

January 21, 1972

Miss Deborah A. Shanks,  
Acadia University,  
Wolfville, N.S.

Dear Miss Shanks:

The Town Office here passed your letter  
to the Queens County Historical Society, who in turn have  
asked me to reply.

I enclose a few notes which I hope will  
be of some use to you.

Sincerely,

## SETTLEMENTS IN QUEENS COUNTY, NOVA SCOTIA

The first permanent white settlements in Queens County were made by people from New England in the period 1759-1770. Most of those who founded the largest town, Liverpool, were from Cape Cod, and they included many descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers. Their main interest was in the fishery, and they were drawn to the mouth of the Mersey River because in those days there were throngs of salmon entering the river every spring, while cod, pollack, herring and mackerel could be caught in the bay. This was true also of the Medway River and Port Medway, whose settlers also came from New England via Liverpool.

The diary of Simeon Perkins, covering the period 1766-1812, reveals a good deal of the speech pattern of these New Englanders because his spelling of many words is obviously phonetic. There is a microfilm of this diary in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, and the Champlain Society have published four volumes of excerpts from it. (The Champlain Society volume covering the period 1780-1789 has an excellent introduction and summary of Perkins and his people.)

Under the French regime the Indians of Nova Scotia were fiercely hostile to anyone speaking English, and until 1759 the New England fishermen could only make brief landings for wood and water at their peril. The fall of Louisburg and Quebec made settlement safe. A few New Englanders came in the Fall of 1759 and wintered at Liverpool. The main body of settlers came in the following year, led by Captain Sylvanus Cobb, who had been Wolfe's pilot at Louisburg. The New Englanders and their descendants formed the greater part of the Queens County population down to comparatively modern times.

At the close of the American Revolution there was an influx of discharged British and Loyalist soldiers and their families. Most of these came from New York to Shelburne, N.S., and from there scattered to Queens County and other parts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The British soldiers who settled at various places along the coast of Queens County seem to have been mainly Scots. Those who came to Port Joli were entirely Scots. The Loyalists who had taken refuge at New York, and then removed to Nova Scotia, were from various colonies or states. Those who settled in Queens County were chiefly of New England origin, drawn no doubt by the fact that New Englanders were there already. However there was one considerable group of Loyalist soldiers and their families, who created a new settlement at Port Mouton, the men being veterans of the British Legion, commonly called Tarleton's Legion after their late commander. This regiment was raised originally among the Loyalists of Pennsylvania, but it suffered heavy losses in the Southern campaign under General Cornwallis, and its ranks were refilled from the Loyalists of South and North Carolina. These people had hard luck at Port Mouton after landing there in October 1783. They suffered a terrible winter, and in the spring their whole town was destroyed by fire. As a result most of them removed to other places. Some rebuilt at Port Mouton. Others came to Liverpool. The rest went to what is now Guysborough County, to Digby County, and to New Brunswick. Of those who remained in Queens County, the descendants retained for generations a trace of Carolina accent in such words as "heah, theah, anywheah" --clearly distinct from the more guttural "heuh, theuh, anywheuh" of the German settlers of adjoining Lunenburg County. This accent was strongly noticeable as late as the 1914-1918 war, when a Queens County soldier overseas met some Americans who mistook him for a Southerner.

In the period 1825-1835, following the end of the Napoleonic Wars when hard times in Britain drove a great many people overseas, some groups of Scots and Irish settled in the northern part of Queens County, where their descendants remain, notably about Caledonia and Hibernia.

Also, from about 1815 onward, a number of fishermen and their families moved from Lunenburg County to the adjoining coast of Queens County, notably at East and West Berlin, Beach Meadows, and Western Head. They were descendants of the German and French Protestant settlers at Lunenburg, and the movement into Queens County was simply a matter of an enlarging population moving to new fishing stations along the shore.

There was no remarkable influx of population, other than those already mentioned, until the establishment of a large paper manufacturing industry at Liverpool in 1929. This brought, and continued to bring, skilled workers from paper mills in Ontario and, to a lesser extent, Quebec. Many of these were accompanied by their families. By 1972 this industry had changed the predominant "Yankee" strain in Liverpool and adjacent villages to a minor one.

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