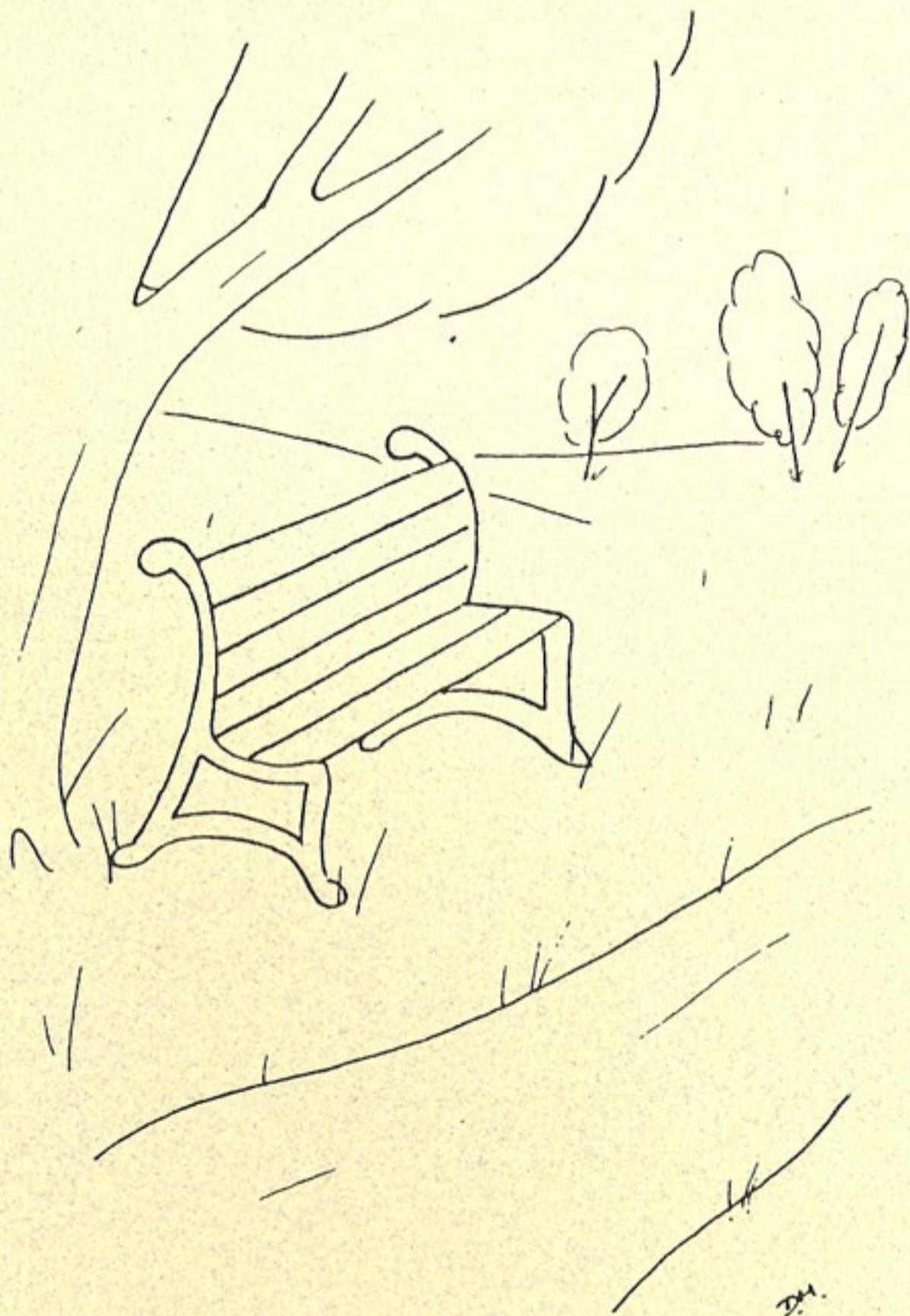


# Parks of the Miramichi



# **Parks of the Miramichi**

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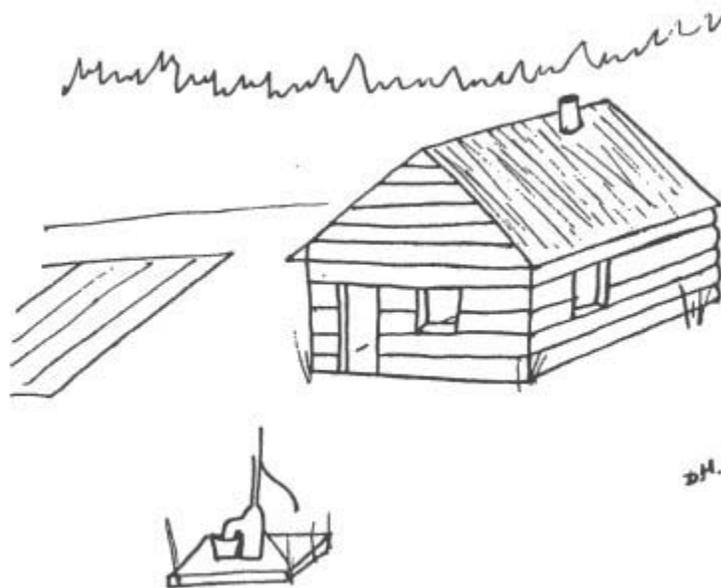
# PARKS OF THE MIRAMICHI

## THE ENCLOSURE (WILSON'S POINT)

### CHAPTER I

In the beginning, the Enclosure, or Wilson's Point as it is also known, was part of the land given to Nicholas Deny in 1653. Nicholas Deny and his son, Richard, were two of the first settlers at the Point. It was Richard Deny, his son, who built the fort on the Enclosure. When Nicholas died in 1688, all the settlers who had come with him moved away and were forgotten.

Wilson's Point was first known as Beaubear's Point. It was called after a man named Boishebert. He was the leader of all the French settlers in Acadia. In 1755, thirty-five hundred of these French settlers moved to the Miramichi. Some of them settled on Beaubear's Point.



French Settler's Cabins

In 1760, Commander Byron destroyed the French village on Beaubear's Island. The English ships stopped the French ships from bringing food up the river to them. Many of these settlers died from sickness and want of food. As many as eight hundred of them died and were laid to rest on the piece of land known as Beaubear's Point.

This ended the French settlements on Beaubear's Point. In 1765, William Davidson of Scotland, was given a large piece of land along the Miramichi River. Part of this land was Beaubear's Point. The town of Newcastle was to be built on this land. Also, the very end of the land was to be saved for a Church. Miramichi was to be the name of the town. But, it was thought the name would be too hard to spell. In 1785, the first Sheriff of Northumberland thought of the name, Newcastle.

## CHAPTER II

When William Davidson was first given the land, he was going to start a fishing industry. He was led to believe that the farming industry would not be important. During the American Revolution, Davidson and his workers went to the Saint John Valley. When he returned, he found he had lost the land known as Beaubear's Point. The government had taken it back. They gave it to the thousands of Loyalists then coming into New Brunswick. This was to be the start of the farming industry. This was now the second industry to be started.

In 1785, a Loyalist called, John Willson, was given a lot of land on Beaubear's Point. By 1787, he had cut the trees from one acre of land. Although the very end of the land was saved for a church, there was no record of it from 1765 to 1785. It was believed that shortly after 1791, the first Presbyterian Church was built at Beaubear's Point. Services were held often there until 1827 or later. The Reverend John Urquhart was the first minister. He held services at Beaubear's Point from 1880 to 1814, when he died. In 1838, the church at the point was put up for sale. It was not used for some time before it was put up for sale.



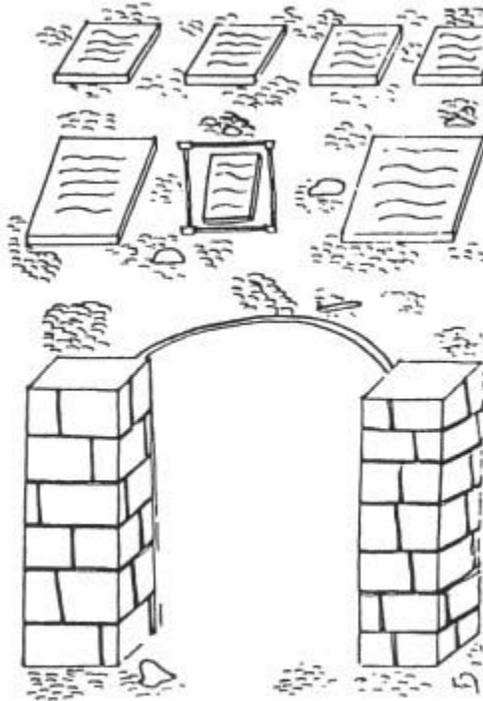
Church at the Point

### CHAPTER III

Beaubear's Point was sometimes known as the Point of the Miramichi. It was called Wilson's Point after John Wilson started a boat-crossing service there. This was not the same Wilson as John Willson, the Loyalist. The two Wilson families were not relatives. The Loyalist Willson left the land around 1794. The Point got its name from Wilson the boatman.

Today Wilson's Point is known as the Enclosure. If you were to go to the Enclosure today, you would find a Provincial Park. If you look around, you will find gravestones. These are of the first English and French-speaking settlers along the Miramichi. Also, on Wilson's Point or the Enclosure you would find what is left of the first Presbyterian Church. All that is left is a low stone wall, believed to be the base of the church.

When the land was being cleaned up after World War II, parts of a wall and pieces of glass were found inside this base. These pieces were thought to be from the first church.



Cemetery at the Point.

Lovely little roads lead you around these places. From the end of Wilson's Point you can see Beaubear's Island. It is only a stone's throwaway. Beaubear's Island was one of the first French settlements on the Miramichi.

In the next chapter, you can read about another of the Miramichi's Provincial Parks. It is known as Middle Island.

## MIDDLE ISLAND CHAPTER IV

Although Middle Island was likely formed by Mother Nature, there are many tales about it. All of them are said to be “Old Wives’ Tales.”

About a mile inland from Middle Island is a lake. It is called simply, The Lake. This lake is said to look exactly like Middle Island. One story tells how the Devil made Middle Island and The Lake at the same time. The story says that the Devil in a fit of anger, took a piece of ground and threw it in the river. This piece of ground made Middle Island and the Lake at the same time.

Another story tells how Leprechauns moved the soil around to make Middle Island and The Lake. The last story tells of a huge man who stepped on the soft ground and went down into it. His weight caused the ground to come up as Middle Island. His footprint is said to have made The Lake.

It is not known how the island got its name. On December 20, 1830, Adam Dixon Shirreff was given the land. He used it for a Mackerel and Packing Industry. When the industry died out, he gave the island to Henry Cunard on May 1, 1835. Henry then gave Middle Island to his brother Joseph on December 12, 1838.



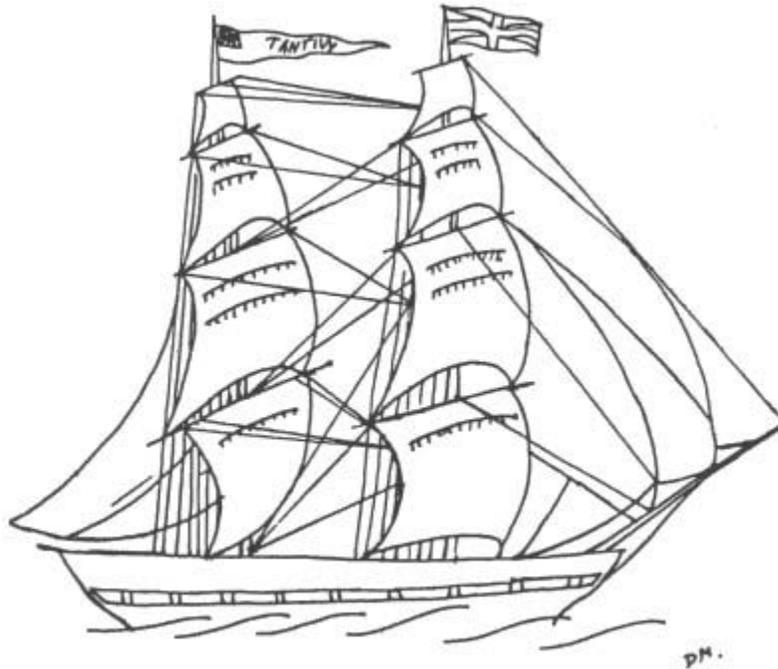
Tale of giant making Middle Island.

## CHAPTER V

In Ireland during the 1840's, a potato famine took place. The famine caused many of the Irish to move to Canada. They hoped to get enough food to support their families.

Many lived through the famine only to die crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Many of the people were sick and hungry. These people were crowded into ships without food. The famine had left them weak and hungry. Sickness broke out throughout the famine-weakened people.

In May of 1847, a ship arrived on the Miramichi. Many of the people on the ship were sick. To keep these people from the rest of the Miramichi, they put them on Middle Island.

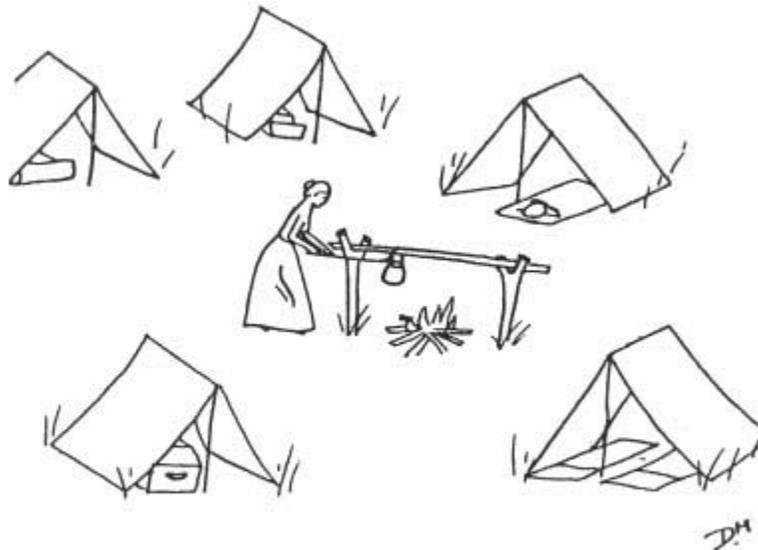


Ship with sick going to Middle Island.

Soon another ship was headed toward the Miramichi. It also was loaded with sick people. When this ship had left Europe it had four hundred and sixty-seven people on board. One hundred and seventeen of these people died crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Another one hundred were very sick.

Joseph Cunard, who owned Middle Island, gave it to be used as a place for these people to stay until they were well. When the ship, the "Loostauk", arrived in June, 1847, one hundred people on board were sent to Middle Island.

The first fifty people who had arrived in May were cared for in tents. With more sick people arriving, the tents were not enough. It was decided the people should use the fishcuring buildings that already were there. These buildings had been left behind by A.D. Shirreff.



Tents in which sick were cared for.

Life was very hard on the island. The buildings were cold. You could see daylight through the cracks in the walls. Many of the people who died on Middle Island were laid to rest there. Dr. John Vondy looked after the sick there. He died on the island from the same sickness of the people. He was laid to rest in St. Paul's Cemetery in Bushville.

Many of the children on the island were given homes by the people of the Miramichi when their parents died. Some of these children never knew the names of their real parents.

## CHAPTER VI

For many years, the graves on the island were looked after by the people who lived nearby. As the years passed, the graves were sadly forgotten. There is no exact record of the number of deaths which took place on the island.

Around 1964, the river uncovered part of a grave on the east end of Middle Island. The body found was that of Hans Holden, a Norwegian sailor, of the Ship "Lilly." This ship came to the Miramichi around July 1, 1899. The ship left two sailors on Middle Island. These sailors were very sick. One of the sailors went to the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Chatham for treatment. He recovered. The other sailor, Hans Holden, was not so lucky. He died on the island at the age of fifty-three and was laid to rest on July 4, 1899. Records kept by doctors who served on the island may be seen at the Chatham Museum.



Hans Holden's Grave.

Today, Middle Island, like the Enclosure, is a Provincial Park. In the summer, the sounds of people laughing and swimming in the Miramichi River can be heard from both these Provincial Parks. These are just two of the places people come to visit on the Miramichi. The people of the Miramichi also enjoy these beautiful Provincial Parks.



## WORD LIST

sailors

settlers

industry

Acknowledgement:

The information for this book was taken from several different articles from a book on the history of the Miramichi from Miramichi Valley High School.