

narrowness of the river. Wave action may also explain the disappearance of dikes in some parts of the river below Mt. Stewart.



*Phragmites*

Cattle have sometimes erased evidence with their cloven hooves. Heavy vegetation such as giant reed grass (*Phragmites*), cattail (*Typha*), or burr-reeds (*Sparganium* sp.) sometimes mask the evidence.

It is 234 years since the dikes have seen any maintenance by their builders.

Mr. J.A. Macdonald of Cherry Hill whose ancestors came to the Cherry Hill area in 1772 (oral) told Kent and Steves, that the dikes had been maintained by the early settlers of the English period but by 1900 they had been completely abandoned. He explained that a large abideau was incorporated in the Mt. Stewart bridge about 1900. This made maintenance of the dikes unnecessary.

The Acadians constructed a system of dikes above Mt. Stewart that stretched for four and a quarter miles. I would not care to estimate the miles of ditches they dug. The dikes ran from the railroad bridge to the lower side of the big S on the north side of the river and from the railroad bridge to the upper side of the big S on the south side of the river. They also ran in the larger tidal creeks a certain distance. These creeks were situated on the first mile of river above the railroad bridge. Starting at the railroad bridge on the north side of the river the list starts with the Mill creek then Muddy creek, Bambrick creek, and St. Andrews creek, with Allisary creek on the south side.

Why did they go no further with the dikes than the big S on the main river? This is a good question. The marsh was ditched beyond these points. Possibly they were interrupted by the conquest, but a description of their methods states they built the dikes before they had done any ditching.

The large creek above there is the Tannery creek, that has its headwaters at the medicinal spring, the Grande Source of the Acadians. When Colonel Louis Franquet arrived by boat in front of the Tannery creek in 1751 he gave us an eyewitness account of what he saw.

"A house that assumed the duties of an inn because of its location was run by the Widow Gentile" (Spelled the Widow Genty in the 1772 census of the Island.). The house was located on the banks of the Tannery creek which he described

"Immediately under the dwelling in a miniature estuary, through which when the tide was low, in a bed worn in the slime, ran the limpid waters of a great spring that lay at some distance in the woods".

The next day before resuming his journey he admired the grains growing on the cleared upland surrounding the marsh. The road to St. Peters Harbour, his destination, was so rough that no one would ride the old fashioned choutte dragged along by two stout oxen. They would rather walk, only venturing on the choutte to cross the unbridged creeks and streams.

The meager evidence surviving would seem to suggest the Acadians had great respect for the volume of water flowing down the Tannery river from the Grande Source.

Why were there no dikes here? At this late date we may never know.

While there are no dikes here on the edge of the marsh there is a different structure. It is about a foot or so high and twelve feet wide. It