

## The Origin of North Dumfries

**I**N the year 1764 the British Parliament passed a Stamp Act, whereby the American colonies were made subject to payment of taxes without their consent, which met with very powerful resistance. In the British Parliament the debates were violent. The Grenville Government was followed by the Rockingham Ministry, and the Act was repealed. But this was followed by a vote declatory of the right of Great Britain to tax America in all cases. Though the Stamp Act had been repealed, America still remained in a state of great excitement. In 1767 Charles Townsend revived the idea of taxing America. In 1774, some tea on which a small duty was charged by the British Legislature for the purpose of asserting its right of taxation, was sent out to America. When the vessels arrived at Boston they were boarded by the populace and the cargoes thrown into the sea. An act was passed closing the port of Boston, and for taking the executive power out of the hands of the people and vesting it in the Crown.

On the 4th of July, 1776, the Congress published the Declaration of Independence of the thirteen United States, and after seven years of war, on the 20th of January, 1783, England formally acknowledged the thirteen united colonies of America to be free, sovereign and independent states.

Such was the cause of the American revolution, which led to the independence of the United States of America. And for the aid given the Government by the Six Nation Indians they received a land grant. That portion of the grant, which included North and South Dumfries, was conveyed in 1798 by Joseph Brant to Philip Stedman, of the Niagara district. Their purchaser soon after died, and his estate descended to his sister, Mrs. John Sparkman, who, in 1811, conveyed it to the Hon. Thomas Clark, of Stamford, by whom it was later conveyed to the Hon. William Dickson. It would appear that no part of the purchase price of these lands had been paid to the Indians up to the time of the Sparkman-Clarke transfer, which doubtless furnished the justification of Brant's having again sold a part of the land, including the present site of Galt,

to Andrew Miller, of the Niagara district, of whom it is said that he secured a grant of 1,000 acres of land for a team of horses. Mr. Miller made the purchase in 1802, and proceeded with the construction of a mill on the east side of the river—slightly above where the business portion of Main street is. He returned to the United States and took part in the war of 1812, by which he forfeited his rights which he had secured in what is now Dumfries. In 1816 Hon. Mr. Dickson purchased from Mr. Clarke the entire block of Dumfries lands originally conveyed by Brant to Stedman, the purchase price being slightly in excess of \$1 per acre for the tract. He at once took active measures to establish a village upon the Grand River and place his lands upon the market, and he secured the services of a young man, a carpenter by trade, named Absolom Shade, to look after his affairs. By midsummer they reached the site of Galt, which was covered by a thick growth of forest trees, at the junction of Mill Creek and the Grand River. Mr. Shade secured the services of a number of workmen in Buffalo and returned, and they set to work and erected log buildings where now stands the Canadian Bank of Commerce, which in later years was known as the Red Store. The building was for a dwelling for Mr. Shade, and a small store in connection therewith. Mr. Dickson lost no time in putting the land on the market for sale. He immediately had a survey made, to which the name of Dumfries was given, in honor of his native shire in Scotland.

Among the early settlers was Ephraim Munson, who settled about three miles below Galt and fitted up a small mill for gristing purposes. The news soon having gone abroad that the fine lands in Dumfries were on sale, a considerable number of settlers came in 1817 and took up land between Galt and Branchton, among whom were Donald Fraser, Thomas McBean, John Buchanan, William MacKenzie, Robert Carrick, Alexander Harvie, Daniel McArthur and Dugald McCall, who came from Genesee County, N. Y. The village, which was at that time called Shade's Mills, was making gradual progress. By 1816 there was a grist mill