

CHAPTER VIII

The incorporation of Presque Isle: State of Maine Private and Special laws of 1859.

"The present township of Presque Isle is included in Range 2, the southern half being originally known as Letter F and the northern half as Letter G."

On April 4, 1859, both townships were incorporated, separately, as townships, the northern half being under the name of Maysville, remaining a separate town until Feb. 4, 1883, when the two towns united taking the name of the southern town, Presque Isle, which now lies near the middle of the united territory.

The present township is six miles wide and twelve miles long, thus containing seventy-two square miles.

Most of this land is as good as can be found in Maine for agricultural purposes; that included formerly in the town of Maysville lying in the fertile valley of the Aroostook River, which takes a winding course of about eleven miles through the town. The population in 1860, one year after the incorporation, was 732. Ten years later it was 970, while in 1880 it had reached 1305.

"At this time, or at the time of the union of the two towns, Maysville had a population of about 1141.

"In 1890 after the towns had been united, the population of Presque Isle had increased to 3046; and in 1900 to 3804, with a valuation of \$1,413,608.00.

"The township is bounded on the north by Caribou, on the south by Westfield Plantation, and on the west by Chapman, Mapleton and Washburn."

The following is a copy of the true copy of the State of Maine Private and Special Laws of 1859:

STATE OF MAINE PRIVATE AND SPECIAL LAWS OF 1859 An act to incorporate the town of Presque Isle

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in the Legislature assembled, as follows:

Sect. 1. Letter F in the second range west from the east line is hereby incorporated into a town by the name of Presque Isle; and the inhabitants of said town are hereby vested with all powers, privileges, immunities, and liabilities of inhabitants of other towns.

Sect. 2. Any justice of the peace, within the county of Aroostook, is hereby empowered to issue his warrant to some inhabitant of said town, directing him to notify the inhabitants thereof to meet at such time and place as he shall appoint, to choose such

officers as other towns are empowered to choose at their annual town meeting.

Sect. 3. The town hereby created shall take the effects belonging to Presque Isle Plantation and shall also assume all the obligations of said plantation.

Sect. 4. The town of Presque Isle and the town of Keysville in the county of Aroostook are hereby united and incorporated into a town to be called Presque Isle, and the inhabitants of said town are hereby vested with all the powers, privileges and immunities and subject to all the liabilities of inhabitants of other towns, and the town of Presque Isle thus created shall take the effects belonging to the towns of Presque Isle and Keysville, and shall assume all the obligations of said towns; provided however, that the provisions of this section shall not take effect unless a majority of the people of each of the towns of Presque Isle and Keysville present at the annual election on the second Monday of September next, shall vote in favor of accepting the same.

Sect. 5. This act shall take effect from and after its approval by the governor.

Approved April 4, 1859.

A true copy,

ATTEST:



Secretary of State

CHAPTER IX

The State Road; why so called; its early settlers.

This road, "so called", as the early records say, was made from Presque Isle to Fort Fairfield in September 1848. The state put on three crews in different sections early in the spring of that year, and before the ground was frozen they completed the road from Patten to Fort Fairfield; also the entire length of Fish River to Fort Kent.

It is of course understood that when the militia came in the winter of 1839 they came through the woods to No. 10 and then went down the ice of the Aroostook River and Fish River where they built the fort in January.

These forts were built across both rivers in March, and a supply of food and munitions were stored at each fort to tide them over until the road was built.

The road on both sides of the river was built by settlers who paid for their farms wholly in road labor.

In the winter of 1839, the militia left the ice at the Weeks place or claim and the brook trail over the Reach Mountain and the Whitney Hill to Fort Fairfield or the Fitzherbert place as it was then called. This trail had been used by the French and Indians, but was then used by the timber thieves who were stripping the territory of the giant pines.

All the cannon and war supplies were hauled over this trail in the winter of 1839, and it was abandoned when the state road was built.

The town line between Haysville and Fort Fairfield runs near the top of the mountain about a mile from the river at that point.

I don't know, says the "historian", which way Veranus C. Chandler and other Haysville settlers came, but I presume by the Aroostook Road; but Wingate Haines came by Houlton and Presque Isle, for there were scattered settlers from whom he obtained food for his stock.

When Haines came, there was no road from Alva Corner (Blaine) to Fort Fairfield, but he soon had a road opened from the Black School House to the Houlton Road in Alva Plantation. This was a country road.

Veranus Chandler married Miss Elizabeth Hooper, daughter of one of the first settlers. He made a log house and set up house-keeping and one of the best farms in town. He was for years a justice of the peace and tried many cases and so just were his decisions that few were the appeals taken to his decisions.

Mr. Chandler married 60 couples before any clergymen had settled as pastors. He was a charter member of the Pomona Grange and continued his membership during his entire life. He filled many official positions in the order. He was an able and interested debator.

This road helped a great deal in the settling of the northern towns because it made traveling so much easier.

CHAPTER X

The Maysville Road: its early settlers;
The Maysville town house.

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When Capt. Henry Rolfe finished his service as a soldier in the Aroostook War, he visited his home in Somerset County, returning with the well known pioneer, the late John Allen remembered as the giver of the town clock, who settled in Maysville and made the noted Henry and Freeman Keirstead farm. Captain Allen, better known as John Allen, came very early in the forties. He selected his claim or permit of a mile square of land in Letter G, when organized as Maysville. He also bought what has since been known as Allen's Island for \$100; paid for it by a chest of tea valued in those days at one dollar a pound, in Aroostook. His 1000 acres were chosen from what is at present the Charles Hussey and Walter Christie Farms, among the highest in town, valued at \$100,000 each.

THE MAYSVILLE TOWN HOUSE

This town house was the center of all public gatherings and known for school house, grange hall, church, Sabbath school, town meetings, and noted weddings. Hence it had a big name, but no bigger than its purposes and uses.

Here Rev. Perrington preached for years and laid the foundation of moral and religious instruction.

Here a nephew of Harriet Beecher Stowe preached for a part of a year and started Congregational faith and the Congregational church held the services for years. Here the writer supplied services for two years in the afternoons in connection with his village church.

Here agricultural meetings have been held from the first, for Maysville has always been noted for its valuable farms and leading and progressive farmers. Hence the grange was organized very early; the third in the county. Here some of the popular and able speakers of State and National fame have spoken. Here some notable weddings have been held. Here Fred S. Wiggin, son of Hon. Edward Wiggin and wife, and Miss Annie Duff, daughter of Daniel and Susan Duff, who were among the early pioneers, were married.

In 1844, Captain Parrott surveyed Maysville, then Letter G, into half mile blocks. There were settlers at that time on both sides of the river, and new ones were coming every day for the treaty signed at Washington August 9, 1842, settled the long-standing dispute and gave the land to Maine.

Parrott's survey was not satisfactory for in many cases a man's

farm was located on both sides of the river, of which Maysville had a generous share.

In 1858, the late Veranus Chandler circulated a petition and sent it to the legislature to have the township resurveyed. In the spring of 1859, the state sent Noah Barker to survey the township where it was needed and requested, and gave him authority to adjust all differences with the settlers arising from any changes made in their homestead lots.

Mr. Barker did the job in a thorough and satisfactory manner. He used the surveyor's so-called 'fraction' methods so that no farm crossed the river. While he could not get the farms in square blocks, ...or quarter sections, the settlers were generally satisfied.

Parrott laid no roads, but Barker, after consulting the scattering settlers, laid roads he thought would be the most convenient and the settlers 'grubbed' out to pay for their farms.

Ferdinand Armstrong left Bradley's Island, and was the first permanent (citizen) settler. He came down the river from his island home in 1823. (I am now speaking of the Northeast corner of the township east of the river.) The farm is now owned by Frank Ashby on the river near Parkhurst Stack Mill.

Charles Bubar came in 1826 and settled on the farm now owned by Willard Darling.

William Johnson came in 1830, and located on land at the mouth of the Weeks' Brook. It was here in the winter of 1839, the soldiers left the ice and cut across the big bend in the river over the hills to build Fort Fairfield. For weeks cannon and other war munitions were piled up high on the river bank under canvas, and the Stars and Stripes.

Just across the river near where the Reach schoolhouse now is, Lieutenant Welch disobeyed orders, and moved a breastwork of pine timber, and then sent a messenger down the river to inform the armed mob, which had frightened Major Strickland and caused him to take that far ride to Augusta, that he was ready for them. Welch had been ordered to fall back to No. 10, now Kasardis.

Warren Weeks, a staunch Loyalist, had patents for 600 acres of land for which he was to build a mill on the so-called Johnson Brook at Fort Fairfield. He was so disgusted with what he called New Brunswick's surrender of its rights that he and Johnson traded their squatters' rights, and each man who had become a citizen and voter by the treaty, lived and died under the flag they hated. Charles Fisher now owns the Weeks farm.

In 1848, Robert Manley settled on what was known as the 'Mountain Lot'. Mr. Manley was an ex-British soldier and gave this country valuable service during the Civil War. One of his daughters

is now a resident of Presque Isle, and his son William is now a resident of Easton or Blaine.

George Parker, who came from Ireland in 1853, settled on a lot adjoining the Fort Fairfield line the next year, 1854. Barker's survey left Parker's farm without water, and he was given the next lot, where for years he lived in the wilderness without road or neighbors.

In 1854, Captain Enoch Ginn and a cousin, Joseph Ginn, came and took up lots in the extreme northeast corner of the township. Joseph did not stay long; later the claim was occupied by Ira D. Toothaker, still later by Columbus Mayford, and after him by the writer of this sketch, W. T. Ashby. Captain Ginn's farm is still in the family and is one of the fine farms of that noted part of town.

The same year in 1854, Captain Nathan Davis came from Oxford County and settled on the farm owned by Frank Block. Mr. Davis came to make Saleratus from the ashes of the rock-maple trees, and did for a while; but the product had to be hauled to Bangor by team and the cost ate up the profit, so Davis abandoned his kilns and leach tubs, and went to raising buckwheat and making cedar shingles.

James Johnson, "Uncle Jimmie", came from Miramichi, N. B. the same year, and took the farm now owned by George W. Johnson. Ralph Johnson came in 1855 and located on the farm now owned by W. E. Clark.

David O. Todd took up the farm where Freeman Todd's son now lives. James Ham, John Sawyer, and others came, I think, in the spring of 1856.

Barker's survey split the farms of Ham and Sawyer, and Ham was dis-usted and left. The late E. A. Sawyer later occupied the claim and at the death of his father, he owned both farms. Frank L. Johnson now owns the old Sawyer Estate, which is one, if not the best and finest-looking farms in the town.

The lots between Jimmie Johnson's and G. A. Parker's were taken by some Auburn, Maine shoemakers in 1860. They were William Preston, John Mortimer, Hiram Wadleigh and Enoch Lovely; but when the Civil War came they left and the land went back to the State...it is now among the best farms in town.