

Early in 1800, Dorchester Island was a busy place and a rival of Fort Cumberland as a shipping point. Vessels at the latter place had to remain at anchor or enter a little creek at high water. The building of vessels, the shipping of lumber and local trading made the Island an important place for coast-wise traffic. Steamers from St. John regularly touched there, until after the I. C. R. was built. In the eighties, competition in rates forced the withdrawal of the steamers and later killed the schooner business. The stoppage of wooden ship-building completed the ruin of the place; it became deserted, the buildings one after another fell down and Dame Nature has resumed her sway.

FIRST ACADIAN SETTLEMENTS

Petitcodiac River, in all of which places the settlers exhibited the tenacity of the race in sticking to their lands. They escaped attention when Acadia was raided in 1704 and were not affected by the fall of Port Royal in 1710 and the conquest of Acadia. The people in those places were not active combatants. The population had so grown that in 1755, three churches had been established in these new settlements, one at Shepody, one at Memramcook and one at the "Bend" of the Petitcodiac.

The first European inhabitants of Dorchester were Acadian French. Pierre Thibeau was a prosperous farmer and miller at Round Hill, on the Annapolis River, but being of an adventurous turn determined to settle his family in a new location at the upper end of the Bay of Fundy, and with his four sons, Peter, John, Anthony and Michael, and a comrade of theirs—Pierre Gaudet—they (1691) sailed up the Bay into the "Chippoudy" river, to which they were attracted by productive marsh lands. In addition to his four sons he had eight daughters. After landing his sons and their impediments, he sailed at once (July) to St. John, to obtain the consent of the French Governor, M. de Villebon, to his project. That obtained, he returned to Port Royal and before the end of July he had returned to Shepody with provisions, live stock, farm implements, etc. He was accompanied from Port Royal by William Blanchard and his two sons. Blanchard sailed his own vessel. Arriving at Shepody, Blanchard seems to have penetrated the river Memramcook and decided to settle beside the marshes there. They were the pioneers of Dorchester. M. Blanchard must have been well to do, for he was able to furnish the new settlement with provisions, live stock and other necessaries until it was self supporting. The settlements inaugurated by Thibeau were successful and prosperous. In the progress of time they extended along the marshes bordering the Petitcodiac and Memramcook. These settlements were raided and destroyed by forces from Fort Cumberland and St. John at the time of the removal of the Acadians.

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