

FORTS OF OLDEN DAYS.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH STRONGHOLDS NEAR ST. JOHN.

Rev. V. O. Raymond, M. A., writes about Fort La Tour, and the Old French Fort, and gives interesting historical facts of the Dunes when they flourished.

The occurrence this year of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the New World by Columbus has stimulated the citizens of the neighboring republic to undertake a grand celebration of the event, in which the World's fair at Chicago will be a prominent feature.

It is right and proper that Canada should heartily participate in the observance of so memorable an anniversary; not merely because the discovery of Columbus was destined to leave an impress on the pages of the world's history of which the old navigator with all his hopefulness and with all his enthusiasm but little dreamed, but because it is an event in which all the people of the continent have a common interest.

The occurrence of this notable anniversary serves as a reminder of the fact that with the lapse of years our own little corner of the globe has been making history, and when twelve more years have elapsed St. John will be able to commemorate its ter-centenary! It was on the 24th day of June, A. D. 1604, that DeMonts and his famous colleagues, Jean de Poutrincourt and Samuel de Champlain, for the first time sailed into the mouth of our magnificent river, which in honor of the Saint on whose day the discovery was made, they named la riviere Saint Jean.

Champlain had received special instructions from Henry IV. of France, to bring back a careful and detailed account of his explorations and he may be said to have accompanied DeMonts as geographer to the king. It is to this appointment, unsought, unexpected and as it appears almost accidental that we are indebted for Champlain's unparalleled journals which have come down to us rich in incident, prolific in important information and covering nearly the whole period of his subsequent career.

A glance at Champlain's chart of St. John harbor sufficiently proves the fidelity with which the famous voyageur conducted his observations and made note of his discoveries. We there behold all the prominent natural features as they exist today and are convinced that in respect to these general features our harbor has not materially altered since the first recorded visit made by European explorers. We note, however, some minor points of difference in the chart. As for example the narrow passage west of Navy Island. Here it is manifest that the combined action of the outflowing waters of the river and the inflowing tides of the bay have in the course of three centuries materially widened the channel. Champlain's map displays a group of Indians on either side of the harbor, also a house on Navy Island, which a note describes as a "cabin where the savages fortify themselves." Navy Island thus appears as the site of the first known fortification at the mouth of the St. John.

The French settlers afterwards erected two of these situated at Portland Point and on the site of Fort Dufferin were stated by the first English settlers to be plainly visible on their arrival at St. John in 1762, at which time Fort Frederick occupied the site of another French fort, situated at "Old Fort Neck," in Carleton. Two of these old French forts are particularly referred to by Nicolas Denys, Brouillon and other writers. They were established, the one by Charles de la Tour, and the other by d'Aulnay Charnisay.

The position of these two forts, is not easy from the somewhat fragmentary material available, positively to determine. There has been a good deal of controversy regarding the site of the original Fort la Tour, and we are assured that the last word has not yet been said. The conflicting views hitherto advanced have been supported with documentary evidence and elaborate argument by such students of local history as James Hannay, W. P. Dole and Prof. W. F. Ganong. The merits of the controversy is not the intention of the writer at this time to discuss.

Fort la Tour. Charles de la Tour probably began the erection of his fort at the mouth of the St. John about the year 1631, but he did not receive a formal grant of the "Fort and Habitation of la Tour" from the Company of New France till Jan. 15th, 1635.

His fort, we may presume, was similar in construction to other forts built in Acadia at this period, which the plans of Sieur Franquet show to have been as follows:

A double row of palisades from fifteen to eighteen feet in height, forming the general outline of the fort. Outside the palisades a deep trench was dug part of the earth from which was thrown up against the palisades and the remainder sloped off so as to form a glacis. Within the enclosure a small bank of earth was thrown up against the palisades, above which was the parapet. The bastions at each angle were as a rule constructed of logs projecting about thirty feet beyond the palisades and terminating in an acute angle. On these bastions guns were mounted in the usual manner reciprocally flanking the wall and each other. The four bastions were each mounted by six cannon.

Fort la Tour, as thus constructed, was termed by Saltonstall a "strong sufficient fort," and its subsequent gallant defence by the little garrison under Madame la Tour against the repeated attacks of d'Aulnay-Charnisay would seem to give it some claim to the title.

Doubtless the fort built by Charnisay, whether at "old Fort" in Carleton or Portland point was similar to that built by la Tour.

The feud between these rivals lasted well-nigh twenty years, and the vicissitudes of either party render the story of this period one of the most interesting chapters in the history of Acadia.

Lady la Tour died in May, 1645, and in the year 1650 d'Aulnay-Charnisay in the zenith of his fortunes and in the prime of life was drowned in the Annapolis river near Port Royal. A few years later the feud that had so long prevailed between the houses of la Tour and Charnisay together with all conflicting claims then existing was finally settled by the marriage of Charles la Tour and d'Aulnay's widow.

The historian Nicolas Denys, a contem-

porary of la Tour, mentions in his work that "la Tour's fort was destroyed (ruined) by d'Aulnay after he had wrongfully taken possession of it."

It would seem not improbable that la Tour after his second marriage established himself at the fort constructed by his former rival (now come into his possession) in preference to rebuilding his own old fort. In that case he would very probably continue to reside there the remainder of his days.

If this theory—for it can be considered as little more, be correct, la Tour having made his headquarters at the fort he himself built from 1634 to 1645, changed his quarters after his second marriage and lived from the year 1653 till his death in 1666 at the fort built by his former rival on the opposite side of the harbor. The probability of this rests upon the fact that la Tour, wearied by his prolonged struggle with d'Aulnay, impoverished by past exertions and with his adventurous spirit somewhat subdued by advancing years would be more likely to content himself with occupying d'Aulnay's fort than to go to the expense and trouble of rebuilding his own. The occupation by la Tour, first of one fort and afterwards of another, if it be a fact, will serve in a large degree to explain the confusion played by map-makers of a later period as to the site of the original Fort la Tour.

Old French Fort. For some years, subsequent to the death of la Tour, the French maintained a post at the mouth of the St. John. About the year 1670 the Chevalier Grand Fontaine strengthened the old fort on the west side of the harbor, and placed his lieutenant, M. de Marsmont, in command.

Governor Brouillon visited the fort in 1701 and was not favorably impressed. He described it as "extremely small, and commanded on one side by an island at the distance of a pistol shot, and on the other by a height which commanded it entirely at the distance of only a hundred odd fathoms with the disadvantage of having no water to drink without going to seek it beyond the torrent of the river St. John."

Brouillon resolved to abandon the post, and accordingly St. John was left as deserted and desolate as it had been previous to the arrival of its discoverers nearly a century before. "A deep silence" says Hannay, "fell upon the place which was unbroken for thirty years. The Indian might wander among the ruins of a fort which had been abandoned to his care, or left to be converted into a hiding place for the wild beasts of the forest, and wonder at the folly of the white man who had forsaken the finest river in all Canada for the hunter, the woodsman, the fisherman, or the farmer."

It was not till the lapse of nearly half a century that the flag of France was again hoisted over the ruins of St. John. This was done by Boishebert, who, with thirty men was sent from Quebec for the purpose. The little garrison did not long remain in possession, and their position during the next five years was at times precarious. After the capture by Col. Monckton in 1755 of Beau Sejour the formidable fortress erected by La Corne and Deloutra at the isthmus of Chignecto, Capt. Rous was dispatched with three twenty gun ships and a sloop of war to drive the French from a post at the mouth of the river St. John. As soon as the garrison under Boishebert held their formidable adversaries entering the harbor they deemed discretion to be the better part of valor and accordingly burnt the cannon, blew up their magazine, burned everything they could bring to the fort and departed in haste.

The same summer the Acadians of Grand Pre, Chignecto, Shepody and other places were removed from their ancient settlements by the British. Large numbers, however, succeeded in escaping to the St. John river where Boishebert at one time found himself in command of as many as fifteen hundred fugitives. The fort at St. John was repaired and the French remained in possession for three years longer.

The English dispatched an expedition from Boston in the summer of 1768 to reduce the French to submission. The expedition consisted of three ships of war and two transports with a regiment of Highlanders and one of Provincial troops. They landed at what is now known as Negro-town Point, from whence a road was made through the woods to the place where the Carleton City Hall stands, where the French then had a vegetable garden. An attack was made on the fort and after one repulse it was carried by storm. Three hundred prisoners were made, the remainder of the garrison escaped in boats across the river. The French lost over forty men in the conflict and never regained possession of the post they had held for a period of more than a century.

W. V. O. RAYMOND.

[Next week an article on Fort Howe will appear with an engraving of the fort as it was in 1871.—Ed.]

Mortality Among Hospital Nurses.

"New Fragments," gives some terrible figures of the mortality among hospital nurses. Thus a healthy girl of seventeen, devoting herself to hospital nursing, dies on the average twenty-one years sooner than a girl of the same age moving among the general population, and a hospital nurse at the age of twenty-five has the same expectancy of life as a person at the age of fifty-eight in the ordinary community.

Ravages of Typhoid.

Sir William Hunter mentions a man-eater in India who was known to have killed 108 people in three years, and another which killed an average of 80 persons a year for the same period. A third caused thirteen villages to be abandoned, and 250 square miles of land to be thrown out of cultivation. A fourth killed 107 persons in a year, and stopped a public road for many weeks.

Come to Stay.

There were between 4,000 and 5,000 guesses deposited in the "Kandy Kitchen" contest last week. That means as many purchases. The "kandy kitchen" has become popular and is here to stay.

Selling Out.

Mrs. Carroll, the fashionable milliner, announces in this issue that she is going out of the business, and proposes in consequence to dispose of her stock of millinery at very low prices.

DARTMOUTH'S BIG RATE.

HOW ASSESSMENTS ARE MADE IN AN AMBITIOUS TOWN.

Property Assessed at Only One-Half Its Value—But the Poorer People Have to Make Up for It Just the Same—Financial Affairs in a Burdened Town.

DARTMOUTH, N. S., June 2.—Halifax papers are fond of calling Dartmouth "the ambitious town." Recently it has evidently been trying to earn the title. What with corporation water works and corporation ferry, together with electric lights put in by a company, Dartmouth certainly is putting herself in possession of "all the modern improvements." These improvements, however, cost money, and the town is said to have the largest debt, in proportion to her wealth and population, of any town in the Dominion. The truth of the last statement is not vouched for, but she has debt enough without question.

One matter, however, needs a thorough overhauling, and that is the present system of assessment. The assessment was lowered some years since so that the town would not have to pay out so large a sum for county purposes—the assessment in the county being much lower than in the town. The change being once made remained so, and today the town is advertised as having a very high rate. The rate is high, but the assessment in most cases is low; to raise the assessment and lower the rate would be to the best interest of municipality.

The inequalities formed in the way the rates are levied is a matter of far greater concern. So long as the rate is either high or low, with a thoroughly honest assessment, no one could complain of bearing an undue burden; but the assessment is manifestly unjust, and as usual the rich escape and the poor are mulched.

The assessment is supposed to be for actual value, but this is purely theoretical, for as a matter of fact, it is well understood that the valuation shall be for about 80 per cent. of value. Of course actual sales fix values beyond dispute, and we have had enough of these in the past two years to settle that point. The Dartmouth ropeworks were sold to the National Cordage company, or Consumers' Cordage company, for the company prefers to call itself for \$315,000; the works are assessed for \$100,100. The Ferry company is assessed for \$77,000, but the bonded debt for ferry purchase is \$150,000. The marine slip which was sold for \$120,000 to the Halifax Graving dock company, is assessed for \$60,000. Oland & Co. is assessed for \$11,500, but it has recently syndicated for \$60,000 if my memory serves me correctly. The Halifax Land Improvement company (so called), are assessed for \$2,300 while one small portion of their property cost them \$1,300. The steamer factory is assessed for \$60,000, but the capital invested is about \$200,000. Recent property transfers show how the estimates vary when measured by actual sales. C. Robson's house, valued at \$3,000, sold for \$4,500. S. Seldin's estate, assessed for \$1,350, sold for \$1,650. W. McV. Smith's property, assessed \$1,150, sold for \$2,000. The Lawlor property, recently divided, was appraised for division purposes at fully double the assessed value of \$1,650. A great number more of ridiculously low assessments might be given: as J. T. Walker, \$2,800 for house and wharf property, the railway running right through the property. One other remarkably low assessment is that of Mrs. Handley, assessed for \$1,000—probably the land could not be purchased for the sum; so also W. H. Green's lots on Pine and Tulip streets, assessed for \$350 and \$500, respectively. Compare these with such properties as E. Erb, assessed for \$900; Edward Foster, \$800; A. Hutchinson, two houses on Pine street, \$1,400; Frazee's cottage on North street, \$800; Edward Elliot, \$400 on a property that cost him \$450.

With regard to personal property, it doesn't seem to make any difference what a man has as far as the assessment goes for the gentleman with a fine pair of horses or a \$600 piano gets off with much the same charge as the widow with her necessary household belongings. A number of persons raised a cry over tax reform last year, but coupled a lot of other matters with it, which those interested took good care should overshadow the vital issue. These persons claimed that nearly a million dollars worth of property escapes taxation entirely and that those who escape are the rich and that as a consequence the masses have to make up for it by being overtaxed. A very conservative estimate made after careful review of the assessment will show at least \$500,000 dollars worth of property that escapes taxation.

Who is to blame for this state of affairs, deponent saith not. The councillors lay the blame on the assessors, and the assessors smile and immediately raise the assessment on the kicker when they make up their little list for the next year.

Amberg with all its improvements has a rate of about 80 cents on the \$100. Kentville has a rate of about 85 cents on the \$100, while last year Dartmouth had a rate of \$1.40 per \$100, or about 70 per cent. higher than those named. When people wish to invest in the "ambitious town," money lenders say, "Beware! No town in the Dominion is taxed so heavily as that very town across the harbor." Recently a gentleman who was about to purchase a property there asked two gentlemen who loan largely on real estate, what rate of interest they would charge for a loan, and they said they would charge from one half to one per cent. more for money on investments in Dartmouth than for the same kind of property in Halifax. Now is a serious matter for the property owners of the town, and it is Dartmouth wants to be what she should be, a delightful suburb of Halifax, she must be ambitious to run her machinery with better results than have been obtained. Many runs are about just now of "rings" and "pobos" and excessive expenditures. People who were aforetimes disposed to think the town over the harbor somewhat fickle and cranky are disposed now to view all undertakings there with distrust. Now is a time when all proceedings should be open and above board; everyone wants to know the truth about affairs of common interest. The various commissions of which Dartmouth

seems to have more than its share, will be wise if they publish fully just how matters are going in these various departments. The people want to know positively. First, just how much money the water commission has spent down to May 31st, and how much it will require to finish the work. This information should come from a report made by the engineer in charge. They want to know the estimated income and how it is to be raised, and also what sum, if any, will have to be raised by general assessment for water purposes.

Secondly, they want to know what the earning of the ferry is for the year so far, and what the cost of operating has been for the same period. Thirdly, they want to know why no reform was made in the method of levying the rates for this year, when if methods used were most unjust. They also want to know if the council propose having any changes made that will insure an honest assessment in the future. These things the people want to know at once, for various reasons. Those in authority will best consult their own interests by a full and clear statement of the condition of things as outlined.

New and Nice. MacLaren's Imperial Cream cheese, Canadian Salted cheese, strawberries and cream and other luxuries in season at J. S. Armstrong & Bro's grocery, 32 Charlotte st.

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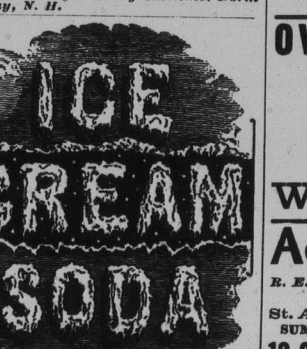
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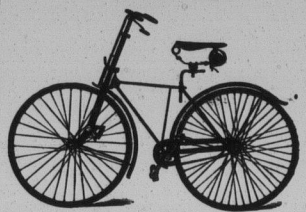
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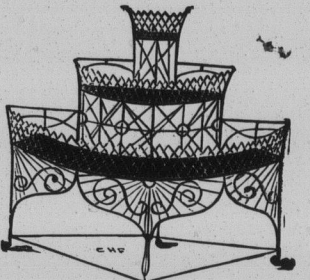
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