

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FOUNDING OF THREE MILITARY SETTLEMENTS IN EASTERN ONTARIO—PERTH, LANARK AND RICHMOND, 1815-20.

BY GEORGE F. PLAYTER.

(The account by George F. Playter in his "History of Methodism in Canada," published in 1862, and now become a very rare book, describing the origins of the three settlements named in the above title, is so complete that it deserves to be more widely known, and is reprinted here. Robert Gourlay had visited the Perth Settlement in 1817 and had described it at some length, while W. H. Smith in his "Canada: Past, Present and Future" (1851) had also devoted some space to its origin, and other writers on the same subject could be cited. But none compare in completeness with Playter's account, as here extracted. The Notes, by Gen. Cruikshank, following the Account, contain hitherto unpublished material regarding the origin of the settlements).

PERTH SETTLEMENT.

Perth was the principal village of the Military Settlements of Upper Canada, and is situated on the branch of the Rideau River, called the Tay. As Perth in Scotland was situated on the River Tay, so was Perth in Canada. Early in 1815, the offers of the Imperial Government to emigrants to Canada attracted much attention in Scotland. The war with France being lulled, and with the United States ended, a great number of soldiers were disbanded, and a large number of mechanics, laborers and others, fed by the war, were without employment. To many of these, the Government offers of grants of land, rations, implements, and a free passage, were very acceptable. In Scotland, about 700 persons, men, women and children, accepted the offers. In June, they embarked from Greenock, in four transports, for Quebec. Arriving here, they remained on rations until the next year. Early in 1816, they were directed to proceed to the place of settlement, on the banks of the River Tay, about half way between the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa rivers. The Townships of Bathurst, Drummond and Beckwith had been surveyed, and were now open for the emigrants. In the adjoining southern Townships of Elmsley and Burgess, surveyed before the war, there was also a good deal of unsettled land. A place for a Government store and a town, had been already laid out and called Perth, about 42 miles north of the River St. Lawrence. The settlers, in the beginning of March, set out for their new homes in the forest, having passed through the severity of the first Canadian winter. They passed up the St. Lawrence, landed at Brockville, and proceeded back twenty-two miles, when they were obliged to halt, as here the road stopped, and there was nothing before them but a narrow pathway through the woods. The families, with the baggage, remained until the men had cut a road for twenty miles through the woods. Having, at last, reached the site of Perth, the men began to chop the trees, clear the ground, and prepare for building. Some huts, covered with boughs and bark, were the first they put up. The King's store, the superintendent's office, and a bridge across the Tay, soon followed. Those who wished to become farmers were settled upon their lands at once; and those who wished to dwell in the village received an acre lot each. All had their choice of the vacant lots, as they came forward. Besides these emigrants, a large number of discharged soldiers with their officers flocked into the settlement this summer, with late emigrants from the Old Country; so that the surveyed lands were soon nearly all occupied. The Scotch emigrants petitioned the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh for a minister. Accordingly, the Rev. James Bell left Leith in 1817, arrived at Quebec

1st June, and came to the settlement on the 24th. The superintendent, Captain Fowler, received him kindly, and granted him a lot of twenty-five acres near the town. He found the settlement to contain the following population:—

	Men	Women	Children
Emigrants	239	111	366
Discharged Soldiers	708	179	287
	947	290	653—1890

In 1818, the settlers suffered great hardships. The two previous crops were small, and the clothing was nearly worn out. There was not food enough until the harvest. The Government was petitioned, and kindly allowed the most needy half rations until the crops were gathered. The time of harvest was looked forward to with great anxiety, and with fervent prayers to a gracious providence. Nor were these prayers in vain. The fears of the poor settlers were gradually dissipated, as the crops finally advanced; and a good and plentiful harvest, especially of potatoes, shewed the wisdom of trusting in the Lord. In the first year of the settlement, provisions sold at very high prices. In 1817, the prices were reduced one-half; but then flour was \$14 per barrel, potatoes \$2 per bushel, wheat \$4, Indian corn \$2, beef or mutton 9d per lb., pork 10d, and other articles in proportion. As the cleared land increased, the crops multiplied, and the prices moderated. And now, in the sixth year of the settlement (1821), there were in the country four Presbyterian ministers, one Episcopal, two Romish priests, and one Methodist preacher (James G. Peale).

LANARK SETTLEMENT.

The Lanark, the second Military, Settlement, was back or north of the other, and included the Townships of Lanark and Dalhousie, with Ramsay and North Sherbrooke. The Lanark Settlement was formed by distressed manufacturers, mechanics, and others, in Glasgow, Lanark, and other places in the west of Scotland, who united to petition the Government for aid to emigrate. In answer, a grant of land was promised, and £10 a head, to assist the petitioners in settling in Canada. Accordingly, 900 persons sailed from Scotland for Quebec, in 1820; and when arrived, the Earl of Dalhousie, the Governor, ordered them to be forwarded to Perth, and settled in the two newly surveyed townships, afterwards called Lanark and Dalhousie. The same year, 176 more emigrants arrived from Scotland, for the same settlement. The accounts returned being favourable, the next year, 1821, four transports took from Greenock no less than 1,833 more emigrants, who arrived safely in Quebec. The Townships of North Sherbrooke and Ramsay were now added to the Lanark Settlement; and the new emigrants had the choice of all the unoccupied land in the four townships. A village was laid out, called the Lanark Village, and the stream through it called the Clyde; on which a saw mill and a grist mill were soon erected. The Scotch settlers thought too of a church; and their friends in Lanarkshire (Scotland) contributed and sent about £300 to Quebec, in 1823, to assist the erection of a house for the worship of God in the woods of Canada. Besides the Scotch settlers, many of the disbanded soldiers went in and took up lands among them, as well as emigrants from Ireland.

RICHMOND SETTLEMENT.

The third Military settlement was the Richmond, and began in 1818. The 99th regiment was then reduced, and the men were offered a location of land, in the usual proportions to officers and privates, if they would choose to settle. A great number of the men accepted the offer, and were conveyed to the Townships of Beckwith and Goulbourn, to choose and settle their lands. These townships lie about east of the Perth and Lanark Settlements. The soldiers were placed under the superintendence of Major Burke, and were to receive rations for one year, and the usual farming implements and seed. Some became useful and industrious tillers of the soil, and provided comfortable homes for their families; but others, like discharged soldiers in general, could not confine themselves to steady work, and, therefore, when the rations ceased, wandered off from the settlement, leaving their land to others. The Village of Richmond was laid out in the Township of Goulbourn, on the banks of the Jock, a sluggish stream, which falls into the Rideau River twenty miles below. The Govern-

ment store was here set up, and soon a saw and grist mill were in operation. Here was the place where the late governor, the Duke of Richmond, died. Another body of emigrants came into the country from Perthshire, under the direction of a Mr. Robinson, in the same summer of 1818. They paid their own passage to Quebec, were conveyed the remainder of the journey by the Government, and settled in the Township of Beckwith.

Although the discharged soldiers and Scotch emigrants laid the foundation of the Perth, Lanark and Richmond Settlements—comprising about twenty townships, mostly ten miles square—yet the filling up of all the vacant good lands was the work of several years. In 1824, only twelve townships were partially settled. But the Scotch emigrants still came out, and a far greater number of the Irish; and the townships gradually filled up, forming, at last, an old country population, with few English or American settlers in it.

NOTES ON THE FOREGOING MILITARY SETTLEMENTS.

BY BRIG-GEN. E. A. CRUIKSHANK.

Sixteen volumes of fragmentary correspondence relating to these and other military settlements are deposited in the Dominion Archives, Ottawa. These volumes are numbered C 619 to C 633 A, and cover a period extending from 1794 to 1853. Most of these papers refer to matters of simple routine, but some documents of considerable interest are included among them.

A special "establishment" for dealing with military settlements in Upper Canada was formed in 1815. On July 4, Alexander Macdonell, late Assistant Paymaster-General of Militia, was appointed superintendent. He had been an officer in the Royal Highland Emigrants or 84th Regiment, and exchanged into Butler's Rangers. From 1792 to 1805, he was sheriff of the Home District. From 1805 until 1812, he was agent for Lord Selkirk in the superintendence of his settlement at Baldoon on the Thames. From 1803 until 1812, he represented the County of Glengarry in the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, and in 1804 was elected Speaker of that body.

On July 25, Major David McGregor Rogers was appointed deputy superintendent. He had represented the counties of Northumberland and Durham in the Legislative Assembly for many years. Lieut. Angus Macdonell, of the Glengarry Light Infantry, was appointed receiving officer at Cornwall; Captain Richard Bullock, of the 41st Regiment, was appointed receiving officer at the Bay of Quinte, and Lieut. Donald McIver, of the 70th Regiment, was appointed receiving officer at Fort Wellington, (Prescott).

Daniel Daverne was appointed secretary and storekeeper, and John Caldwell, surgeon.

The first body of settlers arrived at Quebec early in the summer in the army transports, *Atlas*, *Baltic Merchant* and *Dorothy*. They proceeded up the river and were quartered temporarily at different places, as far as possible in barracks, lately vacated by troops. On November 21, Sir Sidney Beckwith, the Quarter-Master-General, reported to Sir Gordon Drummond, that at Brockville, thirty large

families were accommodated in the barracks or in neighboring huts, hired by themselves. A few families, whom it was contemplated to settle on the Rideau, were at Fort Wellington. At Cornwall, about three hundred and their families were in adequate quarters, the buildings formerly rented as barracks having been re-engaged for them. At a small barracks at the River Raisin, in the county of Glengarry, about fifty settlers, including their families, were comfortably lodged for the winter. Three families were at the Coteau du Lac, the men having been employed by Drummond's authority as artificers in the Engineer Department. A few families had been detained at Montreal owing to sickness among their children.

Alexander Macdonell, the superintendent, wrote on June 18, 1816, from "Perth on the River Tay," where he had just arrived:

"I found myself placed in a most unpleasant predicament from the not having in my power to place the men from the Regiment de Watteville on their lands. All that has been surveyed in Township No. 1 has been located on the 13th instant

"I must apprise you that the spirit of enterprise that appeared to actuate the de Wattevilles on their first arrival has evaporated in consequence of their not being placed on their lands, and that some have quitted the settlement and that others have notified their intention of doing so."

Next day, Captain George Fowler, Assistant Deputy Quarter-Master-General, who had also just arrived in the settlement, wrote to Lieut.-Colonel Francis Cockburn, the Assistant Quarter-Master-General at Quebec, also dating his letter from "Perth, River Tay":

"You will perceive that from want of Survey the locating of the numerous settlers from the several disbanded corps for the present is at a stand, and a great number of de Watteville's men have disappeared in consequence The fatal effect of the Surveyor here having considered himself altogether independent of the Superintendent is most evident. Had this not been the case there would have been abundance of land on which to place the men waiting for their grants."

It should be noted that De Watteville's regiment, originally recruited from Switzerland, had in the latter part of the war with France, been largely filled up with deserters from the French army, among whom were men of nearly all the nations of continental Europe.

On June 28, Major-General John Wilson, commanding the Forces, to whose attention this matter had been brought, wrote from Quebec to Lieut.-Governor Francis Gore, in Upper Canada, recommending that ten, or if possible, fifteen, land surveyors should be sent at once to the Perth settlement to provide lands for the disbanded non-commissioned officers and private men of the De Watteville, De Meuron, Canadian, and Glengarry regiments.

On October 4, General Wilson wrote from Kingston to the Military Secretary at Quebec, that he was on the point of departing for the Perth settlement in

company with Lieut.-Governor Gore. On October 15, Gore wrote from Quebec to Sir John C. Sherbrooke, the Governor-in-Chief, who was also at Quebec:

"I left Kingston on the 4th Instant accompanied by Major General Wilson and Lieut. Colonel Cockburn, Assistant Quarter Mr. General.

"I found that a considerable delay had taken place last year in fixing upon a situation for the settlers and a great difficulty in procuring surveyors to lay out the several allotments of Land, in consequence of which the Settlement cannot be considered to have commenced until late in the last Spring.

"Altho' the Settlers were suffering many privations, I found a good disposition in them to exert themselves to erect houses and Cultivate their Lands, but a general alarm penetrated throughout the Settlement that the assistance afforded by Government in the supply of Provisions till the Settlers were enabled to support themselves was to be withdrawn. Several Families were preparing to leave the Settlement and seek an asylum on the American side of the St. Lawrence on some lands belonging to a Mr. Parish, who, I understand, holds out very tempting offers to Agriculturists from Europe. I ventured to assure the Settlers that were already on their Lands that Government would continue its assistance for some time longer and that I would confer with your Excellency on the subject.

.....
 "The small Crops at the Settlement have been unproductive and the Settlers already begin to feel the severity of this Climate, living under Canvas and in small Huts, and it is to be regretted that some temporary building has not been provided to shelter them on their first arrival."

He strongly recommended that the issue of rations should be continued.

Colonel Christopher Myers, the Deputy Quarter-Master-General, a veteran officer of long service and experience in Canada, had also inspected the various settlements.

Under date of 23 October, he reported to Sir John Sherbrooke that he had visited the new settlements on the Rideau in Upper Canada and the River St. Francois in Lower Canada.

With respect to the Rideau settlement at Perth, he said:

"This settlement was commenced on 18th April, 1816. The new village of Perth is situated on a small river now called the Tay (formerly the Pike) which empties itself into the Rideau Lake at about 5½ Miles below, it is distant from Brockville 42 Miles, 21 of which is an old established and good road, the remainder is a Road recently cut through the Woods and is good for the passage of Waggon, much praise is due Captain Fowler for his exertions in opening this Communication by which a very great saving in Transport has taken place.

"In this Village there are 20 Houses and in the immediate vicinity there are 250 Habitations, which will be in readiness for occupation before the Winter.—Amongst the Settlers there are about Eighty head of Cattle and there are Eight hundred Bushels of fall Wheat now in the ground.—At present there are 840 Men, 207 Women, and 458 Children, equal to 1100 Military Rations of Provisions per day. The Settlement is generally provisioned to the 24th October—

About 50 families of Scotch to the 24th December, and Provisions for the whole are at the Depot till the 24th January next. The Settlers recently gone up are not included in this Statement, their Numbers as far as I can form a judgment will not exceed 200 Rations per day. Of the number of Settlers expected from the United States and who had emigrated from home to that Country, it is not possible to Speak with any degree of certainty. I am of opinion that none of the Settlers at Perth and its immediate neighbourhood are in a state to provide for themselves during the Winter, the earliest of them only commenced clearing their lands in April last. I would therefore beg to recommend that Rations of Provisions be issued to them until next June, to those recently gone up, a further indulgence will, I think, be absolutely necessary."

These recommendations apparently had the desired effect as the supply of rations was continued.

On November 1, Myers addressed a confidential letter to Thomas W. Moore of New York, stating that he was instructed by the Governor-in-Chief that no further encouragement could be held out to emigrants from Great Britain to the United States who now wished to emigrate to Upper Canada than 100 acres of land to each head of a family, and that owing to the advanced season, none of those emigrants should be induced to remove into that province.

In the spring of 1817, Sir John Sherbrooke considered it necessary to sanction an advance of £200 to each of the establishments at the Rideau in Upper Canada and Drummondville in Lower Canada for the purpose of providing the poorer settlers with seed grain. On May 13, his conduct in this respect was approved by Lord Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary, and he was further authorized to make a similar advance to any settler who had cleared a portion of his lands and did not possess the means of supplying himself with "seed corn," and to take such security for repayment as he was able to afford.

In the previous autumn Lord Bathurst had addressed the following letter to Sherbrooke on the subject of future settlements:

"No. 39.

Downing Street, October 4, 1816.

"Sir,

"You are sufficiently aware of the measures which have been taken by His Majesty's Government since the restoration of Peace to promote the settlement in the North American Provinces of such of His Majesty's Subjects as evince a disposition to emigrate from Great Britain. As there is every disposition to continue (as far as the circumstances of the Country will admit) the system which has already to a certain degree been acted upon, I am desirous to receive from you at as early a period as possible a report of the principal difficulties which have been found to exist to the establishment of emigrants in Canada and any suggestions you may be able to furnish as to the mode of alleviating them and as to the best and most economical mode of conducting those settlements in future in order that I may be enabled to lay the subject under the consideration of His Majesty's Government."

Sherbrooke's reply is not found among these documents; but the policy of furnishing free passages was soon afterwards discontinued and a printed circular published stating that free grants of land would in future only be made to those persons who could pay for their passage and support themselves, and as it was necessary for them to arrive in Canada early in the year, such grants would be made only to those who sailed before June 1.

Alexander Macdonell was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs late in 1816, and was succeeded as superintendent of the settlements in Upper Canada by Captain George Fowler, without any additional salary, to the pay and allowances of his appointment in the Quarter-Master-General's department.

LANARK SETTLEMENT.

These settlers were assisted by emigration societies in Scotland. The Government also made advances in money and supplied transport and provisions. On May 1, 1821, Lieut.-Colonel Francis Cockburn, Assistant Quarter-Master-General, submitted a statement giving "particulars of expenses for the Emigrants from Lanarkshire, North Britain, who arrived in Canada last year under particular instructions from His Majesty's Government and were placed on Land at Lanark in the Military Settlement, consisting of 167 Families, comprising 833 Individuals."

Advances of money, the expenses of transport, survey, and provisions, amounted to £11,298.16.1¼ sterling and the amount of one year's pay of persons employed in superintendence came to £533.15.6, making a total expenditure of £11,832.11.7¼.

This account was accompanied by a statement of implements, etc., issued to these emigrants by the emigration societies assisting them, giving the number of articles supplied by each society to the emigrants for which they were severally responsible. These societies were nine in number, namely, the Glasgow, Bridgetown Transatlantic, Abercrombie, Bridgetown Canadian, Muslin Street, Abercrombie Street, Transatlantic, Lesmahagow, and Anderson and Rutherglen. The total number of emigrants was stated as 167 men, 134 women and 532 children. Each man was provided with a felling axe, a pick-axe, carpenter's hammer, two files, a flanders kettle, a frying pan, two gimlets, a reaping hook, a bill hook, a broad hoe, a narrow hoe, two pairs of hinges, a pair of iron hinges, a latch and catch, a lock and key, a pitch fork, a saw-set, a hand saw, a spade and a scythe. In proportion to the size of their families they were supplied with blankets amounting to 569, 1,503 harrow teeth and 2,595 lbs. of nails.

A subsequent return, dated November 3, 1821, shows that the ship *David*, with 359 emigrants, and the ship *Commerce* with 373, arrived at Quebec in June, 1821, and were settled at Lanark in August, when each person was advanced £3.