

PICTOU

HISTORICAL.

PICTOU, the shire town of Pictou County with a population of 3200 people, is situated at the entrance to the harbor bearing the same name, on the northern coast of Nova Scotia, where its waters mingle with those of Northumberland Strait.

A view of matchless beauty greets the eye, when standing on the higher ground above the business section of the town and looking eastward, north and south across the waters of the harbour and onward to the shores beyond. Terrace like the hillsides rise, and breaking through their vales of green, the winding East, Middle and West Rivers may be seen, which in their onward sweep from distant hills beyond, meet to form the harbour, which with the island at its mouth, has made a land locked sea where some five hundred vessels may be safely moored.

The country round about was originally inhabited by the Miemac Indians, a tribe of the powerful Algonquin nation. During the years while the French ruled in Canada, a number of settlements had been made in the County, which were, however, abandoned when the Acadians were expelled from Nova Scotia in 1755.

While the Treaty of Paris signed in 1763, by which all Canada became an English possession, directed the attention of prospective immigrants to the agricultural and forest wealth of the County, it was not until June 10th, 1767, that

the first English settlers, comprising six families of thirty persons, arrived in the Brig "Hope" from Philadelphia. They disembarked near the Town Gut, on land now known as Brown's Point, in the vicinity of which they had been granted about two hundred thousand acres of land. Like nearly all early settlers of America they suffered many privations. While the land was rich in timber the latter had to be felled before the soil could be tilled. Although discouraged by the prospect before them, they set to work to build rude dwellings. A road was cut to Truro and settlements further south, which had been established about ten years before. To support themselves they cultivated small patches of land for vegetables and grain, and engaged in hunting and fishing. By the close of the year 1769 the community included 84 white persons who owned 64 bushels of wheat, 60 of oats, 8 of barley, 6 of rye, 6 of peas and some flax, besides 6 horses, 16 cows, 16 oxen, 16 young cattle, 37 sheep, 10 swine, as well as a small vessel, a fishing boat and a saw mill.

Three years later, in September, 1773, the "Hector" arrived from Scotland with 189 souls. In 1775 thirteen more families, mostly farmers, came from Scotland to join their countrymen, whose numbers were further increased by the arrival of disbanded British soldiers, nearly all Scottish, in 1783, and to whom the British Government,