

ARCHIVES TELL OF HARDSHIPS OF N.B. PIONEERS

Loyalists Had Hard Struggle
for Existence First
Few Years

DIARY EXTRACTS
RICH IN INTEREST.

Notes From Record Kept by
the Reverend Frederick
Dibblee

The early life and customs of our forefathers are told of in an interesting article in the local office of the Dominion Archives, Princess street.

For the first few years after their arrival, it says, the Loyalists found that life itself was almost a struggle for existence. Many of them were used to manual labor and found it a hard task to construct their log cabins so as to withstand the bitter cold of the severe winters. In some cases, members of the family had to remain up all night to replenish the fire in the high fireplace to keep the rest of the family from freezing. It has even been recorded that in cases where bedding was not available, the parents warmed pieces of board which they

applied alternately to their children for warmth.

In order to procure food granted by the Government for their maintenance, the early settlers had frequently to travel several days by toboggans or hand sleds. Often the supplies were frozen before they reached their destination and in some instances the flour was damaged by water and had to be "chilled out of the barrel." In due time, however, the cabins were made more comfortable and the settlers laid in a supply of moose and bear skins which considerably lessened the terrors of a New Brunswick winter of those days.

Wolves and foxes made havoc among the cattle and poultry and the wild pigeons settled in great numbers upon the corn fields. The latter were caught by the hundreds in their sleighs for that purpose. In the spring, several weeks were devoted to the making of maple sugar and the luscious honey so familiar to New Brunswickers today.

One of the early settlers at Woodstock on the Saint John river was the Rev. Frederick Dibblee, a noted Loyalist, and a few extracts from his diary may be of interest.

"Early closing of the river, Nov. 15, 1804. Several families crossed the river Saint John to church in their sleighs. First frame house in Woodstock. Nov. 9, 1808—Richard Smith's house raised."

"Christmas service, Dec. 25, 1806—A large congregation which made the house too warm for comfort."

REMARKABLE SEASON

"Jan. 12, 1807—Only four inches of snow till storm of yesterday, when there fell 18 inches; only five cold days as yet."

"Feb. 19, 1807—After amazing heavy rain the ice ran in the river. Nothing but ice in the roads and fields."

"May 8, 1807—From sunset yesterday to sundown today, the water rose 10 feet perpendicular; continues rising."

"May 4—River rose during the night four feet at least, and carried off almost all my fence from the front. The water is about six feet over the top of my bank and all the high intervals are under water. We never had such a freshet."

"No. 28, 1810—Married, Thomas Fields and Ann Wright. They came in a canoe, and never better poling."

"The war of 1812—March 1, 1813. The 104th Regt. are now marching through to Canada. Snow four feet deep on a level."

"March 19—No church on account of storm. Never, never was there such a spring, snowdrifts in places 10 feet above fences."

COLDEST SUMMER

"June 7, 1816—Snow fell last night so as to cover the ground. 8th—Hills on other side of river covered with snow. 10th—Hills on other side of river covered with snow. Never was there such a June. 11th—A very heavy frost, ground all white. At 10 a.m. grows warmer and we lay aside our greatcoats, which we have worn eleven days."

"Late opening of navigation, May 2, 1817—Two yoke of oxen crossed the river on the ice today."

"July 6, 1819—We have a comet, first seen on Sunday evening (July 6). Situation a little west of north when first seen at night. It has a tail about two feet in appearance."

"Nov. 7, Sunday—Cloudy and a very thick fog. Never knew so dark a day. Had to go to the altar window to perform divine service."

"Oct. 28, 1822. We had this fall 1,500 bushels of potatoes and 500 dozen of wheat."

"May 29, 1824—Wm. and Mrs. Bull set out for Saint John on a raft of timber."

DROUGHT OF 1825

"July 28, 1825. Clear and warm day and night last 10 days. Sept. 17—From last date continued warm and dry weather, never the like before in this country. Crops all in but corn and potatoes without any rain. Oct."

15—From last date the same remarkable dry weather. Fires run in both the woods and on the improvements in a surprising and destructive manner. In Fredericton near 100 houses, stores and barns burned. On the Oranmotto several houses and children burned and numbers suffered in other parts of the province. We never knew such a time before. The earth is so dry that fire burns to a considerable depth, and nothing but a great rain can stop it, which God grant."

FIRE AT MIRAMICHI

"Nov. 17, 1825—It is ascertained that about 200 have perished by fire and in the river at Miramichi. All furniture, clothes, provisions and every kind of stock, houses, stores and barns at Newcastle and a number of other settlements entirely destroyed. Terrible indeed."

SEEKING NAME FOR WARTIME REFUGEE

French Authorities Unable to Locate Relatives of Boy Now in Paris

PARIS, Sept. 17.—The terrible plight of the refugees who, driven from their homes by the German invasion, fled westward, is recalled by a touching appeal broadcast in the Parisian press for information which may help to identify a boy of 18 who at present has no legal existence. In 1917 M. Peltier, an official of the sixth arrondissement, and his wife, who had organized a refugees' shelter in Paris, received a detachment of 400 women, children and old men who had been evacuated from Chanzy when it was bombed by a German aeroplane with the result that many women and children were killed and 150 children wounded.

Among these was a little boy of four, who said his name was Rene Bource. His father, he said, had gone to the war, and his mother, with whom he had left Chanzy, could not be identified. As time went on the

refugees were identified and put in touch with their relations, but no one claimed the little Bource, whom M. Peltier took into his own home, where he already had a granddaughter and an adopted child.

The little refugee soon won a large place in the hearts of his benefactors, but difficulties began when it became time to send him to school. He could not be admitted because he had no name. That was overcome by amicable arrangement, but later, when M. Peltier tried to open a savings account for his protegee, he was unable to do so because the child had no legal identity. M. Peltier, who is now police commissary of a busy quarter in Paris,

said that he had found the boy remarkably intelligent and, loving him as his own son, had decided to give him a university education. But he must now obtain for him a legal identity, and, to satisfy his own conscience has made known all the facts in his possession, so that if no one should come forward to claim Rene Bource after the appeal in the press, he will be registered under this name and adopted in due legal form by M. Peltier and his wife.

A June bug married an angle worm; An accident cut her in two; They charged the bug with bigamy. Now what could the poor thing do?

THE CATS' ORGAN

LONDON, Sept. 18.—In a very curious little book in which he treats of the "Panna of the Organ," M. Perrier

de Labatille recalls that in 1545 in the great procession of the Ommegeank in Brussels a chariot figured on which was placed a big organ played by a bear. The "melodies" were produced by the mewings of several cats whose tails were fastened to the hammers of the notes. The cats' spinet or galeo-organ also figured at St. Germain and at Prague in the 17th century.

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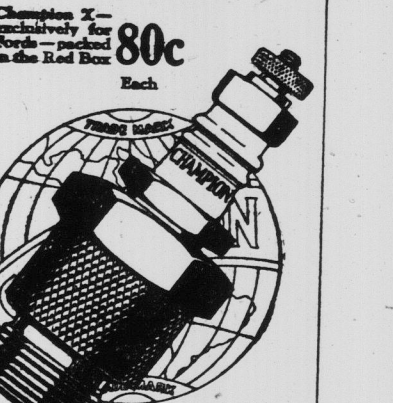
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