

**CENTENNIAL PRIZE ESSAY
ON THE
HISTORY OF THE CITY AND
COUNTY OF ST. JOHN**

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Centennial Prize Essay on the History of the City and County of St. John by D. R. Jack

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D. R. JACK

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ON THE

HISTORY

OF THE

CITY AND COUNTY OF ST. JOHN.

BY
D. R. JACK.

"L'histoire est une resurrection."

— JULES MICHELLET.

—
1883.
—

SAINT JOHN, N. B.

J. & A. McMILLAN, 98 PRINCE WILLIAM STREET.

1883.

PREFACE.

NO community is so insignificant that its history is devoid of interest. The living man may deem his life monotonous and uneventful, but every incident connected with the dead ancestor incites his descendants to the fullest investigation. In North America, a new world only beginning to grow old, the men of to-day recognize the part which each colony, each city, each settlement has taken in the history of their country. Here, it is not as in Europe—the development of a people from barbarism to civilization—which commands our attention, but the success which, in a single century, has crowned the efforts of pioneers possessing, indeed, the advantages of modern knowledge and the experience of the ages, but, surrounded by serious and sometimes appalling difficulties.

In ACADIA, of which New Brunswick formed a part, the period of French occupation is most attractive to the student of history; but, having regard to political problems which are perhaps advancing towards solution, he cannot but consider the advent of the Refugees and Loyalists, and the subsequent events, as most deserving his careful investigation. The antecedent period savors of romance, but with the melting away of the French *regime*, an age of progress—of life in earnest—commences. The possibilities, under a continued French rule, might indeed form a subject of speculation; but such a speculation would be more curious than advantageous, for it is the British colonist who is here connected, not only with the past, but with the present and the future of the country. In the following pages some consideration is given to each of the periods indicated, but mainly to the most im-

Preface.

portant. The essay — and it must be borne in mind that it is but an essay, and not a history — was written in competition for a prize offered by the Mechanics' Institute of Saint John to the writer of the best essay on the history of the city and county of Saint John. The competing essays, of which there were two, were handed in on the 18th day of April, A. D. 1883, and were submitted to the judgment of Messrs. GEORGE J. CHUBB, WILLIAM P. DOLE, and WILLIAM H. VENNING, all well known citizens. On the 17th of the following May, the last day of the first hundred years of the city's life, the judges awarded the prize, \$200, to the writer of the following pages. They are now offered to the public in the modest hope that, despite their many defects in style and matter, they may interest the general reader, and may aid the student and future historian.

The writer avails himself of this opportunity to thank those who kindly supplied him with pamphlets, memoranda, and other material, which have greatly aided him in his work.

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HISTORY OF SAINT JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

The Indians; Visit of Champlain, De Monts and Poutrincourt to La Baie Française; Indian War; Discovery of an iron mine by the French; Charles Amadour de LaTour, his character; Captain Samuel Argal sent from English Colony on St. James River, Virginia, to the coast of Acadia to convoy a fishing fleet; He burns buildings at St. Sauveur and Port Royal; Colony at Port Royal broken up; Arrival of Missionaries from France; Death of Membertou, Sachem of the Micmacs; A trading post established at the St. John; Nova Scotia granted to Sir William Alexander; Death of Biencourt; Creation of Baronets of Nova Scotia; Charles LaTour's marriage; Fort St. Louis; War between France and England; David Kirk; Claude de LaTour taken prisoner to England.

THE Indians who occupied the mouth of the river Saint John about 1600, were the Souriquois or Micmacs, and members of the same tribe resided near the French fort at Port Royal. Their chief was Membertou, who had seen Cartier at the Bay Chaleur in 1534, and he appears to have resided indifferently at the Saint John, or Port Royal, for the Indians ventured fearlessly in their canoes over the waters of the Bay of Fundy, or the Baie Française, as it was subsequently called by the French.

On the 24th of June, 1604, a little French ship sailed into what is now the harbour of Saint John. She was a paltry craft, measured by modern standards, smaller than many of the coasting schooners of the present day, but she carried the germ of an empire; for Champlain, DeMonts, and Pou-

trincourt, the founders of New France, were on her deck. Champlain's chart of our harbour showed how carefully he scanned his new discovery, and how little the great natural features of the place have changed in the course of nearly three centuries. Looking upon it, and tracing its soundings, we can see the course his vessel took—passing into the harbour by the eastern channel—and note even the very spot where he anchored. The rugged hills about St. John were then covered with pines and cedars, and on Navy Island, which was then separated from the main land by a much narrower channel than now, was a collection of Indian wigwams, surrounded by a high palisade.

Champlain regarded himself as the discoverer of this great river, and in honor of the day—that of S. John Baptiste—gave the river the name it has ever since retained: the Saint John.

But though bent on founding a colony, he did not linger at Saint John, but spread his sails for a longer flight, and turned the prow of his vessel towards the fatal Island of Saint Croix.

The year 1607 made St. John the theatre of one of those warlike scenes, the like of which it will never see again, unless some fierce onslaught of barbarism should sweep civilization from our shores, and the birch and cedar should flourish on the sites of our deserted dwellings. Membertou was at war with the Armouchiquois of Saco, and he had called all the warriors of his tribe to aid him in his expedition against his enemies. The mouth of the St. John was the place of rendezvous, and to it they came from the marsh lands of Chignecto, from the Miramichi, from Cape Breton, and from Gaspé. Early in June, four hundred warriors were assembled, in all the pomp and circumstance of savage war, at the mouth of the St. John, and its harbour—which now bears on its bosom the peaceful fleets of commerce—was