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A. F. Church and His County Maps This is the 100th anniversary of the completion of an extraordinary map project—the county maps of Nova Scotia prepared and published by Ambrose F. Church. They are maps that can be read with as much pleasure and interest as you might read a book. They tell who owned the land in the period from around 1865 to 1888—the period (despite the printed dates) the maps were actually published. They tell where the wharves and schools and churches were, who carried on business, who had the fish houses and the lobster factories, and which way the road turned then. They indicate how self-contained many communities once were, with perhaps a butcher, a carpenter, a wheelwright, etc. These are large maps, two sheets to a county—and they are all available. See the end of this article for information about how to obtain these maps. The following text is taken from an article by the late C. Bruce Fergusson, a native of Port Morien and a former Provincial Archivist of Nova Scotia. He has gathered here what little is known about Ambrose F. Church. We have virtually nothing regarding Church's methods. It is said, for instance, that he got school children to participate; he went to the classrooms and got them to fill in maps, showing where each of them lived. The map illustrations here are taken from A. F. Church's county maps. 'Geography is about maps, But biography is about maps.' These words of Edmund Clerehew Bentley may fittingly serve to introduce a cartographer whose maps should guarantee his being remembered. The name of Ambrose F. Church is seen on a series of topographical township maps of the counties of Nova Scotia, as well as on other maps, but the man himself is otherwise virtually unknown. Nevertheless his handsome maps of the counties of Nova Scotia, with their insets of Nova Scotia and adjacent provinces, their plans of the various townships, and their names of residents, which were produced between 1865 and 1888, continue to receive a good deal of attention. Justice to his memory and a proper appreciation of his work seem to warrant at least a biographical sketch. Feeling that such a sketch was signally desirable, the writer was amazed at how little information was generally available. He tried to locate persons who remembered Mr. Church. He consulted directories, he perused a variety of records, and he endeavoured to discover descendants. The search extended from Halifax to Bedford, from Portland, Maine, to Washington, D. C., and from Montevideo to Rio de Janeiro to Maryland. Although dubious material is sometimes gleaned from failing memories or from the vivid imaginings of childhood partially recalled after the lapse of many years, nevertheless the writer is indebted to two or three elderly residents of Bedford, Halifax County, Nova Scotia, for bits of information and useful clues. He is also grateful to individuals in the United States and South America including Harold A. Church, grandson of Ambrose F. Church, the subject of this account. According to those persons who remember him when he resided in the Ten Mile House at Bedford, Nova Scotia, Ambrose F. Church was a bearded, short, rather stout sort of man who always wore a beaver hat. He was a respected resident of Nova Scotia for many years, and he retained his United States



citizenship. Looked upon as being quite learned, Church is described as being a very quiet man who kept much to himself and who was somewhat eccentric. He is said never to have emptied the teapot until it was too full of leaves to take water. It is told about him that he used to eat half a pound of nuts after meals, that he used to put flypaper on his head in the house, and that he sometimes slept with a revolver under his pillow. He is also said to have carried a sextant in a wheelbarrow while surveying, and he is credited with having planted the willows along the road at the front of his property in Bedford. What Manner of Man His grandson corroborates, in a general way, the description of the physical appearance of Ambrose F. Church. "He was," the grandson writes, "of rather small stature, like all of us, wore black shoes, white pants, a black coat of some kind of thin shiny material, long white whiskers and a Panama hat." This description is appropriate for the later years of the man who had previously been photographed by Notman and whose photograph was lent to the writer by Ambrose F. Church's grandson. One gentleman in Bedford said that Ambrose F. Church eventually went to Rio de Janeiro with his son Harold because he could not go back to the United States as he was a deserter from the United States army. If there is any truth at all in this statement, it has not been authenticated, and there is apparently no record of any military service for Ambrose F. Church in the National Archives, Washington, D. C. However, the story as told to the writer is that one day on a march Church was ordered by an officer to put out a cigar which he was smoking; this he refused to do and in order to avoid the consequences,