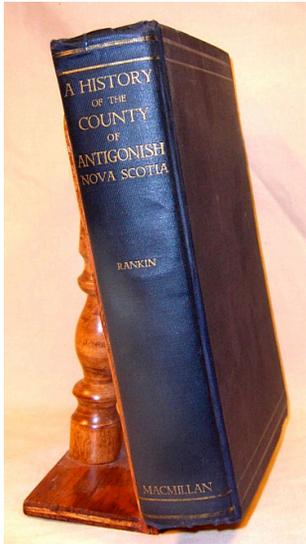


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A History of the County of Antigonish, Nova Scotia (1929)

CA0237



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ABOUT THIS BOOK:

This book is primarily a collection of biographies (pedigrees) of families living in (or having lived in), or having a heritage in, the county of Antigonish. The only index to these hundreds - perhaps thousands - of names is via the table of contents which locates chapters by only 24 main Clan (Family) names.

If you are not certain which Clan you should be referencing we suggest that you try searching by individual names. A word of warning however when conducting such searches:

The author tended to use a Family name only once in any particular part of the narrative, referring to all the other related individuals by only their given names. This means that a search for "John Smith" may fail because the actual entry was for Albert Smith, father of Peter, John, etc., etc. In order to maximize the chance of finding a specific individual it may be necessary to perform two searches; one for "Smith" and another for "John" and review the results for common (or adjacent) page numbers, or if your search engine offers the facility, to perform a "Proximity," "adjacent," or "within - words" type search.

A HISTORY
OF THE
COUNTY OF ANTIGONISH,
NOVA SCOTIA

BY

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CHAPTER I

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF ANTIGONISH COUNTY

EARLY DIVISIONS OF EASTERN NOVA SCOTIA

THE County of Halifax formerly included the whole of the eastern section of Nova Scotia proper. In 1784, all of that part which lay east of the river and harbour of St. Mary's was erected into the County of Sydney. In 1822 this boundary, being found very inconvenient, was removed to the falls of the River Ekamsegan, thus adding about 500 square miles to its area. Afterward the county was divided into an upper and lower district, and still later each of these districts was formed into a separate county, the upper retained the name of Sydney and the lower was called Guysboro. In the year 1865, the name of the County of Sydney was by Act of Parliament changed to Antigonish, which name it still retains.

The County of Antigonish is situated in the north-east of Nova Scotia proper. It is nearly triangular in form, the base of the triangle being bounded by the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of St. George, while the apex is wedged between the Counties of Pictou and Guysboro. Roughly, its boundaries are mapped out by strongly marked geological features. Commencing at Cape George a range of hills composed of syenite and metamorphic rocks extends westward to the upper part of West River. Another range of similar structure, commencing at Cape Porcupine on the Strait of Canso, runs along the southern border of the county to meet the other at the place already named. The triangle thus formed comprises the County of Antigonish and gives us a very broad surface—composed of the carboniferous system of rocks. With the exception of the hills above-mentioned, the surface of the county is undulating, intersected with numerous streams and here and there diversified by picturesque lakes. Although the carboniferous system so generally abounds, it is not certain that any valuable seams of coal exist in the county. Still, from its richness in limestone and gypsum, it has that fertile calcareous soil which, combined with the rich intervals

district had to be visited. It would be considered an insult to omit one.

On Christmas Day, man and beast should get something better than at ordinary times. The ox had to get a sheaf of wheat, other cattle were treated to sheaves of oats, and so on through the grades. Two men named Duncan and Allan thought the hens should not be overlooked, so they prepared a feed of oatmeal soaked with a spoonful or two out of the bottle for them. In a short time they observed an unusual commotion amongst the fowl, as if they had begun to disagree over some point or other connected with barnyard politics. Followed vicious dives at one another, feathers flying, and much stumbling, and rolling on the ground. The chanticleer, in an attempt to restore order, mounted an eminence and tried vainly to exercise his vocal chords, but all to no purpose. Presently he was just as helpless as his minions. This incident caused many a hearty laugh afterwards amongst the exiles, who retained their Celtic sense of humour despite the horde of tribulations that beset their paths during those early days.

Another occasion generally fixed for social gathering was a night or two before Lent, during which the same big-hearted hospitality and simple joys were indulged in. But during the whole year, and particularly during the long winter nights, these good people visited one another regularly. These neighbourly visits were called "ceildhe". A night visit was "ceildhe oidhche". On a dark night the visitor carried a firebrand, "aithinnie", to light his way. This he swung right and left in the air to keep it blazing. This was before the introduction of lanterns and it served its purpose admirably. The conversation by the fireplace was generally Scottish folklore, stories about the brave warriors of the Highlands, and especially about those heroes who distinguished themselves during the Jacobite Rising. "Bliadhna Tearlach", and songs relating thereto were rendered by many a tuneful throat, and Sgenlachdan, most interesting to the young, was recited. They also had weird stories about ghosts, hobgoblins, bocain, and what-not, from the Old Country. Hair-raising stories about the antics of an unearthly "Bocain" called "Colunn gun ch'eann", held the young breathless, and often caused an uncomfortable shifting of chairs nearer to the company on the part of their elders too. Thus these pioneers passed their days in toil unremitting, and their nights in harmless amusement. Would to God that the same standard of morality, the same lofty ideals, the same undaunted courage, and tireless perseverance remained with their successors.

CHAPTER XI

GENEALOGIES: THE CLAN MACDONALD

There is a tradition that the Macdonalds are descended from Conn, who was Ard Righ or Supreme King of Ireland, and swayed the sceptre at Tara, County Meath, Ireland. Conn Ceud-Chathach, or "Conn of the Hundred Battles", flourished in the second century of the Christian era, and was one of the greatest heroes of antiquity. Ewen McLachlan, the celebrated bard and scholar, gives the Macdonalds this royal lineage:

"Before the pomp advanced in kingly grace,
I see the stem of Conn's victorious race
Whose sires of old the Western sceptre swayed,
Which all the Isles and Albion's half obeyed."

"Of all the clans, that of the Macdonalds is by every rule of antiquity, power, and numbers fully entitled to be spoken of before any other," says Robertson. This noble race, so far as Scottish history is concerned, undoubtedly sprung from Somerled of Argyle. By his courage and skill this Somerled completely defeated a band of Norse pirates who threatened his paternal inheritance, and thus made himself master of a goodly portion of Argyle. By virtue of this military feat he assumed the title of Lord of Argyle, and became one of the most powerful chiefs in all Scotland. He was slain at Renfrew.

Regarding the spelling of the name "MacDonald", the editor of this work has facsimiles of the signatures of early chiefs and other notables. There is no uniformity: MacDonald, Macdonald and McDonald being used. Admiral Sir Reginald Macdonald, Marshal Macdonald, Sir John A. Macdonald (Premier of Canada), Simon Macdonald of Morar, Sir James Macdonald (Eighth Baronet of Sleat) and Alexander (second Lord Macdonald) signed their names "Macdonald".

Donald MacDonald, of Tirnadrish; Ramsay MacDonald, George MacDonald (novelist) write their names "MacDonald".

CHAPTER XIV

GENEALOGIES: MACKAY—MACMILLAN

MACKAY

Allan MacKay came to the Keppoch about the year 1840, from the Isle of Mull, Scotland. He was married to a daughter of Angus MacInnis, son of John, of Ohio, and had the following issue: Angus married to Ann MacLean, issue (John died young; Allan went to the West when he was young; Alex married to a lady from Guysboro; Mary married to Archibald MacDaniel from Cape Breton, and lived in Stellarton; Ann died young, being accidentally burned at an open fireplace).

The remaining members of the family of Allan MacKay were: John died young; James; Ronald, and Charles, all married in Stellarton.

MACKENNA

Arthur MacKenna came from Roscommon County, Ireland, and landed in Halifax after a voyage of three weeks. He left Ireland on April 7th, 1827. He removed from Halifax to Pictou, thence to James River, and finally to Brierly Brook. He married Mary Mullins, with issue: Patrick, born in Ireland, married Mary Mooney, born 1801, died 1887; and a daughter. Patrick, son of Arthur, married Mary Mooney, with issue: Arthur married to Miss Murphy; Andrew married twice, first to Miss Davis, and second time to Miss Brody, of Dennis; Margaret not married; Lucy not married; daughter married to Martin Wall, and two sons.

Andrew, son of Patrick, married Miss Davis, first, with issue: John P., druggist, married to Miss MacDonald, daughter of Dan; Arthur, son of Patrick, married Miss Murphy, with issue: John D., Frank, Willie, Patrick and Mary.

MACKENZIE

Donald MacKenzie and his brother, John, came from Scotland (Strathglass), in the year 1799. Donald MacKenzie settled at Malignant Cove, and was married to Mary MacDonnell. John

CHAPTER XVII

GENEALOGIES: MACRAE—SMITH

MACRAE

John MacRae came from Strathglass, Scotland, and settled at Malignant Cove. He married Miss MacKenzie, with issue: Mary married to Angus MacNeil (Brown); Catherine married to Austin Fraser; Mary married to Wm. Chisholm, Kerry; John married to Miss Chisholm, daughter of Donald.

John, son of John, pioneer, married Miss Chisholm, with issue: John married to Peggie MacDonald (had one son, John Wilkie, who is in West, lately married); Donald married to Teresa MacInnis, no issue; Christopher not married; Peggy married to Donald Chisholm; Mary died not married; Catherine married to Mr. MacIntyre, of Cape Breton; Ann married to John MacDonald (became mother of Dr. J. J. MacDonald, New Glasgow); Ellen married to James Ross; Jessie married to Angus MacLean.

There were several families of MacRae's at St. Joseph's.

Murdock (Yintail) came in 1811. He married, with issue: Alexander; Duncan married; Donald, and a daughter married to brother of Bishop Fraser.

Duncan, son of Murdock, married, with issue: Farquhar died young; Donald married to MacDonald (Alex); James married to Miss Fraser; John married to Miss MacDonald, daughter of John; daughter married to Hugh MacDonald, Beaver; daughter married to Angus Fraser. Donald, son of Duncan, son of Murdock, married Miss MacDonald, with issue: Alex died, not married; daughter married to Donald MacLean.

MANSON (LOCHABER)

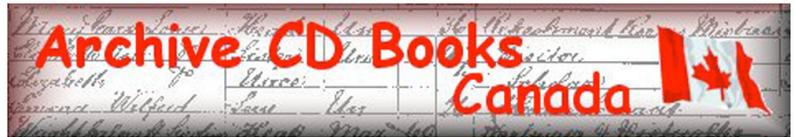
Alexander Manson came to Halifax, N.S., from the County of Wick, in Scotland, early in the nineteenth century. He was married to Jean Waters, and had issue of two children, John and Ellen. From Halifax they removed to Sherbrook, and took up a grant of land at Stillwater, about four miles from that place. At Stillwater were born the following members of their family: George, Gilbert

CHAPTER XIX

THE FRENCH OR ACADIAN DISTRICT, TRACADIE

THERE is a tradition among the old folk that the village of Tracadie derived its name from Jacques Tracady, the captain of a crew who in early times called in the harbour for the purpose of buying cordwood. But the more probable opinion is that the name is a modification of the old name "Acadie" with the prefix Tr. Although I am not able to fix the significance of that prefix, the fact that the same name of Tracadie has been given to an Acadian settlement in New Brunswick and to the Acadian settlement in Prince Edward Island seems to place beyond doubt the origin of the name Tracadie.

The islands in the harbour of Tracadie were thickly settled by the Indians before the white man ever took possession of the place or came around its shores. The beauty of the groves and their convenience to sea and land would have rendered them a sort of happy hunting ground to the red man. Heaps of human bones, old coins, and various kinds of wooden utensils found on these islands bear witness to the prior Indian settlement. The earliest permanent French or Acadian settlement in Tracadie in our county may be safely dated about the year 1776. A sentence from Brown's *History of Cape Breton* seems to account for the presence of Acadians on the eastern coast of Nova Scotia a few years previous to that date. Brown says that in the year 1768 a number of Acadians came back from St. Pierre and Miquelon, "and settled in the Isle Madame, and on the eastern coast of Nova Scotia". The eastern coast of Nova Scotia in that statement seems to point to Havre au Boucher, and the shore along St. George's Bay. If that be so, the early settlement of that part of the county goes back to the year 1768. A date like that, taken from a well-considered historic account, is more trustworthy than the mere oral tradition of dates found among the old folk of the country. In his *History of Nova Scotia*, Haliburton states that at the time the soldiers of the Nova Scotia regiment made their first settlement in Antigonish, there were a few families of Acadians at Pomquet, Tracadie, and Havre au Boucher, whose descendants



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