

When the Loyalists arrived there were only three houses standing on the old St. Ann's plain. Two of them were old framed houses, the other a log house. [This stood about at the lower gate of the late Judge Fisher's place.] The houses must have been built by the first inhabitants, who were French. There were said to have been two bodies of people murdered here. It could not have been long before the arrival of the Loyalists that the last party were murdered.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the Loyalists who came in the spring had gone further up the river; but they were little better off for provisions than we were at St. Ann's. The supplies we expected before the close of navigation did not come, and at one time starvation stared us in the face. It was a dreary contrast to our former condition. Some of our men had to go down the river with hand sleds or toboggans to get food for their famishing families. A full supply of provisions was looked for in the spring, but the people were betrayed by those they depended upon to have supplied them. All the settlers were reduced to great straits and had to live after the Indian fashion. A party of Loyalists who came before us late in the spring had gone up the river farther,<sup>2</sup> but they were no better off than those at St. Ann's. The men caught fish and hunted moose when they could. In the spring we made maple sugar. We ate fiddle heads, grapes and even leaves of trees, to allay the pangs of hunger. On one occasion some poisonous weeds were eaten along with the fiddle heads; one or two died, and Dr. Earle had all he could do to save my life.

As soon as the snow was off the ground we began to build log houses, but were obliged to desist for want of food. Your grandfather went up the river to Captain McKay's<sup>3</sup> for provisions and found no one at home but an old colored slave woman who said her master and his man had gone out to see if they could obtain some potatoes or meal, having in the house only half a box of biscuits for themselves. Some of the people at St. Ann's who had planted a few potatoes were obliged to dig them up again and eat them.

In our distress we were gladdened by the discovery of some large patches of pure white beans marked with a black cross. They had probably been originally planted by the French, but were now growing wild. In our joy at this fortunate discovery we called them at first the "Royal Provincials' bread," but afterwards the "staff of life and hope of the starving." I planted some of these beans with my own hands and the seed was preserved in our family for many years.

<sup>1</sup> This tradition is probably connected with the destruction of the French settlement at St. Ann's in March, 1759, by a company of Rangers under command of Capt. Moses Hazen, as detailed in the New Brunswick Magazine for July, 1898, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> The reference, no doubt, is to the King's American Dragoons, who settled in Prince William.

<sup>3</sup> Captain John McKay of the Queen's Rangers, who lived in the Parish of Queensbury, where he was a prominent magistrate. His wife was a sister of Judge Saunders.