

NOTES ON MADAWASKA, No. I.

BY REV. W. O. RAYMOND, M.A.

We New Brunswickers are rather proud of the fact that in our place nomenclature we have retained many Indian names. We must confess, however, that many of these names have suffered at our hands, and in their present form are harsh and unmusical, as compared with their more primitive form. Madawaska, for instance, is much less musical than the older form Madoueska which is derived from the Indian *Med-a-wes-kek*.¹

Remote as was the situation of the Madawaska country, when European explorers first visited our shores, there can be no doubt that the native races were intimately acquainted with that region in pre-historic times. The best travelled and most convenient route to the St. Lawrence was by way of the Madawaska river and Lake Temisquata. Early French explorers and adventurers soon became familiar with the route, and even in Champlain's map of 1612 we find crude indications of Lake Temisquata and the River Madawaska. It is not, however, until the Franquelin map of 1686 that the name of "Madoueska" itself appears, and even then it is applied to the lake (Temisquata), and not to the river. That the name was applied to the river at least as early as that time is shown by the concession, dated November 25, 1683, of the seigniory of Madoueska to Antoine and Marguerite Aubert, children of the Sieur Charles Aubert de la Chesnaye, of Quebec. The concession, or grant, is described as lying along both sides of the river named Madoueska, near the river St. John, with the lake called Cécimiscouata (or Temisquata). The seigniory of Madoueska was one of the few that did not eventually revert to the crown on account of non-performance of the conditions upon which it was granted. It descended by successive purchases (and these are duly recorded) to Col. Alexander Fraser, who was the owner in 1828.²

¹ See Dr. W. F. Ganong's "Place Nomenclature of New Brunswick," p. 247.

² When the British and American plenipotentiaries were engaged under the convention of 1827 in determining the International boundary, the British agent submitted a series of fifteen documents to prove that the fief of Madoueska had always been under Canadian jurisdiction. The fact that the Quebec government had held uninterrupted jurisdiction over the fief of Madoueska had considerable weight in establishing the British claim to that territory in the settlement of the boundary dispute by the Ashburton treaty in 1842.