

# ROAD REPORT OF 1860

## RECORD OF PROGRESS

### Interesting Sidelight on Development of Harvey Highway Communications.

From a blazed trail through the woods to a rocky path just wide enough for the passage of a team; thence to the turnpike, then to the province-supported dirt roads, and at last in our own time to pavement. This has been the history of thoroughfares in New Brunswick during the past century.

When the settlers of Harvey first followed the route of what is now the Hanwell road, they marked their path by chipping bark from trees along the way. A journey to Fredericton was a day's tramp for most, and taking a team of horses over the route was unthinkable. Today Harvey Station is situated on one of the main highways, supported by the province, the Fredericton-St. Stephen road, and hundreds of automobiles pass through the community daily.

To follow year by year this development in road building would be impossible, but an interesting glimpse of the slow but ever-progressive manner in which it took place is shown by the following excerpt from the sixth annual report of the Chief Commissioner of Public Works for the year 1860. The report was made to His Excellency the Honorable John Henry Thomas Manners-Sutton, Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Province of New Brunswick, after whom the parish in which Harvey is located was named:

"From Fredericton to St. Andrews, 78 miles. The state of the road is now better than at any time heretofore, and all the bridges with one exception, are in good order. The long approach to Digdeguash Bridge has been finished at a cost of 38 pounds, and is deemed a great improvement on the previous facility at this point. Six other bridges have been repaired at a total cost of 28 pounds 3s.

"An extent of 3,128 rods of the road has been turnpiked at a cost of 147 pounds 11s. 6d., and 484 rods have been gravelled at a cost of 20 pounds and 17s. 6d.; 27 new culverts or cross-

drains have been made at a cost of 16 pounds 8s. 4d., and such general repairs as were most required have received attention.

"The old portion of the bridge at Johnstone's Cove is so far defective as to require immediate care, and its renewal will probably be necessary in the course of the ensuing summer.

### Old Letters Found That Reveal Facts About Early Life

Even from the beginning of time, it would seem, the roads and their condition have attracted the attention of the inhabitants of the country. If one is to judge by a letter written in the Manners Sutton Parish as far back as 1854. Interest in roads at this time, however, was probably prompted by more vital necessity than exists today, for the people of that time were almost completely dependent on the towns and villages situated on the waterways for their supplies, and passable roads were more than a convenience, they were an absolute necessity.

Interesting sidelights are thrown upon the conditions of the times and the work carried on by the early dwellers in the following letters, obtained from Brockway and taken from the correspondence of Lieutenant-Colonel Vail who was in charge of the barracks there. It is interesting to note that the Harvey, Lake George and Brockway districts were at this time collectively called Magaguadavic, a name which still lives in Magaguadavic Lake.

#### Letter On Roads.

Magaguadavic,

March 15th, 1854.

Sir: I have to travel the road from here to Fredericton very frequently on business. I find grants for the great road have not been expended as I think they should have been. I have some experience and I trust some judgment in road making and it is the wish of many of the settlers between this place and Town that I should apply for the situation of supervisor. I therefore request you will submit this to the Governor and Council and I further request that I may be tried for one year as supervisor when I trust the Government will see good cause to continue me longer.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

(Signed) SOLOMON VAIL.

#### Another Road Letter.

The following is another letter written eight years earlier also dealing with the roads.

Fredericton, N. B.

April 2, 1846.

Dear Daughter: I wish to ask Solomon to write me word how the road is between your house and St. Andrews by the next mail, whether I can go all the way with wheels. I expect the House will break up to-morrow