

Apple River, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia – 2012 Tide Mill Discoveries in Canada

This community is located on two sides of the Apple River, a small river which widens dramatically to produce a large, shallow tidal harbour facing Chignecto Bay, an arm of the Bay of Fundy. The river and harbour are bordered by extensive tidal salt marshes, protected by Cape Capstan to the east and a long sand bar to the west. The two sides of the river are known as East Apple River and West Apple River. Apple River is located on Route 209 and one of the communities that form the Fundy Shore Ecotour.

History:

The early settlement dates from the United Empire Loyalist migration after the American Revolution. Around 1783 several Loyalist families from the United States settled at Apple River including Robert Dove, Hugh Pudsey and Joseph Elderkin. An early lighthouse keeper was John Fowler (1785-1866) who is buried in Apple River.

- * Lumber was the main industry in the 19th century which led the community to grow until the local stands were exhausted.
- * At least 14 vessels were built at Apple River between 1845 and 1909.
- * No early watermill is recorded, but, early records are far from complete and further research in 2013 may assist.

As in many parts of the world, the effects of rising sea level and climate change are noticeable in Nova Scotia. Here in the Fundy region the land is sinking at about 3 cm per ten years over the past 100 years. Referred to as isostatic rebound, following the last glacial withdrawal. These figures are similar to those published for the greater Thames Estuary area in the UK. Increasing melted Polar Sea ice in recent years is simply compounding the rate of sea rise generally.

The remains of an old water powered sawmill site has been investigated by Kerr Canning in the south inlet of the town, close by the westward Apple River Road crossing. This site found by modern water erosion is within the tidal marshland limits and would appear to have had a secondary freshwater input.

Kerr is keen to progress research at this site and to that end has contacted molinologists in Europe, England and USA in an attempt to resolve this mill and its history. Bud Warren of the Tide Mill Institute based in Maine, has stepped in and provided much practical assistance with comparisons in the many tidal lumber mills located in the New England States. John Boucher in England has also provided much feedback and advice with comparison site details elsewhere.

It is believed that the located mill was in the hands of Joseph Elderkin as recorded in a road name not far from the mill site.

David Plunkett.

See *the Tide Mill Times* on line for

photographs: www.tidemillinstitute.org