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LIFE OF THE SETTLER IN WESTERN CANADA  
BEFORE THE WAR OF 1812.

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## LIFE OF THE SETTLER IN WESTERN CANADA BEFORE THE WAR OF 1812.

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**H**ISTORY during the greater part of its conscious period has been a record of the exceptional and dramatic events of personal heroes and of dynastic and national crises. Written for entertainment rather than for instruction, it dealt mainly with strife and adventure—the tragic and unusual phases of life, not its every-day and prosaic course. We have not, of course, dropped the earlier aspect of history nor do we wish to do so, but with the rise of democracy interested in the welfare and development of all sections of the people, we have broadened the outlook and deepened the interest and insight.

We have still, however, to depend upon the records which have come down to us for the reconstruction of the past, and the actual records of the common people are not considered worthy of preservation by reason of any intrinsic interest. Such records as we have regarding the lives and interests of the common people were not intended for historical purposes. The information is nearly always incidental to what were considered the larger interests of life, or is to be obtained from records preserved for family reasons or for corporate or business needs. These unintentional witnesses are all the more independent of special coloring, but for the same reason they are fragmentary and uncertain, requiring much piecing together and considerable explanation and interpretation.

In dealing with the settlement of a new country like Canada, we find much difficulty as to adequate contemporary records, though interest in the pioneer period is certain to increase as it recedes from the newer generations. It becomes increasingly difficult to restore the daily life of the settlers and to understand at once the difficulties with which they had to contend, the means which they were forced to employ in overcoming them, and the success or failure which attended their efforts. Yet a somewhat detailed understanding of their circumstances is indispensable in estimating the influences which their lives and achievements have had upon the subsequent development of the country, its economic conditions and social and political institutions.

The following sketch is based chiefly upon the somewhat unique record of the daily life of a pioneer of the Burlington Bay District, known in early days as "the head of the Lake." This record is the personal diary of Benjamin Smith, born in 1773 in Sussex County, New Jersey, his parents having come from Ludgate Hill in London. He came to Canada with his father, not as a loyalist of 1784-5, but in the subsequent immigration as a sympathizer with the British cause. In 1794 he married and started life on a new farm in the neighborhood of Lancaster. At the same time he began a diary for his own information. This is simply a brief daily record of his ordinary employment alike on the farm and in going and coming throughout the district. All the entries are simply statements of fact, there being no comment or expressions of opinion. The diary is thus a photographic record of the daily life of a pioneer farmer. That portion of it prior to 1799 has been lost and there are a few sheets missing here and there. The original, it is understood, is now deposited with the Ontario Archives at Toronto.

Being a daily record of the round of farm duties, journeyings to the mill, the store, the neighboring farms, etc., there are necessarily many repetitions of practically the same entry. This in itself, however, is useful as enabling one to measure the relative amount of time and attention given to the various occupations of that period. It indicates also the changes which took place with the passage of the years in the relative importance of this or that occupation or duty. As the settlement developed, the farms were cleared up and facilities increased for disposing of additional lines of produce and procuring new conveniences and supplies. The present sketch is confined to the period between the beginning of the century and the outbreak of the War of 1812. The central record is supplemented, especially as to prices and in many other particulars, by information derived from other unpublished records, still in the possession of private individuals in the same part of the country. For the opportunity of making copious extracts from the diary itself and from other early records, I am chiefly indebted to Mr. Joseph Smith, Inspector of Schools and historian, of the County of Wentworth.

When the settler arrived in the wilds of Western Canada

or took up a new bush farm in the rear of existing settlements, his first work after selecting the location for his home was to make a small clearing and erect a log house or shanty. In size this was as a rule about ten feet by fifteen feet. Basswood, being the timber most easily cut, split and handled, was commonly used for both walls and roof. As, however, it rapidly decayed when exposed to moisture, some more durable timber, preferably cedar if at all available, was employed for the foundation logs and for the support of the floor slabs. The logs were notched into each other at the corners, this process serving the double purpose of holding them firmly together and bringing each log of the wall into contact with the one above and below it. One side of the log walls was carried somewhat higher than the opposite one, the higher side forming the front, and the lower, the back of the house. In the centre of the front was a door and on one, and sometimes both sides of it, a small window, these being the only openings. As few of the logs closely fitted upon each other, the spaces between them were filled with triangular pieces of split basswood, while over these was plastered as firm a clay as could be had in the neighborhood. At first the chinks or spaces between the logs might be temporarily filled with dry grass or moss.

The first roof might be of elm or basswood bark supported on poles. A more durable roof was made of basswood logs of ten to twelve inches in diameter, split in two and hollowed out in the centres, forming long troughs. These were then laid along the roof in a double row sloping from front to rear. The first row was placed with the hollow side upwards and the other with the hollow side downwards, covering the cracks between the adjoining edges of the lower row. In this way the edges of the upper row joined in the troughs of the lower side, thus furnishing, so long as it remained in good condition, a completely water-proof roof. The fire-place was constructed on the rear wall of the house, with a squared opening through the lower logs, the chimney being built of small stakes imbedded in clay. This fire-place furnished the means of warming the house in winter and of cooking the food for the family. The first bed was made by simply driving stakes into the walls in one corner of the room, thus requiring but one leg for the

bed in the room itself. This rude frame was then covered with slender stakes supporting the general body of the bed, composed of moss or straw on a foundation of small branches. Home-made blankets completed the equipment. Tables and benches were made in much the same way.

A stable for the live stock in winter was commonly made by cutting into the neighboring bank and building up the front and sides of the opening with logs. Above this was usually constructed a shelter of logs roofed in the usual way and furnishing storage for grain, the first farm implements, etc. This structure was commonly known as a "hovel." Other minor farm buildings followed in due course and as soon as the settler had gained a little time and capital, he erected more substantial buildings, commonly the barn first and the house second.

Few of the pioneer farmers found it necessary to clear their land of trees before beginning to crop it. The primitive hardwood forests were as a rule remarkably free from undergrowth, such as there was being easily cleared out. The trees being of large size on the best soil did not stand very closely together. Instead, therefore, of cutting down such timber, which would be very difficult to handle and dispose of, the settlers simply girdled the trees in the spring. This meant that they cut from each tree a complete ring of bark, thus preventing the flow of the sap, with the result that the tree, being unable to leaf out, simply died. There being no foliage to obstruct the rays of the sun, the farmer simply sowed and raked in his grain in the rich loose soil formed from a long accumulation of decayed vegetable matter. As the result of this limited labor, he commonly reaped a very satisfactory crop.

The dead trees dried more rapidly standing than falling and in a year or so most of them might be burned as they stood. The remnants of the forest were cut down and gathered into log and brush heaps to be subsequently burned. These log heaps in turn, especially those made up from hardwood trees, such as maple, beech, birch, etc., furnished large quantities of wood ashes rich in soluble alkali salts, especially potassic carbonate. The ashes were therefore gathered together into rudely constructed receptacles, usually sections of hollow trees,

placed on a drainage platform of split slabs. By draining water through these when filled with ashes the soluble salts were dissolved, and the alkaline solution, known as lye, when evaporated, furnished the commercial article of potash; when further purified and calcined this was known as pearlash. These substances, together with wheat and furs, constituted the three chief articles of export furnished by the early settlers of Upper Canada. In return for these they obtained their first imported supplies and what little money the early settlements contained.

Summarizing the mass of individual records contained in the diary, we may trace the work of the pioneer through the sequence of the seasons. Early in the spring of almost every year we find our diarist girdling a new section of the forest farm preparatory to bringing it under cultivation. He has already cut out such timber as he requires for fences, fire wood, transport to the sawmill, after its erection. From the timber and lumber thus obtained we find him from time to time constructing such new out-houses and buildings as are most urgently required, or he has the time or means for completing. In the early spring, also, he was accustomed to make a limited amount of maple sugar, the amount increasing with the increase of his family, who were able to render him material assistance in the work of gathering sap and attending to the boiling down or evaporating process. Naturally the maple tree was almost the sole source of sugar for the early settlers. Cane sugar, when first imported, was an article of exceptional luxury. In any case, however, the settlers used but little sugar as compared with later generations. In quite a number of cases farmers with adult families manufactured considerable quantities of maple sugar, disposing of it through the local merchants, who sent most of it on to Kingston and Montreal, although but little of it was ultimately exported.

Immediately the snow was gone, foundation logs were cut and laid for new fences. Above these split rails of basswood or cedar were built up, forming the well-known snake fences of the country. Later we find the straight fence with stakes and rails coming into use. The older fields, as they were cleared of stumps and logs and brought under the plow, were fertilized from the barn yard before the plowing began. From

an early date the settlers in the Niagara District began setting out fruit trees. As their clearings enlarged and space was afforded, the original small orchards were enlarged. We find Mr. Smith setting out a few new trees and shrubs nearly every spring, beginning with 1800, when he set out several apple trees, three pear trees and one cherry tree. In 1802 he set out his first peach tree. Later we find him raising seedlings on his own farm and apparently supplying trees to some of his neighbors in addition to meeting his own needs.

The regular occupations of plowing and spring planting occupied most of the time during April and May. The root crop followed the grain crop, while corn, pumpkins and, later, melons, were planted about June 1st. Before and after planting were the chief seasons for burning brush and rolling up log-heaps. When these were carried on upon a larger scale, resort was had to the inevitable co-operative institution known as a "bee," the characteristics of which are dealt with later. Disastrous experiences from bush fires had proved that it was too dangerous, especially in dry seasons, to undertake the burning of brush during the late summer and early autumn.

During the latter part of the month of May, the farmers washed their few sheep in some neighboring stream or pond and immediately sheared them, thus obtaining the precious supplies of wool to be converted into home-made clothing for the family.

Between seeding and harvest, the work of clearing the land went forward. Logs were prepared for the mill and for domestic buildings during the following winter, when the snow roads greatly lightened all such work. This, too, was the season for all kinds of miscellaneous summer work, such as cultivating the root crops, repairing fences and buildings, getting the simple home-made tools and conveniences repaired for the gathering of the crops. The grubbing of stumps in the summer following also occupied the attention of the farmers, thus preparing the land for the sowing of the fall or winter wheat and rye.

For the rough work of logging and cultivating among stumps and stones as well as for much other heavy work on the pioneer farms, oxen were commonly preferred to horses. They were, of course, slow and even exasperating in their

solidity but they were much steadier and less excitable in critical positions. Even after horses were procured, Mr. Smith found it safer to employ the oxen, as witness this entry of June 2nd, 1807: "Plowed with the mares and got hurt; plowed with the oxen." Oxen were also much cheaper, more easily housed and fed, and less liable to stray away when let out to forage for themselves. In case of need also they could be fattened and turned to account as food, while their hides made the very best of leather. As the beginning of the century a pair of horses were worth from £75 to £85, or \$300 to \$340, while a yoke of oxen could be had for about \$100, and cows for \$50 each. These prices, however, were high as compared with later years.

When the harvest once began, all other work was suspended until the crops were safely housed. Close on the heels of the hay crop came the rye and the fall wheat. Before 1800 the farmers of that district had already passed the stage of the sickle and had reached that of the scythe and the cradle, the latter for the grain crops which were to be bound in sheaves. Here again co-operation came in. Hired help being very limited and uncertain, farmers who had grown-up sons must assist each other with the harvest, one cutting and another binding, one loading and another building the load and the stack. As yet there were few barns large enough to house the crops. The earliest form of shelter for the crop was the "barrack" or "Dutch loft." This consisted of a durable roof of thatch or other light material and which was made either round or square in shape, supported at the edges or corners on four tall posts pierced with holes at regular intervals through which stout pins were passed and which held the barrack roof at any required distance from the ground. The roof could thus be raised or lowered according to the amount of grain to be stored under it. This permitted the grain to be removed to the barn or threshing floor in any quantity desired without exposing the remainder to the weather. These structures were, of course, made by the farmers themselves. From 1802 the diary makes frequent reference to raising or lowering the barrack and the deposit thereunder of various grains, including flax. When sawn lumber became available, large frame barns were constructed and the barracks passed out of use.

Once the main harvest was past, the autumn plowing took place and the last touches were given to the land prepared for the fall wheat or rye. The seed grain for the autumn sowing was carefully selected from the best sheaves in the field, which were the first to be threshed and cleaned. The threshing of the main crops continued at intervals as time permitted or need required during the autumn and winter. At first only the flail was used, an instrument consisting of two rough hardwood sticks of about four or five feet in length joined to each other at one end by a leather thong, sometimes with a swivel intervening. Holding one of these sticks in the hands, the thresher beat the grain with the other. Some little experience was necessary to acquire an easy and effective swing. Later when the farmers acquired oxen and horses, these were frequently used to thresh the grain by tramping it out in the ancient and orthodox fashion on the floor built of boards or of hard-beaten earth. When the floor was made of boards, the seams or cracks were "corked" or "calked" to prevent the grain from falling through. The straw being easily separated from the wheat and chaff by the ordinary rake or fork, the chaff was next separated from the grain by winnowing it in an open space in a stiff breeze. Owing to the light black earth midst which much of the grain was grown, and the process by which it was threshed and winnowed, the wheat, at least, required to be washed and dried, a process undertaken by practically all of the early settlers. After 1807, when windmills or fanning mills driven by hand became common in that part of the country, we find in the diary no further reference to the washing of wheat.

After the summer grains had been harvested during August and September, the corn was gathered in the first half of October and during the latter half of the month the pumpkins were brought in, as also the apples, then the potatoes and other roots. At that time practically all the winter apples, potatoes, turnips and even pumpkins, cabbages and other vegetables were stored for winter use in pits dug in the earth. The pits were located in a dry spot and after being lined with straw, if available, the fruit or vegetables were placed in them, the contents covered with straw and then with earth to a depth of two or three feet. In the climate of Southern Ontario and

in sheltered locations, the contents of these pits were entirely protected from frost, the protection being doubly secure when a good fall of snow was added. Portions of the contents could be removed at intervals during the winter. When carefully prepared this process proved an excellent form of cold storage, the contents of the pits being preserved in prime condition throughout the winter and even late into the spring.

In October the flax was pulled just before the seeds were quite ripe, enough being left to mature for seeding next year. It was then laid out in the fields to be partially rotted in the autumn rains. By this process the bast or intermediate fibre was loosened from the outer skin and the inner woody stock. After having reached the proper stage of decomposition, about the beginning of December, the flax was dried and stored, awaiting the more leisurely process of breaking which, like the threshing of the grain, went on at convenient intervals during the late autumn and winter. The breaking of flax consisted in pounding it with a heavy wooden mallet on an uneven surface, thus breaking up the partly decayed woody fibre. It was then roughly dressed and handed over to the women of the household who finished the dressing, spun it into threads and wove these into various fabrics. The women accomplished the same process with the wool from the sheep. After being scoured it was carded or combed with small hand cards and deftly shaped into loose rolls of twelve to eighteen inches in length. These were then spun into threads at the spinning wheel and afterwards woven or knitted into cloth or garments. A very durable form of cloth was made by the early settlers, as by their ancestors in Europe, from a combination of linen and woollen threads, the linen being the warp and the woollen the woof. This cloth was known as "linsey-woolsey."

One of the important phases of late autumn work for those who had acquired a number of hogs was the killing, dressing and salting of the hogs. Salt or pickled pork was one of the articles of increasing demand, by the Government for the supply of the troops and those employed on public works, vessel owners and others engaged in transportation, new settlers going into the woods, and lumbermen getting out timber for export. These and other sources of demand united in fur-

nishing an excellent market for salt pork, as well as for flour, peas and beans.

Once the press of harvest work was over and the remaining duties did not press so much for time, it was possible for the community to indulge in social gatherings. Most of these, however, were given a more or less thrifty turn. At this season of the year "bees" were appointed on all possible grounds. There were bees for corn-husking, apple-paring, logging, barn-raising and various other special purposes. The neighbors from far and near were bidden to these co-operative gatherings. Considerable preparations were made for them in the way of refreshments. The granary, the barn-yard, the orchard and the garden were duly laid under tribute. There were also fish from the river or lake, wild fowl or other game from the forest, and the inevitable cask of spirit from the still, which in the evolution of the early settlement arrived with the mill, if not preceding it. With a few supplementary supplies from the trading store, a bountiful and appetizing supply of refreshments were duly prepared in advance. Unfortunately the means at hand for adequately setting forth the repast were necessarily somewhat meagre, but where all were under much the same limitations, envy was not started or disdain feared. Even the work which preceded the entertainment was accompanied by much mirth and strenuous competition. After the specific duties of the bee were ended, the young men indulged in trials of strength, while their elders discussed the crops, prices, local politics and the prospects of the ensuing year. The elderly women extended the circulation of the personal gossip of the neighborhood, while the younger ones, after assisting in disposing of the rude accompaniments of the feast, were ready for the dance, the round of country games and the repartee of flirtation. The bees were the chief social functions of country life. At these the young people met, and acquaintance laid the foundations for more lasting friendships. Individual visits among special friends and relatives were occasional but not so frequent as one might expect. Other centres of occasional meeting were the mill, the store and the chapel or meeting-house.

As autumn passed into winter, the farmers employed their time in cutting and hauling wood, taking saw logs to the mill—

once a sawmill was established—grists to be ground, corn and produce to be sold or exchanged. Timber was got out for new buildings, additional improvements were made for the farm, vehicles repaired and articles of household furniture constructed.

Before the roads were passable for wheeled vehicles and before the iron fittings for wheels were available, the universal means for conveyance, both summer and winter, was the sled. Naturally bent young tree trunks of the harder woods were carefully sought for throughout the forest to furnish the runners and knees for the sleds, while split and dried hickory saplings furnished the most durable shoes for the runners; even these, however, especially in summer, had to be frequently renewed by reason of wearing out.

Naturally the farmers in the earlier days had either to make all their own implements or to obtain assistance from one or more of their neighbors in producing the more difficult parts. Mr. Smith was evidently one of those farmers who from a combination of necessity and natural aptitude had become quite expert with their small stocks of tools. Wood being an ever present raw material, all possible implements were made of it. Even where iron was indispensable, it was used in the most limited quantity possible. Thus the plows were only shod with iron, and as even the iron was soft the plow irons had frequently to be taken to the smithy to be sharpened. All kinds of rakes were made entirely of wood, and even in the case of harrows the teeth were at first made of well-seasoned hickory pegs. Iron, of course, supplanted wood in many cases when the farmer's range of purchase was extended.

When the settlers became more numerous and communication between the settlements practicable, travelling mechanics from the United States, with or without the accompaniment of a peddler's pack, began to pass through the country, stopping here and there to make or mend implements for the farmers or supply their families with various small wares of household convenience.

On January 22nd, 1800, we find the entry, "made a rack and a shaving horse." The latter was a very useful contrivance which served as a combination of work-bench and vice. It was constructed in the shape of a long, narrow, fairly heavy

stool or bench, sometimes higher at one end than at the other. Astride of the lower or narrower end of this sat the workman, whils through an opening in the bench in front of him projected the head of a clutch swinging on a pin passing from one side to another through the body of the bench or horse. Upon a transverse piece of wood on the lower end of the clutch the operator placed his feet, and by pressing it from him, brought the head of the clutch down upon any article placed under it, thus holding it firmly upon the horse. The operator by using a stout draw-knife with a handle on each end, cut or shaved to great advantage and with considerable speed any piece of wood held under the clutch. With an axe, a saw, an auger, a chisel and a draw-knife, a man skilful in the use of tools could produce a great variety of implements and articles of household service. One of the commonest uses made of the shaving-horse was for the dressing of shingles after they were split from the blocks or sections into which the logs had been cut. The manufacture of shingles indicated quite an advance in the erecting of buildings. From 1805 we find frequent references to the making of shingles, as for instance on March 15th, 1805, and the three succeeding days, "Shaved shingles, John Wilkins and Joseph Larkin rove." Laths were prepared in the same way.

During the winter, entries in the diary show much time spent in getting out timber of various kinds, including shingle bolts, going to the mill, the store, the still and the blacksmith's shop. The dressing and winnowing of grain, washing wheat and breaking flax also occupied many days. An occasional occupation was the quarrying of stone. In 1804 we find Mr. Smith making an eye through a grind stone, after which it was set up in a frame ready for use and for the torture of his successive sons. In 1809 the diary indicates much preparation for the erection of a new frame barn to replace the log one. Much of the previous winter was spent in getting out the timbers for the frame work, drawing logs to the sawmill and bringing back lumber, preparing shingles for the roof, etc. In June, after the spring planting was over, he cut out the stone for the foundation. On July 29, he bade the neighbors to the raising bee, which occupied two days, August 1st and 2nd. With some hired assistance he had the roof on and the barn sufficiently closed in to admit of housing the harvest.

Before the War of 1812, a few persons in the new settlements were beginning to indulge in the luxury of iron stoves. These were imported from Montreal, where they were sent from the iron forges of Three Rivers. In supplementing the fireplace, for purposes of cooking and especially the baking of bread, most of the settlers built out-door ovens formed of brick clay. Thus we find an entry in the diary of August 31st, 1805, "Hauled clay and made a bottom for the oven." The following day the oven was completed. We find also that he built another oven in 1811. In 1808 a separate milkhouse was constructed. These were commonly built into the hillside, or at least partly covered with earth, in order to keep the contents cool in warm weather.

In October, 1807, he began to dig a well for the convenience of the house. Evidently this was near a spring and did not require to extend to any depth, since the work required only two days. He then selected what was known as a gum-tree, being a tree with a hollow trunk from which could be cut a section known as a gum. The commonest trees furnishing these gums were the basswood, the sycamore and the elm, the second being much the most suitable on account of the great toughness and durability of the outer rim. One of these gums was lowered into the well when dug, thus saving the earth from falling in. In 1810, he dug a new well some fifteen feet deep. This was walled up with stone. At the same time he constructed a sweep with a bucket attached for conveniently raising the water. A more primitive device was a long pole with a hook at the end of it, on which was lowered the dipping bucket. Another structure erected at this time was the corn-crib for holding the cobs of husked but unshelled corn. These cribs were commonly elevated on posts, the bottom overhanging the posts, which in later days were sometimes capped with inverted tin milk-pans, the object being to prevent corn-feeding animals, whether wild or domestic, from effecting an entrance to the granary. The body of the crib, which was sided with open-slatted wood to permit of the free circulation of air, widened from the bottom upwards and was covered with a broad roof, thus preventing the rain from drifting in upon the corn.

Hog-pens, chicken-houses and cattle-sheds were also constructed by the farmers. As time and the means at their dis-

posal extended, the furnishings of the houses were considerably increased. Thus we find them making movable bedsteads, and chairs, the bottoms of which were fitted with rushes, willows or thin strips of wood. These occasionally required mending or replacing. The making of brooms and other household articles is recorded from time to time.

The women evidently attended to the making of all garments in addition to making the cloth itself. With the opening of trade routes and the lowering of prices increasing quantities of lighter cloths were purchased from the traders. The head of the house, however, finds it his duty to make and mend the shoes of the family. When its members became more particular as to the appearance of the shoes, they are cut out by some more skilful hand but are usually sewn up at home. Thus in the earlier years we find numerous entries such as the following: "I soled my shoes all day." There are, of course, frequent references to mending the shoes of the various members of the family. In January, 1804, he goes to Joseph Howe's, a neighbor, to get a pair of shoes cut out. Like George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, our diarist believed in furnishing his growing boys with the most durable form of clothing obtainable, thus saving even the stout clothing made from the flax and wool of the farm. Thus we find the following entry for February 14, 1807, "Helped make a pair of leather trousers for David", David being his eldest son, who now appears in the record as assisting his father in many ways. Some of the farmers tanned their own leather, yet it would appear from the entries in the diary that more of them obtained leathr at the store in exchange for produce.

He made many visits to Hat's store and mill at Dundas, although the nucleus of the village was not known by that name at the time. Hat conducted quite a business from the head of the Lake, sending down produce of various kinds to Kingston to be forwarded to Montreal and bringing back the usual supplies of imported goods coming within the needs or purchasing power of the settlers. The supplies obtained from the stores were primarily those which the settler could not possibly supply for himself, such as glass for windows, cutting tools, table ware, guns, with powder and shot, salt, rum, tobacco. There were also nails and hinges, scythes, bar iron, axes, hammers, saws, knives, etc. The following is a list of

actual prices paid for the leading articles of domestic or foreign produce purchased in the western part of the Niagara district, including the neighborhood of Lancaster, between 1798 and 1810. The higher prices represent as a rule the earlier years of the settlements.

*Domestic Produce.*

- Hay, per hundred pounds, 37½ to 50 cents.
- Oats, per bushel, 37½ cents.
- Timothy seed, per bushel, \$1.25.
- Wheat, per bushel, 75 cents to \$1.25.
- Flour, per barrel, \$4.00 during most of the period, occasionally \$5.00.
- Buckwheat, per bushel, 37½ to 62½ cents.
- Flax seed, per bushel, 75 to 87½ cents.
- Whiskey, per gallon, \$1.00.
- Potatoes, per bushel, 50 cents.
- Lake Salmon, 20 to 25 cents each.
- Salt Salmon, \$10.00 per barrel.
- Hickory nuts, per bushel, \$1.50.
- Herring, per half-barrel, \$2.25.
- Corn, per bushel, standard price 50 cents, occasionally 65 to 75 cents.
- Beef, per pound, 4 to 5 cents.
- Fresh pork, per pound, 5½ to 7 cents.
- Pickled pork, 8 to 10 cents.
- Mutton, 8 to 10 cents.
- Fowl, 12½ cents each.
- Cows, \$16.25 to \$17.50.
- Young hogs, \$1.25.

*Coopered articles made in the settlement.*

- Churn, \$1.25.
- Pail, 50 cents.
- Flour barrels, 40 cents each.
- Meat tub, \$1.00.
- Pork barrels, 62½ to 87 cents.

*Imported Articles.*

- Salt, per barrel, \$2.00 to \$3.50; per pound, 3½ cents.
- Scythes for mowing, \$2.00.
- Bar-iron, per pound, 12½ cents.

Bar-steel, per pound, 37½ cents.  
Nails, per pound, 20 to 30 cents.  
Tobacco, per pound, according to quality, 18½ to 25 cts.  
Hats, \$4.00 to \$5.50.  
Upper leather, per side, \$4.00 to \$5.50.  
A pair of uppers for shoes, 62½ cents.  
A pair of soles for shoes, 62½ cents.  
Glass, per pane, 6" x 8", 15 to 18 cents.  
Sugar, 15 cents per pound.  
Tea, per pound, \$1.00 to \$1.12½.  
Iron for pitchfork, 18½ cents.  
Chairs, 87½ cents.  
Spinning-wheels, \$5.00.

*Wages.*

These varied greatly, but the following are actual payments:—

A man, a boy and a pair of oxen, 1 day, \$1.00.  
A man working one day in the harvest, 75 cents to \$1.00.  
A boy for the same, 60 to 62½ cents.  
Oxen per day without driver, 37½ cents.  
For spinning 3 pounds of yarn, 32 cents.  
For spinning 5 pounds of flax, \$1.56.  
Making shoes for a man, 62½ cents.  
Making shoes for a woman, \$1.75.

Throughout the diary we find periodical references to discharge of various public duties. Thus on March 2nd, 1801, we have the first reference to his attendance at the town meetings. These town or township meetings were established by law shortly after the passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791. Their jurisdiction was very limited, the chief local authority being vested in the justices of the peace in their Courts of Quarter Sessions for the districts. The town meetings dealt with limited local interests, such as the prescribing of the conditions under which animals were permitted to run at large. At these meetings were elected fence viewers, pound keepers, assessors, town clerks, etc. Mr. Smith served in his turn in most of these offices. There are references also to the performance of the compulsory statute labor on the roads. Occasionally he was one of the jury or board to pass upon the quality and location of the work done. We find him turning out

with others to work at the building of a school house. At that time the school was a voluntary institution, including the engagement and payment of the teachers. Considering the limited means of the settlers and the ideas of many of them as to the questionable advantages of education, we are not surprised to find that the teachers available and actually employed were very uncertain quantities.

Occasionally he was drawn to attend as a member of the Grand Jury, which met at Newark, the original capital of the Province, and after 1808 at Niagara. At first the trips to attend the Grand Jury, as for any other purpose, were made by water in open boats, which required to go ashore at night or in rough weather. He had occasional trips to York also after it became the capital, to look after matters connected with land grants for his family and others. The journey was broken at the Credit, a convenient halfway house on these trips.

In June, 1808, there was an election in that district for the member of the Legislature. Those were the days of open and prolonged voting. In this case polls were opened on the 15th and continued open until the 21st, when it was found that Mr. Levi Lewis was the successful candidate.

From 1804 on we find him attending the "training", as the Militia Service of the time was designated. Later his two sons, David and Jesse, were also in training for the defence of their country. When the troubles preceding the War of 1812 began to develop, the trainings became more numerous and when war itself was declared father and sons were called upon for active service. They were marched about throughout the Niagara District during the autumn and early winter of 1812 and again in the spring of 1813. Apparently the militia suffered much more from natural hardships and exposure to the weather than from the enemy. Smith returned from his campaigns much crippled with rheumatism. The settlers, however, were amply compensated for the hardships of the actual campaigns by the great influx of British gold, resulting in a ready market for all possible supplies at unheard of prices, as also for the services of men and animals at extravagant rates of pay.

As in the case of many of the other settlers from the United States, Mr. Smith was a Methodist in religion and very much devoted to his religious duties. Practically every Sun-

day, he went either to "meeting" or "stayed at home and read my Book." On one occasion, however, during an exceptionally wet harvest, Sunday being a fine day, he could not resist the temptation to get in his wheat. Previous to 1801 the meetings were held at the neighbors' houses, but during that year the settlers united in the erection of a modest chapel or "meeting house", as it was called. Class meetings and other special religious services still continued to be held at the settlers' homes. When anyone was present who was specially appointed to lead the services it is observed that they had "preaching", under other circumstances, some of the brethren simply "talked". There are frequent records of quarterly meetings, held apparently on Saturdays, preceded by a fast day on Friday and followed by a love feast on Sunday.

The first record of a camp meeting in the District was on August 17th, 1805, when he "went down the mountain to camp meeting", probably in the neighborhood of Dundas. Subsequently there was apparently a camp meeting every year in June at the Thirty, Forty or Fifty, which were current designations of streams in terms of their distance from Niagara. These corresponded to the present towns of Beamsville, Grimsby and Winona.

These simple annals might be extended indefinitely by drawing upon contemporary records from other parts of the province, but sufficient has been given to indicate the simple and industrious lives of the early settlers in what was then known as Upper or Western Canada. Though lacking the range of interest and of outlook of modern life, theirs was not without strenuous, romantic and even dramatic features. Under those conditions, however, they laid the foundations for our present Canadian life, and in doing so conditioned the modern Canadian social and political outlook to a far greater extent than the majority of existing Canadians realize.

ADAM SHORTT.

