

**HISTORY OF NEW BRUNSWICK.
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GOVERNMENT OF NEW
BRUNSWICK AND WILLIAM
SHIVES FISHER**

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HISTORY
OF
NEW BRUNSWICK

By Peter Fisher

AS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 1825

(With a few additional Explanatory Notes)

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THE GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK

AND

WILLIAM SHIVES FISHER

(Grandson of the Author)

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St. JOHN, N. B.

1921

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Old Settlers on the River Saint John.—New-Brunswick erected into a Government, and settled by the Loyalists in 1783-4.—Difficulties of the first Settlers.—List of successive Governors and Presidents.

THE Province of New-Brunswick formerly formed a part of Nova-Scotia, which was the first European settlement on the Continent of North America.—The first grant of land in it was given by King JAMES the FIRST to Sir WILLIAM ALEXANDER, in 1621 — from whom it had the name of Nova-Scotia or New Scotland. It was at that time regarded by the English as a part of CABOT'S discovery of Terra-Nova. The first settlers, however, were emigrants from France, who as early as the year 1604 came to the Country with DE MONT, a French adventurer, and gave it the name of Acadia.

This country frequently changed masters; passing from the French to the English, and back again, till it was finally ceded in full sovereignty to the British at the peace of Utrecht in 1713.

In 1760, a number of persons from the County of Essex, in Massachusetts, obtained a grant of a Township, twelve miles square, on the River Saint John, from the British Government; and after several delays in exploring and surveying, they commenced a settlement at Mougerville.

During the American War of 1775, they were joined by a number of other families from New England: the district adjoining Mougerville was settled, and the whole called by the general name of Sunbury, where the Courts of Justice were held till 1783: when the peace with America left the Loyalists who had followed the British standard, to seek an asylum in some part of the British dominions.

Prior to this period a number of families from Yorkshire in England, and others from Massachusetts, had settled in and about Cumberland, where many of their descendants still

remain.—These people, actuated by different attachments, lived during the war in a state of hostility with each other;— one part adhering to the British, and the other to the Americans.

In the month of April, 1783, about three thousand persons, men, women, and children, sailed from New-York for the River Saint John; many of them being passengers, but the major part persons who had joined the British army, and were now sent to this Country to be disbanded and settled. In the month of October following, about twelve hundred more arrived from the same place. Those as well as the former had to seek a shelter from the approaching winter, by building log and bark huts; a few indeed were admitted into the houses of the settlers who had resided here before and during the American war. Provisions and clothing were furnished by Government for the first year, with a few implements to commence a settlement. Lord DORCHESTER appointed the Rev. Mr. SAYRE, GEORGE LEONARD, WILLIAM TYNG, and JAMES PETERS, Esquires, as agents to apply for lands and locate them. Major STUDHOLM was soon after added to the number by Governor PARR.—This Officer at that time commanded the Garrison of Fort Howe, at the entrance of Saint John River. These agents appointed the Rev. Mr. ARNOLD for their secretary. The duties that devolved on these gentlemen were of the most arduous nature; they had however the satisfaction of receiving the thanks of the Governor and Council of Nova-Scotia, for their upright conduct in transacting that business.

In the year 1785, the present limits of New Brunswick were divided from Nova-Scotia, and a separate Charter of a Constitution was granted to the Province, under Governor CARLETON, with a Council composed of the following gentlemen:—BEVERLEY ROBINSON, GABRIEL G. LUDLOW, GEORGE D. LUDLOW, ABIJAH WILLARD, JONATHAN ODELL, JAMES PUTNAM, JOSHUA UPHAM, EDWARD WINSLOW, WILLIAM HAZEN, GILFRED STUDHOLM, and DANIEL BLISS.—BEVERLEY ROBINSON, ABIJAH WILLARD, and JAMES PUTNAM, died soon after, when BEVERLEY ROBINSON, the son of the former, with GEORGE LEONARD, and JOHN SAUNDERS, were appointed to succeed them. The above Members of the Council transacted the business of the Province for a long while. Governor CARLETON was authorized from the Crown to locate lands to the Loyalists and disbanded Troops in proportion to their ability and rank.

From this period the Province slowly improved in Agriculture, Ship Building, and the exportation of Masts, Spars, &c. to Great-Britain, and Fish, Staves, Shingles, Hoop Poles, and sawed Lumber to the West-Indies. Receiving in return coarse Woollens and other articles from England; and Rum, Sugar, Molasses, and other produce from the West-Indies.—a Town was built at the mouth of the River Saint John, and another at St. Ann's Point, called Fredericton, where part of two Regiments were stationed till the French revolution.—Barracks and other public works were erected in different places, and the upper part of the Country settled by establishing two military posts in the interior, one at the Presqu-Isle, eighty miles above Fredericton, and another at the Grand Falls, fifty-two miles farther up. But the difficulties to which the first settlers were exposed continued for a long time almost insurmountable. Having been reared in a pleasant Country, abounding in all the comforts of life, they found themselves suddenly transplanted to a wilderness with a rigorous climate, devoid of almost every thing that could make life tolerable.—On their arrival they found a few hovels where Saint John is now built, the adjacent country exhibiting a most desolate aspect; which was peculiarly discouraging to people who had just left their homes in the beautiful and cultivated parts of the United States. Up the River Saint John the country appeared better, and a few cultivated spots were found occupied by old settlers. At St. Ann's, where Fredericton was afterwards built, a few scattered huts of French were found; the country all around being a continued wilderness—uninhabited and untrodden, except by the savage and wild animals; and scarcely had these firm friends of their country began to construct their cabins, when they were surprised by the rigors of an untried climate: their habitations being enveloped in snow before they were tenantable. The climate at that period (from what cause has not yet been satisfactorily ascertained) being far more severe than at present. They were frequently put to the greatest straits for food and clothing to preserve existence; a few roots were all that tender mothers could at times procure to allay the importunate calls of their children for food.—Sir GUY CARLETON had ordered them provisions for the first year at the expense of Government; but as the country was not much cultivated at that time, food could scarcely be procured on any terms. Frequently had those settlers to go from fifty to

one hundred miles with hand sleds or toboggans through wild woods or on the ice to procure a precarious supply for their famishing families. The privations and sufferings of some of those people almost exceed belief. The want of food and clothing in a wild, cold country, was not easily dispensed with or soon remedied. Frequently in the piercing cold of winter a part of the family had to remain up during the night to keep fire 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.

Some readers looking only at the present state of the country may smile at this account as wildly exaggerated, and may suppose that the skins of the moose and other wild animals would have been a far better substitute for bedding. But I have received the account of the above facts, with many other expedients which were at that time adopted by the settlers, from persons of undoubted veracity, and who had been eye witnesses of what they related. It is, however, needless to enlarge upon the hardships they endured, as most of the sufferers are now no more. Some indeed were discouraged and left the country; but most of those who remained had the pleasure of seeing the country improved and their families comfortably settled. Many of those Loyalists were in the prime of life when they came to this country; and most of them had young families. To establish these they wore out their lives in toil and poverty, and by their unremitting exertions subdued the wilderness, and covered the face of the country with habitations, villages, and towns.

I have not noticed these circumstances as if they were peculiar to the settlers of New-Brunswick; but to hold up to the descendants of those sufferers the hardships endured by their parents; and to place in a striking point of view, the many comforts they possess by the suffering, perseverance, and industry of their fathers. All new settlements formed at a great distance from the parent state, are exposed to difficulties, till the country becomes improved. Many of the Colonies in North America, when first settled, were more than once on the point of total extinction. The remnant of the inhabitants of some of them were even embarked to abandon the country

altogether, when they were stopped by succour from home. The remembrance of the difficulties of the first settlers should make their descendants contented with their present advantages, and instead of wishing to change, to use their own exertions to improve the country, and duly to appreciate the many blessings and privileges they enjoy.

Under the judicious and paternal care of Governor CARLETON, assisted by several of the leading characters, many of the difficulties of settling an infant and distant Country were lessened. The condition of the settlers was gradually ameliorated; agriculture was particularly attended to: The Governor himself set a pattern in which he was followed by several of the leading men in the different offices. A variety of grains and roots were cultivated with success, and considerable progress made in clearing the wilderness. Barren seasons were sometimes experienced, when the scarcity of food was partially remedied by the exertions of the Governor, assisted by several other public spirited gentlemen, who are now no more.

After having governed the Province for nearly twenty years — after having seen the country from a desolate wilderness rising to a state of importance among the surrounding Colonies — after having seen the settlers placed in a state of comparative comfort and independence — and after having in every respect endeared himself to them as their common father and benefactor — Governor CARLETON, in 1803, removed to England, when the Government of the Province was administered by the following persons, under the style of Presidents, till his death, viz.— G. G. LUDLOW, from his departure till February, 1808; EDWARD WINSLOW, Esquire, from that period till the 24th May following; when he was succeeded by Major-General HUNTER, who held the Government, with the exception of two short intervals, (during which the Government devolved first on Lieutenant-Colonel JOHNSTONE, and afterwards on Major-General BALFOUR,) till 1812, when he was succeeded by Major-General SMYTH; he having gone to England in 1813, the Government was administered by Major-General SAUMAREZ; but was resumed by General SMYTH, in 1814, who having again left the Province, the Government devolved on Lieutenant-Colonel HAILES. On the death of Governor CARLETON, Major-General GEORGE STRACEY SMYTH, was appointed to the Government by His Majesty's Commission, dated the 28th February,

1817. Governor SMYTH died the 27th March, 1823, when the Government was assumed by WARD CHIPMAN, Esquire, who administered the same till his death in the month of February following, when it devolved on JOHN MURRAY BLISS, Esquire. In the mean time, Major-General Sir HOWARD DOUGLAS, Baronet, had been appointed to the Government by His Majesty. He arrived in the Province in August, 1824, and immediately repaired to Fredericton, and assumed the Government on the 28th of the same month, and is at present (1825) Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Province of New-Brunswick, and its Dependencies.

The lively interest which Sir HOWARD takes in whatever concerns the prosperity of the Province, may be best inferred from his own words in his address to the Legislative Body, and his speech at the formation of the Agricultural Society, which are inserted in full in the Appendix to this short work.