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FIRST ENGLISH SETTLERS HERE

Graphic Account From Pen of Dr. M. E. Armstrong Concerning Their Arrival

Below is given an interesting account from the pen of Dr. M. E. Armstrong concerning the first English settlers at and about Bridgetown, with many details concerning their arrival and the way in which they made for themselves homes in the Valley.

Following the expulsion of the Acadians in 1755 came the siege and capture of Louisburg, Cape Breton, in 1758. In this successful expedition, 160 vessels, engaged in the project in one way or another, and together sailed out of Halifax harbor on Sunday, May 28th, 1758, and after two months' siege, Louisburg was captured.

The following year, 1759, on Sept. 18th, the fortress at Quebec was captured by the British forces and the fall of this stronghold of France was a turning-point in the history of the whole Continent. It is interesting to note that the news of the capture of Quebec was eleven days reaching Nova Scotia on that occasion a marked contrast to the rapidity of news travelling in our times. These two important events had a very important bearing on the attitude of both the Indians and refugee Acadians left in this country and they very soon abandoned all hope of our province becoming a French colony again, and assumed a friendly attitude ever hereafter, and there were no more surprises and tragedies such as had marked the previous forty years.

Lieut.-Col. Chas. Lawrence, Governor of the Province, at once took steps to bring English settlers into the Province to occupy the lands vacated by the Acadians.

It was the intention of the British Government to settle these vacant farms with disbanded soldiers but Gov. Lawrence persuaded the authorities differently, contending that soldiers were not farmers or planters and could not make farmers for a long time, and he favored getting New England settlers. Moreover the New Englanders had been here in vessels or as soldiers at the capture of Port Royal, and at the deportation of the Acadians, and had carried word back to their kin and neighbors of the beauties as compared with the rough and untillable New England hills as a farming country, so that many from there were only waiting for a chance to come here to better their condition, as soon as they could be assured that they would be protected from outrages by Indians and enemies.

The offer made to them was a free grant of one hundred acres of our lands to a master or mistress of a family, and fifty acres to every man, woman, or child, white or black, of which such master or mistress household might consist at the time of coming.

Needless to say that many of our progenitors claimed a dozen or even more of these fifty acres additions for their good sized families and it looks from the genealogical lists as if it were only those with large families that were drawn this way by this offer of fifty acres extra for each child. Further, they were to be free from taxes for ten years and after that they were to pay one shilling a year for each fifty acres they owned.

Full religious liberty was guaranteed to all Protestants; Lutherans, Quakers and Calvinists, dissenting from the Church of England were to have full liberty of conscience and erect meeting houses for worship as they choose, and elect ministers and administer sacrament according to their conscience and custom. Townships of 100,000 acres were to be formed and as soon as a township had fifty families they were to have representatives in the Provincial Legislature which was first formed in 1758.

Under these favorable terms part of this county, and both ends of the Valley received a goodly number of immigrants from 1760 to 1764. They came from Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, by vessels and landed at Annapolis and at Cornwallis and Horton and extended their settlements inward from both ends of the Valley.

The eastern group reached well out to Berwick and those in this county reaching as far east as Bridgetown. They drey lots for their first grants

later to become the township of Wilmot.

Capt. Bruce's farm in the centre of Bridgetown was called "Henley". We therefore have, reading from east to west, "Brae Moor", "Mount Pleasant" and "Henley", three pretty names that deserve perpetuation in some manner, in honor of these pioneers.

It was quite the custom in those early days to give a name to a farm or home.

John Hicks seems to have been lacking in sentiment of this kind and the fact that he was a devout Quaker, a native of Rhode Island may account for his placé being nameless; the Quakers not believing in setting too much in terrestrial things. Anyway he did not remain very long on this side of the river for in 1775 he bought from the Rices all the property from the Morse Road that goes to Dalhousie, to the Walker brook on the west and reaching from the river five miles back on to the south mountain.

At this time there was no bridge across the river and we can well imagine the farms here of no particular interest or attraction above any other part of Granville.

Capt. Bruce leased his big place in the fall of 1763 to Lieut. Henry Munro, he evidently finding it difficult to farm and be Chief Engineer at Annapolis.

He must have been quite fortunate in gathering in Acadian stock, if not other stuff, for while he had only had the place one season he was able to turn over to the lessee, two horses, thirty-one head of cattle, and five hogs, hens, turkeys and geese, nearly forty tons of hay, a elder mill, a cheese press, and large quantities of oats, barley, rye, turnips, potatoes, onions and cabbage, and an abundance of farm machinery such as those early days afforded. Lieut. Munro was to pay forty pounds a year, rental for this completely equipped "farm at Henley" and at the end of seven years was to return to Capt. Bruce the amount of stock and the bushels of grain and vegetables and the barrels of cyder he had received at the beginning.

Lieut. Henry Munro, of Scotland; John Hicks, Quaker of Rhode Island, and Christopher Prince, described as merchant of Boston, were then neighbors, and were men of distinction and probably as different in type and customs as any could be, yet these contracts made them mutual friends and we would not have selected a better combination of elements for the foundation of a new settlement. The grit and bravery of a Scot, the daring and venture of a Boston trader, and the piety and honesty of a humble Quaker. Each of them was elected as members or representatives of the Provincial assembly and went to Halifax to represent the township of Granville in those early parliaments when, I do not think members received any pay for their services, or if any, it was very little. Henry Munro being member from 1765 to 1768. John Hicks 1768 to 1770 and Christopher Prince from 1772-80. Those were important parliaments; for the new settlements which began to spring up in the older counties had needs in the way of roads, bridges, schools, etc., beside the plans for further development of the Province. They were the true path finders and trail makers of those pioneer days and we scarcely appreciate their painstaking efforts and self-denial and hard ships to do these public duties, that the times and conditions of our Province demanded. Let us honor the names and perpetuate memories of these first representatives of old Granville!

Col. Munro died quite suddenly in 1781 and was buried on his own lot near by his residence. He had married after coming here, Sarah Hooper, a daughter of one of the New England settlers on the south side of the river. He left, besides his widow, five children, John, Robert Pointfield, David Davidson, Elizabeth, wife, Wm. Ruffee, and Sarah, wife of James Hendericks.

All or about all the Munros of this county are descendants of this Scotch pioneer who played an important part in this vicinity from 1763 to his early and sudden death in 1781.

His estate was administered on by his wife and was of considerable value. He seems to have possessed more than the usual amount of personal property, as his wearing apparel alone was appraised at twenty-five pounds, his furniture at twenty-nine pounds and three desks at seven pounds, a silver tankard and a complete set of silver knives, forks, spoons, great and small, all in a chest, all helped to swell the value of his estate and if his descendants only had them to-day they would no

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of lands and some that were not well suited exchanged or sold out and moved to new grants where they were better suited.

As the vessels in which they came were small they could not bring any great quantity of household effects with them, even if they possessed them. A few brought calves, pigs and cattle and a few horses. However as the woods here sheltered lots of French cattle and horses that were turned at large there was all the stock the first settlers could take care of to be had, for the catching right on their lots or near at hand.

The great majority of our Valley people are descendants of these early New England settlers who came here from 1760 to 1764. Sometimes called "Pro-loyalists" or early planters to distinguish them from the loyalists who came twenty years afterward. They were altogether from the farming classes and no doubt in most cases were from the poor people who could pick up and move on without much sacrifice.

New England or Massachusetts was not a farming country, as a whole, and much of it, is even yet untilled and will never be much different from lots of our lands between Annapolis and Liverpool. These people had struggled along under these conditions for a hundred years or more and were ready to move on to more fertile areas and "green hills far away", such as Nova Scotia at that time was offering on such easy liberal terms.

The first to arrive were settled along the river on both the Annapolis and Granville sides, but the lots where Bridgetown now stands did not appear sufficiently attractive to any of the first to take them up.

On the south side of the river the Rices, Beriah, Asaph, Timothy, Stephen, and Judah were granted everything reaching from a little east of Carleton Corner to Bloody Creek and probably further. The first Longleys were next east and beyond that the Morses were given nearly everything on the south side of the river from Carleton Corner to Paradise Lane.

On the north side lots 129, 130 and 131 which reached from the home of Mr. G. O. Thies to the Baptist Church were granted to Capt. Robt. Geo. Bruce and Frederic Rudolph Bruce, the former was Chief Engineer of the Annapolis garrison, the latter probably his son. They held 1500 acres; to the westward of them was Solomon Farnsworth, while next to the east was Capt. Elias Weir, who lived on the James DeWitt place and further east on the Pratt hill side the first Hicks, John by name, was given 1000 acres. Now, east of the Hicks lots came Christopher Prince who extended beyond the Ruffee hill and called his place thus early Mount Pleasant. Beyond Mt. Pleasant farm came the large grant of Lieut. Henry Munro's. Henry Munro was a native of Scotland and was a Lieutenant of the 77th Highland regiment which came to Annapolis to assist at the siege of Quebec. His regiment was later disbanded and he came to Nova Scotia, being retired on half pay. He at first leased from Capt. Bruce the 1500 acres that was granted to Bruce, and a few months later was granted 2000 acres to the east of the town and resided where W. B. Price now lives about the centre of his large grant. He named his place "Brae Moor". His lots extended to the Bent road, the township line and beyond that were unsurveyed new lands that were

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