

# EARLY ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE THE CULTIVATION OF HEMP IN EASTERN BRITISH AMERICA.

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The cultivation of hemp was early attempted or suggested by the first colonizers of this portion of the American continent, and in nearly all of the old works relating to the early settlement of northeastern America, reference is frequently made to the importance of its cultivation and the benefits that would in consequence result to a maritime people. Richard Hakluyt, the industrious and enthusiastic compiler of early voyages, in his Discourse Concerning Western Planting, written and presented to Queen Elizabeth in 1584, mentions among the probable important products of "New founde lande," hemp for making cables and cordage. And in another chapter of his discourse, he recommends that the "multitude of loyterers and idle vagabonds" then infesting England be transported and "condemned for certain years in the western partes, especially in Newefounde lande, in sawinge and fellings of tymber for mastes of shippes and deale boordes; in burninge of the firres and pine trees to make pitche, tarr and rosen and sope ashes; in beatinge and workinge of hempo for cordage."

Hemp was raised and spun in Virginia previous to 1648, and in 1651 its cultivation was encouraged in that colony by bounties offered by government.

In the Plymouth colony the cultivation of hemp was also attempted, as hemp-seed was ordered for that colony as early as 1620.

But a species of native hemp may have been grown in the northern parts of this continent, for it is related that Jacques Cartier, on his first voyage to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in 1534, met native Indians in the Bay of Chaleur fishing with nets made of a kind of hemp. [Rev. B. F. DeCosta in Narrative and Critical History of America.]

The early French explorers attached great importance to the lands visited by Cartier and his successors, and justly formed a high estimate of the vast resources of our Acadia. Sieur Borgier of Rochelle, one of the early grantees of Acadia, on a visit to our coast in 1684, planted at Chedabucto Bay, on the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, wheat, rye and barley, and in the autumn reaped the harvest and carried the produce to France for exhibition. Flax, hemp, peas, beans and all kinds of vegetables, Sieur Borgier asserted, grew there, as well as they did in the neighborhood of Paris.

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M. de la Ronde Denys, a captain of infantry in the French army, and grandson of Nicholas Denys, the first historian of Acadia, writing from Cape Breton in 1713, says: "We are deficient in nothing required, for we have the wood, the tar, the coal, and the masting, and eventually the hemp will be common there: make cordage and sails."

The fall and capture of Port Royal by the English under Nicholson in 1710 made Nova Scotia a part of the British empire, the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, having confirmed the conquest. In 1718 Sir Alexander Cairnes, James Douglas and Joshua Gee petitioned the crown for a grant of land on the sea coast, five leagues southwest and five leagues northeast of Chebucto, now Halifax, harbor. These gentlemen proposed to build a town, and improve the country round it in raising hemp and in making pitch, tar and turpentine. The petition was not granted; and no attempt at settlement was made at Chebucto until 1749, when Halifax was founded by English settlers under Cornwallis. Three years previous to this event, in the autumn of 1746, the duke d'Anville, on his ill-fated expedition against the English settlements on the Atlantic coast, rendezvoused at Chebucto with the remainder of his fleet, where the unfortunate duke and many of his soldiers died.

During this period the English lords of trade were continually urging on the colonies the importance of producing hemp in such quantities as to render England independent of the northern countries of Europe for a supply of that material so necessary to a naval power, and Dr. Douglas, the author of a work entitled, A Summary, Historical and Political, of the First Planting of the British Settlements in America, mentions hemp among other articles, the product of the colonies, on which all enumerations, or duties, be taken off to encourage trade and navigation.

On the 8th of April, 1752, three years after the settlement of Halifax, the governor and council of Nova Scotia, who were vested with the powers of legislation, among other bounties granted to stimulate and encourage agriculture among the settlers, offered 3d. per pound for hemp produced in that province.

Vigorous efforts were made during these years to people the province, particularly the lands from which the Acadian French