

THE
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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

No. II.

STEWIACKE.

The older Presbyterian congregations of this Province have had now a somewhat lengthened existence. A number of them have been organized for the best part of a century, and their local history during that period presents many incidents worthy of notice. The struggles connected with their early formation, and their subsequent vicissitudes should be placed on record for the instruction, warning and encouragement of their successors. We would suggest the propriety of measures being taken to preserve the record of these, ere the patriarchs of our several villages and settlements, whose memories are stored with incidents of the past, shall have been gathered to their fathers. In our present No. we shall give a sketch of Stewiacke, which if not exactly one of the oldest, has long been one of the largest and most flourishing of our congregations.

The river Stewiacke, formerly called by the English Wilmot River, but now universally known by its original Indian name, rises among the high lands between the counties of Pictou and Colchester, and after a course of some miles among these hills, where it scarcely exceeds the dimensions of a brook, and through a poor and rocky country still covered with wood, enters upon a broad and beautiful valley, through which it flows, receiving smaller streams, for a distance of 25 or 30 miles, till it unites with the Shubenacadie. This valley forms the settlement of Stewiacke, and is usually spoken of

as consisting of Upper, Middle and Lower Stewiacke. The latter is more closely connected with Shubenacadie, and it is of the two former that we intend particularly to speak.

Stewiacke was not originally occupied by settlers coming in one body, but by individuals or families coming singly from the older settlements of Colchester. In the year 1780, a man named Kennedy, having obtained a considerable grant of crown land, in Middle Stewiacke, erected his hut where Mr. John Putnam now resides. He was joined in the following year by Mr. Samuel Teas, a North of Ireland Presbyterian, and Messrs. David Fisher and Whidden, both from New England. The first settler in the Upper Settlement was Mr. Matthew Johnson, who located himself there in the year 1783. He came from New England, but was originally from Ireland. In the following year he was joined by Messrs. Thomas Croker and William Fulton from Ireland, and Messrs. Charles Cox, Samuel Taylor and Samuel Fisher from New England. Within a few months after they were joined by Richard Upham, and John Archibald, so that when Samuel Creelman settled there in 1786, he was the ninth settler in the Upper Settlement. Shortly after came the two Gammells from Scotland, Logan from New England, and others.

Though the first settlers came to the Province from different quarters, they entirely accorded in religious sentiment. Only the Gammells came from Scotland, but most if not all the others were professedly Presbyterians. Not only those who came from