

The St. John Standard

VOL. XII., NO. 71.

ST. JOHN, N. B., TUESDAY MORNING, JUNE 15, 1920

TWO CENTS

The City of St. John WELCOMES

Members of the National Editorial Association of The Eastern States On Their Annual Outing, and



"ABOVE THE FALLS"—FROM AN ETCHING MADE IN 1860.

Delegates to the National Council of Women of Canada, who will spend the next few days in St. John.

AND THE STANDARD herewith presents for their information and entertainment a brief historical sketch of St. John, together with a similar reference to this province as a whole, this article having been prepared especially for this paper by the resident official of the Dominion Archives.

A BIRTH PLACE OF HISTORY

Three Hundred Years of Conflict and Loyalty—A Sketch of the City and River St. John

THE old Province of Acadia is the historic ground of Canada, if not of America, not excluding the ancient city of Quebec. No part of the Western Continent compares with it in its stories of adventure and romance, of stirring incidents of frontier warfare, of pandering to private greed and at the same time of high minded loyalty to national ideals. Surveying the records of the early struggles for national control of the coast line between Louisbourg and Cape Sable and then entering the Basin of Minas and pursuing one's course up the Annapolis River to Middleton, and down the Cornwallis River to Grand Pré (the home of Evangeline) and taking in ancient Fziquid (Fort Edward)—it is doubtful if that whole section of country furnishes more material for those who study and philosophize on the course of human events or those who like Longfellow weave poetic romances—than the country along the river St. John from its mouth to the Madawaska hills. Its waters reflect all kinds of scenery, the palisades of the Lower St. John, blackened by primeval fires; the high slopes of the Long Reach; the soft landscape and meadows of Gaspereau and Oromocto, and the turbulent flow in the higher levels of Grand Falls, and the noisy tributaries from the hills. This diversified scenery is a delight to the beholder. But not less interesting is the ancient lore—that history has invested many places along these water stretches. They were anciently the highway of fleets of aboriginal canoes on warring expeditions, and on the advent of rival adherents of England and France, savage warfare was intensified by civilized methods of spoliation and destruction. It became the home of the fur trader and the truck dealer, the *coureur du bois*, Acadian habitant, Recollet priest, soldiers and sailors, gentilhomme from Normandy and Paris or seigneurs holding large grants from Frontenac, and later on, after England and France had settled their contest on the Plains of Abraham it still remained the theatre of action; the first batch of immigrants from New England, who were Republican in spirit, and the second batch—Loyalists, true to their King and Country, seeking here a refuge and a home—these two classes came in conflict.

THE first Europeans who are recorded as visiting St. John were Champlain, De Monts and Poutrincourt who coasting along the shores of Acadia on a cruise of discovery, sailed in on the 24th June, 1604 (St. John's Day). Champlain claimed to be the discoverer of the St. John River. They found here an encampment of Micmacs. Their chief was Membertou. He was an aged man—had seen Jacques Cartier at Bay Chaleur, sixty years before. Champlain remained here long enough to make a rough chart of the harbor and coast line and take soundings and then he hastened south to select a site for winter quarters for his Company. He was unfortunate enough to select an island in the River St. Croix above St. Andrews, which being totally

unfitted for their purposes, they were after months of occupation forced to abandon.

Meeting of European and Indian Chiefs.

MEMBERTOU was the most conspicuous Indian chieftain in Acadia, of whom there is any record. He was quick to recognize the superiority of that civilization he observed in the Whites and was anxious to learn from them, while he remained as relentless as ever towards his native foes. He became converted to Christianity. Three years after Champlain was in St. John, Membertou dug up the pipe of peace and issued a defiance to the Indians at Saco, Maine—called the Armouchiquois—and sent his messengers to his allies for help. In June witnessed a great gathering of Indian warriors. They came—four hundred strong from the head of the Bay of Fundy—from the Miramichi River, from Cape Breton and even from distant Gaspé. Embarking in a flotilla of a hundred canoes, they silently sped to Saco,—such an armada of armed men had never since and perhaps never before been seen in American waters. They fell upon the settlement there, speedily destroyed it and returned laden with spoil and scalps chanting their songs of triumph. Membertou had been at St. Mary's Bay, where he took sick and was carried to Port Royal where he died. A very curious contest then arose, while alive, as to the disposal of his remains. Membertou had requested Biencourt to have him buried beside his forefathers, which Biencourt had promised. Father Biard, a Jesuit priest, contended he should be buried in consecrated ground as evidence of his conversion from heathendom. The dying chief was prevailed upon to agree to be buried with the Christians and he was interred at Port Royal, the mortuary of 38,000 ancient graves.

IN 1611, the colony at Port Royal consisted of twenty-two persons only—two of them being Jesuit priests—Fathers Masse and Biard. The latter undertook the spiritual care of Port Royal, while Father Masse took up his quarters with Louis Membertou, son of the Chief. The latter lived at the Indian settlement at St. John. Profound peace and amity might prevail between the courts of St. James and Versailles, but at the extremities of the empires war was waged with unabated fury. The year after peace was signed between the two powers Sir David Kirk in command of a British squadron made a series of captures that led to the occupation of St. John. The first capture was several vessels under command of Roquemont and the elder LaTour, containing war like stores and supplies for Quebec and Port Royal. Kirk then sailed up the St. Lawrence and captured Quebec and took Champlain prisoner. The latter was sent to England. Kirk returned to Acadia and captured Fort Royal. At this time, the younger La Tour was established at Fort St. Louis, Cape Sable, where he had gathered Acadian settlers and a force of Indians. The Company of New France that had received grants of Acadia and was organized originally for trading purposes, became alarmed at the aggressive policy of England and resolved to take measures to protect

their own interests. The next year (1630) they fitted out two vessels at Boydenaux with warlike stores and supplies with workmen and artisans for the new French posts at Grand Cibleon (Great Bias d'Or) and Fort St. Louis (Cape Sable.) On reaching Cape Sable, La Tours, father and son, the captain of the vessels (Marot) and the Recollet fathers had after a long and anxious consultation, decided to change the plans and erect a fort at the mouth of the St. John river.

First Fort and Settlement on the St. John.

THIS was the first European attempt to settle and colonize the St. John river. By this move they could control the pelt and other trade of the vast region watered by the St. John river. At this point they would have the aid of a strong force of Indians. No sooner said than done. The elder La Tour went over to St. John with a force of workmen and commenced the work. The exact location of it has become a matter of controversy—no map, chart, or document now known locates its site. Each of two possible places has supporters—one is the point adjoining Navy Island—the other is Portland Pt., opposite.

LA TOUR'S fort at St. John was one hundred and eighty feet square, enclosed by palisades with four bastions—one at either corner. The next year (1631) Charles I. being threatened by Louis of France, with the retention of four hundred thousand francs of the dowry of Queen Henrietta Maria, instructed his ambassador at Paris to sign a treaty relinquishing Canada, restoring Quebec as well as Acadia to France. La Tour the younger then became Lieutenant General of the King in Acadia and the company of New France renewed its activities. Isaac DeRazilly, a soldier, lawyer, man of letters, poet and a relative of the great Richlieu, became agent of the company of New France in Acadia and with vessels, men, and equipment he set sail for Acadia. Two men, conspicuous in Acadian history, were with him—Nicholas Dony, the historian of Acadia whose works survive and Charles de Menou; Seigneur d'Aulnay de Charnisay.

DERAZILLY planted his colony at La Have; the remains of his establishment are still pointed out. In 1635 he as agent of the Company of New France granted to Charles La Tour, the fort and habitation at St. John with fifty leagues of land adjacent. La Tour took possession of the St. John fort. The next year De Razilly died, which ended his plans for the peaceable development and colonization of Acadia. Forty years of strife and conflict was the result of his disappearance. His heir was his brother, Claude, but he transferred his interest to Charnisay. He and La Tour were natural enemies, and a struggle between them was inevitable.

ESTABLISHED in his fortress in St. John, La Tour exercised semi-sovereign powers. None of the feudal lords, created in Canada was so influential as he. He was trader, chieftain and repre-

sentative of Royalty. Here he kept a miniature court and dwelt in feudal state.

La Tour a Feudal Lord.

BANDS of Indians from up river and its tributaries came with their pelts to his truck house. The yearly ship from France brought merchandise for the Indians and supplies for the fort. He dispensed "high and low" justice, to all within his jurisdiction. His garrison was small, his men were well armed, well trained and most of them veterans in the Colonial service. Game was in abundance. Wild fowl in great flocks found feeding grounds in the marshes, or in the undisturbed forests around, while the waters were so prolific with salmon and other fish, that a stake net, La Tour had set in the flats, was sometimes broken by them.

LA TOUR'S family had originally been Huguenots, but Charles in 1832 embraced the Roman Catholic religion, if a nominal adhesion to that faith could be so termed. He was so absorbed in the exacting duties of his position, he gave but little care or attention to things spiritual and left his wife free to conform her life to her duties as a devoted Huguenot and as a mother of three children and to her domestic concerns. He usually kept two ecclesiastics in his entourage. This semi-savage happy condition was fated not to continue long. From the first intrigue was at work to ruin him. Charnisay, who came into possession of de Razilly's interests, commenced laying his plans as early as 1635, to destroy La Tour. Charnisay was in possession of Port Royal, which was in the middle of the territory assigned to the government of La Tour as Lieutenant of the King, which on the other hand, La Tour's lands at St. John were under the Government of Charnisay, who was also Lieutenant of the King. The latter location commanding so extensive a range of country from Gaspé to the Penobscot, was infinitely more valuable for trading purposes. This was sufficient to excite the cupidity of Charnisay. A letter dated March 1638 and signed by King Louis himself to Charnisay opposes any change in ownership or government assigning La Tour the territory from the middle of the French Bay to Canso and to Charnisay the territory from the "firm land of the French Bay towards Virginia." Neither was to encroach on the other. This did not daunt Charnisay. His father lived in Paris and held an official position there, being a "councillor of the King, in his state and private councils," was probably on good terms with the all powerful Richlieu, and was probably in a position to press his son's claim. On the other hand, La Tour had no friends at Court, his friends were at La Rochelle—a place hateful to that great prelate. He had besieged it years before and had then lately issued an edict destroying its independence. La Tour was completely in the dark as to the designs and underground operations of Charnisay. Had he suspected them and presented himself at Paris in 1640, the results would probably have been different, for La Tour was a natural diplomat and master of those personal charms that at-

(Continued on page 2.)