

The County Histories of Nova Scotia

By MARION GILROY

IN 1864, just thirty-five years after Haliburton's history of Nova Scotia appeared, and just a year before Murdoch's more imposing work was published, the cause of local history received its first tangible encouragement in Nova Scotia. In that year, Dr. T. B. Akins, the first Record Commissioner in the province, established an historical prize at King's College to be awarded annually for "the best history of some one or more counties in this province".

Dr. Akins had been intimately connected with the pioneer historians. Before he was twenty he had assisted Haliburton in gathering facts upon which "An historical and statistical account of Nova Scotia" is based. Beamish Murdoch was his first cousin, and when he was old enough Akins entered Murdoch's law office. It may have been that the prize awarded T. B. Akins by the Mechanics Institute in 1839 for his "History of the settlement of Halifax" gave him the idea for the establishment of his prize for county histories. In this way he hoped to emphasize the importance of collecting and preserving the local records of the various counties in the province and "the local traditions relating to the commencement and progress of the settlements as well". "I believe," he said, "there are many young men in Nova Scotia whose taste would lead them to enter on such a subject, and if stimulated by the offer of a small prize for their labor to devote some leisure to collecting material for local history and biography, thus forming a valuable groundwork for the more general historian of a future day."

His faith was justified. Before his death in 1891 fourteen counties had been the subjects of "Akins historical

essays".¹ Hants, Colchester and Annapolis had each been the subject of essays twice. Perhaps it was the small prize of thirty dollars, perhaps the chance of gaining some recognition for what had often been a life-long interest, or perhaps both, which brought to light these disciples of Clio in all parts of the province. Six of the prize-winning essays (Colchester, Yarmouth, Pictou, Annapolis, Halifax (part only), Cape Breton) were printed after being revised and enlarged; two were reprinted in part (Shelburne and Guysborough); and two essays which were submitted but did not win the prize were expanded into full county histories and published (Lunenburg and Digby). In spite of the combined efforts of those writing for the Akins prize and a growing number of others interested in local history, there are still several counties (Cumberland, Hants, Guysborough, Halifax, Shelburne, Cape Breton, Richmond, and Victoria) which are without so-called "county" histories.

The devotion of these early amateur historians to their task was often remarkable, considering how scattered and inaccessible local records often were. The story is told of one of them: "To enable the author to compile this history,² he travelled hundreds of miles on foot; twice he walked from Digby to Halifax, getting occasional lifts along the road, and accepted whatever hospitality was offered on the way. Handicapped always by poor eyesight, which at last failed him completely, with an entire lack of means, his courage undaunted by difficulties, he spent over a quarter of a century gathering the material and producing the work, upon which he had

1. F. W. Vroom in "The Akins historical prize essays, King's College", Nova Scotia Historical Society, *Collections* vol. 21, p. 35 gives a particular account of the essays, which are in the library of King's College, Halifax.

2. Isaiah W. Wilson.

set his heart." In another case, it was a Nova Scotian living in Boston, in body if not in spirit, who wrote one of the best county histories and left the manuscript of another.³

Among the county histories which have been printed, many are quite inadequate. Some are little more than genealogical sketches of certain families who settled in the county; many are full of inaccuracies. Because of these deficiencies a selective list of publications has been compiled, with brief remarks from prefaces or introductions to reveal the scope of the work when the title does not supply the information. It is hoped that the list may be useful to anyone wishing to find local historical information from printed sources. With one exception genealogies have not been included, although they sometimes throw light on local history and conditions. Some titles are given under Cape Breton Island, for writers have generally broadened the scope of their efforts to include the whole island rather than one county.

ANNAPOLIS COUNTY

- Calnek, William Arthur. History of the County of Annapolis including old Port Royal and Acadia, with memoirs of its representatives in the provincial parliament, and biographical and genealogical sketches of its early English settlers and their families. Edited and completed by A. W. Savary. Toronto, Wm. Briggs [etc., etc.] 1897. 660 p.
- Greenwood, Walter R. History of Freeport, Nova Scotia, 1784-1934. Freeport, N. S., 1934. 46 p.
- MacVicar, W.M. A short history of Annapolis Royal, the Port Royal of the French, from its settlement in 1604 to the withdrawal of the British troops in 1854. Toronto, Copp Clark Co., 1897. 127 p.
- Morse, William Inglis. Gravestones of Acadie and other essays on local history, genealogy, and parish records of Annapolis County, Nova Scotia. London, A. Smith & Co., 1929. 110 p.
- Morse, William Inglis. Local history of Paradise, Annapolis County, Nova Scotia (1684-1936). Boston, Nathan Sawyer & Son, 1937. 65 p.

Morse, William Inglis. Supplement to Local history of Paradise, Annapolis County, Nova Scotia (1684-1938). Boston, Nathan Sawyer & Son, 1938. 79 p.

Savary, Alfred William. Supplement to the History of the County of Annapolis [by W. A. Calnek], correcting and supplying omissions in the original volume. Toronto, William Briggs, 1913. 142 p.

ANTIGONISH

- Rankin, D. J. A history of the County of Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Toronto, Macmillan, 1929. 390 p.
Largely "genealogical data".
- Whidden, D. G. The history of the town of Antigonish. [Antigonish, N. S., The Casket, 1934]. 209 p.

CAPE BRETON COUNTY

- MacKinnon, J. G. Old Sydney; sketches of the town and its people in days gone by. Sydney, C. B., Don. MacKinnon, 1918. 143 p.
"This little book is not issued as a history of Sydney. It contains some bits of history, but the greater part consists of tradition..."
- McLennan, J. S. Louisbourg from its foundation to its fall, 1713-1758. London, Macmillan, 1918. 454 p.
This complete and admirable study based on careful research is so wide in scope that it does not properly belong in any list of "local" histories. Yet the list would be incomplete without it.

CAPE BRETON ISLAND

- Bourinot, John G. Cape Breton and its memorials of the French régime. Royal Society of Canada, *Transactions*, 1st series, 1891, section 2, p. 173-343.
"In the present work it is the object of the writer...to record briefly the main facts in its history from the days of its discovery by European voyagers in the remote past down to the present time..."
- Brown, Richard. A history of the Island of Cape Breton, with some account of the discovery and settlement of Canada, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. London, Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1869. 464 p.
- Gow, John M. Cape Breton illustrated: Historic, picturesque and descriptive. Illustrated by James A. Stubbart. Toronto, William Briggs [etc., etc.], 1893. 423 p.
- Vernon, Charles W. Cape Breton, Canada, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

3. Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton. The manuscript of his unpublished History of Colchester County is in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia.

A treatise of natural resources and development. Toronto, Nation Pub. Co., 1903. 337 p.

"The object of this book, therefore, is to set forth briefly the history of the island, to tell the story of its industrial development, and to describe its present condition, its resources and prospects..."

COLCHESTER

Eaton, Arthur Wentworth Hamilton. The settling of Colchester, Nova Scotia, by New England Puritans and Ulster Scot-men. Royal Society of Canada, *Transactions*, 1912, section 2, p. 221-265.

Memorial of the one hundred and twenty-second, and of the one hundred and twenty-first, advertised as the one hundred and twenty-third anniversary of the settlement of Truro, by the British, being the first celebration of the town's natal day, September 13th, 1882. Truro, N. S., Doane Bros., 1894. 95 p.

Miller, Thomas. Historical and genealogical record of the first settlers of Colchester County down to the present time... Halifax, N. S., A. & W. Mackinlay, 1873. 400 p.

Patterson, Frank H. A history of Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. Halifax, N. S., Royal Print & Litho, 1917. 143 p.

Stewiacke: The centenary celebration of Dec. 31st, 1900. The centennial celebration of Oct. 6th, 1880. Truro, N. S., News Pub. Co., 1902. 166 p.

Addresses.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Bird, Will R. A century at Chignecto. Toronto, Ryerson [1928]. 245 p.

Black, Cyrus. Historical record of the posterity of William Black, who settled in this county in the year seventeen hundred and seventy-five, also a sketch of 23 English families and some early settlers from New England, who settled at the head of the Bay of Fundy about the same time. Amherst, N. S., Amherst Gazette, 1885. 209 p.

Milner, W. C. Records of Chignecto. N. S. Historical Society, *Collections*, vol. 15, 86 p.

Scott, Bertha. Springhill, a hilltop in Cumberland. Springhill, N. S., 1926. 119 p.

Trueman, Howard. The Chignecto Isthmus and its first settlers. Toronto, William Briggs, 1902. 268 p.

Webster, John Clarence. The forts of Chignecto; a study of the eighteenth century conflict between France and Great Britain in Acadia. Shediac, N. B., Priv. Print., 1930. 142 p.

DIGBY COUNTY

Hill, Allan Massie. Some chapters in the history of Digby County, and its early settlers. Halifax, N. S., McAlpine Pub. Co., 1901. 115 p.

Wilson, Isaiah W. A geography and history of the County of Digby, Nova Scotia. Halifax, N. S., Holloway Bros., 1900. 471 p.

GUYSBOROUGH COUNTY

Hart, Harriet Cunningham (Mrs. James E. Hart). History of Canso, Guysborough County, N. S. N. S. Historical Society, *Collections*, vol. 21, p. 1-34.

Historic Canso. Issued under the auspices of the Town Council of Canso and the Canso Board of Trade. [Canso, N. S., 1928]. 63 p. (with advts). [An address by A. C. Jost and] an article by John A. Morrison.

HALIFAX COUNTY

Akins, Thomas Beamish. History of Halifax City. N. S. Historical Society, *Collections*, vol. 8, 320 p.

Eaton, Arthur Wentworth Hamilton. Chapters in the history of Halifax, Nova Scotia. A series of articles in *Americana*, April, 1915-1918 (?).

Lawson, Mary Jane Katzmann (Mrs. William Lawson). History of the townships of Dartmouth, Preston and Lawrencetown; Halifax County, N. S. (Akins historical prize essay). Edited by Harry Piers. Halifax, N. S., Morton & Co., 1893. 260 p.

Mullane, George. Footprints around and about Bedford Basin; a district brimful of romantic associations. Some interesting facts about its early history. Reprinted from, [Acadian Recorder]. 49 p.

Regan, John W. Sketches and traditions of the North West Arm... 2d ed. Halifax, N. S., McAlpine Pub. Co., 1909. 181 p.

HANTS COUNTY

Eaton, Arthur Wentworth Hamilton. Rhode Island settlers on the French lands in Nova Scotia in 1760 and 1761. A series of articles in *Americana*, January-March, 1915.

Hind, Henry Youle. Sketch of the old Parish Burying Ground of Windsor, Nova Scotia, with an appeal for its protection, ornamentation, and preservation. Windsor, N. S., Jas. J. Anslow, 1889. 99 p.

INVERNESS COUNTY

MacDougall, J. L. History of Inverness County, Nova Scotia. 1922. 690 p. Largely biographical and genealogical sketches,

KINGS COUNTY

Eaton, Arthur Wentworth Hamilton. The history of Kings County, Nova Scotia, heart of the Acadian land, giving a sketch of the French and their expulsion; and a history of the New England planters who came in their stead, with many genealogies, 1604-1910. Salem, Mass., The Salem Press Co., 1910. 898 p.

LUNENBURG COUNTY

DesBrisay, Mather Byles. History of the County of Lunenburg. 2d ed. Toronto, W. Briggs [etc. etc.] 1895. 585 p.

PICTOU COUNTY

MacPhie, J. P. Pictonians at home and abroad; sketches of professional men and women of Pictou County—Its history and institutions. Boston, Mass., Pinkham Press [1915], 232 p.

Patterson, George. A history of the County of Pictou, Nova Scotia. Montreal, Dawson Bros. [etc. etc.], 1877. 471 p.

QUEENS COUNTY

More, James F. The history of Queens County, N. S. Halifax, N. S., Nova Scotia Printing Co., 1873. 250 p.

RICHMOND COUNTY

See list under heading Cape Breton Island.

SHELBURNE COUNTY

Crowell, Edwin. A history of Barrington Township and vicinity, Shelburne County, Nova Scotia, 1604-1870; with a bibliographical and genealogical appendix. Yarmouth, N. S. [1923]. 603 p.

Smith, T. Watson. The Loyalists at Shelburne. N. S. Historical Society, *Collections*, vol. 6, p. [53]-89.

VICTORIA COUNTY

MacKenzie, N. R. The Gael fares forth. The romantic story of Waipu and sister settlements. Auckland [etc.] Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., 1935. [269] p.

Story of the migration of the Scottish settlement from St. Ann's to Australia and New Zealand under Rev. Norman McLeod.

See also list under heading Cape Breton Island.

YARMOUTH COUNTY

Brown, George S. Yarmouth, Nova Scotia: A sequel to Campbell's history. Boston, Rand Avery Company, 1888. 524 p.

"The author concluded that it was his duty in some measure to repair the errors of omission and commission...[in Campbell's history]".

Campbell, John Roy. A history of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. St. John, N. B., J. & A. McMillan, 1876. 200 p.

Lawson, J. Murray, compiled: Yarmouth past and present; a book of reminiscences. Yarmouth, N. S. [Yarmouth Herald] 1902. 647 p. "...the principal resources for information are the Yarmouth newspapers published since 1831."

Poole, Edmund Duval, compiled: Annals of Yarmouth and Barrington (Nova Scotia) in the Revolutionary War. Compiled from original manuscripts, etc., contained in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, State House, Boston, Mass. Yarmouth, N. S., J. M. Lawson, 1899. 133 p. "Reprinted from the Yarmouth Herald."