and we find Major General William Balfour himself filling the position of administrator of the government and commander in chief of New Brunswick. He died at Fredericton in 1811 whilst holding this position.

Sergt.-Major William Cobbett's fame as a political writer and reformer is well

known. It was at Fort Howe in the early light of a dark winter morning that he caught a glimpse of the artillery man's daughter, and formed the resolve that she and none other should be his bride. The young woman's name was Ann Reade, at this time only thirteen years of age. Five years later she married Cobbett at Woolwich.

The limits of this article will admit of but brief reference to the various corps at Fort Howe. When war broke out with France in 1793, rumors of the appearing of a French privateer in the Bay of Fundy occasioned some alarm. The post at St. John was strengthened by the arrival of forty artillery men and a detachment of the King's New Brunswick regiment under Major Murray. Governor Carleton called out the St. John city militia, which he reported as "amounting to 511 effective sergeants, rank and file, who readily undertook to prepare fascines and to throw up some temporary works to cover the guns which were placed in advantageous situations for the defence of the harbor."

Lower Cove battery, constructed at this time, was considered quite a formidable work, its guns being eighteen pounders. The war-like spirit of the old loyalists however did not rest content with defensive measures. They fitted out a large privateer sloop and sent her out under Capt. Thomas in quest of the vessel which had caused all the commotion, but with commendable prudence the Frenchman kept out of harm's way.

The war with France severely taxed the resources of the British empire. This is indicated by the fact that the 101st regiment, which for some time formed the garrison at Fort Howe, was largely recruited from English prisoners. As might naturally be expected the men of the 101st were notable fighters, and achieved quite a reputation on the battle field, but they acquired a different reputation when in garrison at St. John. An old citizen some years ago said to the writer, "the men of the 101st were the greatest rascals that ever served under the British flag, floggings at Fort Howe were of almost daily occurrence, and the hundred and first regiment was popularly known as the hundred and worst." They had good officers though, and in the war whenever they had a chance they fought like devils."

In June, 1809, the 101st regiment was sent to the West Indies, and was replaced by a part of the King's New Brunswick regiment.

On February 18th, 1811, the latter corps was gazetted as His Majesty's 104th regiment. The Royal Artillery at St. John was at this time commanded by Lt. Col. McCarthy, a popular officer, who, on his departure, was granted the freedom of the city as a mark of public esteem.

In the year 1812 the long impending war with the United States broke out.

Col. Halkett commanded the 104th Regiment, which formed the garrison at Fort Howe. In order to strengthen the defences of the city in case of attack, batteries were located at Partridge Island and other prominent points, and the Martello Tower erected on Lancaster Heights.

February 11th, 1813, the 104th regiment, under command of Major Drummond set out from St. John on their famous winter march to Quebec; a march which, considering the almost unprecedented severity of the season, and the character of the country traversed, will always stand out as one of the most remarkable military achievements recorded in history.

The place of the 104th at Fort Howe was supplied by the 2nd battalion of the 8th regiment, but as this was considered rather a small garrison in time of war, the forces stationed at St. John were shortly afterwards augmented by the organization of the New Brunswick Fencibles, a native regiment. This corps was raised by the patriotic exertions of General Coffin and others. It remained on service till the close of the war, when it was disbanded.

The 8th regiment, having been ordered to Western Canada, was succeeded at Fort Howe by the 98th, under Col. Daniell. The next corps to arrive was the 74th, under Col. French, in the year 1818. This regiment, as the event proved, was destined to be the last at the old barracks on Fort Howe.

Forty-four years the British flag had floated from its lofty staff on the fort which crowned the rugged limestone rock, a conspicuous object for miles around. During all those years the evening gun was wont to awaken the echoes of the shores and surrounding hills with its reverberating thunders, warning the "red coat" to hasten his loitering footsteps along the toilsome ascent leading to his elevated quarters, lest perchance, "tattoo rollcall" should find him a delinquent.

Any one who has witnessed the lively race against time in which the British soldier in every garrison town is not infrequently obliged to indulge to reach the barrack gate before it is barred against him, can heartily sympathize with the unfortunate man who, in olden days, had to race up the precipitous pathway leading to the summit of Fort Howe, stimulated by a desire to escape a night in the guard room and an unpleasant interview with the commanding next morning.

The situation of the barracks on Fort Howe was, in many respects, very undesirable. Exposed to every wind under heaven, it was a miserable, cold spot in winter. At all times the task of conveying thither the necessary supplies—fuel, provisions, etc.—was a laborious undertaking. The supply of water was another drawback. The well, excavated with much difficulty in the hard limestone, was deep; the task of drawing water from it no trifling matter. When, therefore, the soldiers' barrack was burned in the year 1819, the regret on the part of the garrison was not very apparent. The conflagration, it may be imagined, was, from the elevated position of the barracks, a magnificent sight. By the efforts of the military and citizens a portion of the buildings was saved. It was, however, at once decided to erect new barracks at Lower Cove.

A former citizen of St. John says he very well remembers, when a boy, visiting the smouldering remains of the barracks on Fort Howe. After the fire the troops were quartered at what was then known as the "Red Store" at Rankin's wharf, where they remained till the Lower Cove barracks was built for their reception.

William G. Cody whose name is inseparably connected with the old Coffee house on the corner of King and Prince William streets had the contract for the erection of the new soldiers' barracks. He sustained a serious loss in consequence of the building when in course of construction, being

known. It was at Fort Howe in the early light of a dark winter morning that he caught a glimpse of the artillery man's daughter, and formed the resolve that she and none other should be his bride. The young woman's name was Ann Reade, at this time only thirteen years of age. Five years later she married Cobbett at Woolwich.

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