

**Blockhouses in Canada, 1749–1841:
A Comparative Report and Catalogue**
by Richard J. Young

Gaspé, 1760–1867
by David Lee





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Prepared by the National Historic Parks and Sites
Branch and published under the authority
of the Hon. John Fraser, PC, MP,
Minister responsible for Parks Canada
Ottawa 1980
Design Management: Eric Plummer
Design: Eiko Emori

Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History
will be published as papers become available. Manuscripts may be
submitted to Chief, Research Division, National Historic Parks and Sites
Branch, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1A 1G2.

Articles appearing in this series are abstracted and indexed in
Historical Abstracts and/or *America: History and Life*.

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Cover: Eighteenth-century blockhouse, Fort Edward, Windsor, Nova Scotia. (*Watercolour by Max Sutherland.*)

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Available in Canada through authorized bookstore agents and other bookstores, or by mail from the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, Hull, Quebec, Canada K1A 0S9.

En français ce numéro s'intitule *Lieux historiques canadiens: cahiers d'archéologie et d'histoire*, n° 23 (n° de catalogue R61-2/1-23F). En vente au Canada par l'entremise de nos agents libraires agréés et autres librairies, ou par la poste au: Centre d'édition du gouvernement du Canada, Approvisionnement et Services Canada, Hull, Québec, Canada K1A 0S9.

Catalogue No.: R61-2/1-23

ISBN: 0-660-10298-6

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No.: 70-103875

QS-7093-000-EE-A1

Price Canada: \$10.00

Price other countries: \$12.00

Price subject to change without notice.

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Abstract

This report is a preliminary study of blockhouses in Canada for the period 1749 to 1841. In Part I, the author briefly describes the origins of the blockhouse and, using seven of these defensive structures which span the era of blockhouse construction in British North America, compares their structural details. The remainder of Part I describes, within an historical framework, the varying functions of blockhouses in their defensive roles. Part II is an alphabetical catalogue of blockhouses in Canada, each accompanied by relevant documentation.

Submitted for publication, 1969, by Richard J. Young, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Halifax.

Preface

This report is based on 15 months of archival research undertaken for the National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. The nature of the subject matter being so vast and consequently the prospects for further research seemingly endless, it was agreed that a preliminary report should be prepared from existing research notes. It must be emphasized that the blockhouses described in the first part and listed in the second part of the report are not all the blockhouses built in Canada. This paper is intended to provide an outline or approach to the study of blockhouses in Canada for the period 1749–1841.

Dealing with the research notes on over 100 blockhouses constructed during a century presented two serious problems. First, despite the common subject matter, the material was not sufficiently homogeneous for a tightly analytical treatment. Second, the blockhouses were so numerous, so separated in time and place, that a controlled narrative was equally unrealistic. Compromise on both sides seemed to be the only alternative. The result was an attempt to compare, organize and catalogue the blockhouses.

The first chapter, "Origins," briefly describes the use of the blockhouse as a defensive structure in the early North American colonies. The second chapter compares the structural elements of seven representative blockhouses. These seven span the whole era of blockhouse construction in British North America. They differ sufficiently in shape, size, disposition and construction methods that the survey ought to identify the main physical types. In the remainder of the first part of the report, blockhouses have been loosely organized into their varying functional defensive roles. These are arbitrary classifications, but ones which the research seemed to suggest; hopefully they will provide a useful second means of comparative study.

The second part of the report is an alphabetical catalogue of blockhouses in Canada, each accompanied by relevant documentation.

Part I A Comparative Study

Origins

The origins of the blockhouse are obscure. The English word "blockhouse" probably derives from the German *Blochaus* which means "a house which blocks a pass." Whether the *Blochaus* in any way resembled what, in North American terms, the blockhouse became, is uncertain. Northern Europeans were familiar with horizontal log construction from ancient times, and undoubtedly used it in defensive works. It is unclear how the knowledge of such construction came to the American continent.

Harold Shurtleff, in his book *The Log Cabin Myth* (originally published in 1822), dispelled forever the popular American legend that the original English settlers used horizontal log construction for their houses. The first pioneers built what they had traditionally known in England – the frame house. Shurtleff declared that "all housing data for the Bay Colony that we have found points to the same sequence: temporary shelters such as dugouts, huts, wigwams, cabins, or cottages, followed by framed houses."¹ Log cabins were introduced to the North American continent by the Swedes and Finns who settled in Delaware in 1638. Pennsylvania became the centre from which the log cabin technique spread after the Germans began settling there in the 18th century.

The blockhouse form, according to Shurtleff, was the one instance of horizontal log construction with which the English were familiar. The Plymouth Pilgrims apparently had a blockhouse in their fort. John Pory, a former secretary of Virginia, described the fort in a letter to the Earl of Southampton in 1622. *And their industrie as well appeareth by their building, as by a substantial pallisado about their [settlement?] of 2700 foote in compasse stronger than I haue seene anie in Virginia, and lastlie by a blockhouse which they haue erected in the highest place of the towne to mount their ordinance upon, from whence they may commaund all the harbour.*²

Issack de Rasieres, Secretary of New Netherland, described the Plymouth blockhouse in more detail.

*Upon the hill they have a large square house, with a flat roof, built of thick sawn planks stayed with oak beams, upon the top of which they have 6 cannon, which shoot iron balls of 4 and 5 pounds, and command the surrounding country. The lower part they use for their church.*³

Shurtleff cautions against attaching any constructional significance to John Pory's word "blockhouse," claiming that Pory was referring to the purpose, not the type, of the building, and that it in fact "must have been framed with oak timber and walled with planking heavy enough to stop arrows."⁴

Shurtleff states that blockhouses were a "traditional type in English military engineering, and part of the general European technique of fortification,"⁵ but he gives no evidence to support this statement. English treatises on fortification of the early 18th century, when such treatises first began to appear, make no mention of blockhouses, although by that time the blockhouse was certainly in widespread use throughout the American colonies. These treatises were intended primarily to train engineers in the principles of extensive permanent fortification based on Vauban's system, an outgrowth of the continued development of the design and use of artillery. The English either were unaware of the blockhouse as a defensive structure, or considered it so rudimentary that it needed no description on the printed page. Also, until the middle of the 18th century, Britain had committed very few troops to the struggling American settlements and consequently had no experience constructing fortified outposts in the wilderness.

James Stanten, a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin, has been engaged in research on the architecture of the very early American colonies. His general thesis, which revises Shurtleff's conclusions somewhat, is that horizontal log construction, in the form of blockhouses and garrison houses, was developed in New England, independently of the Swedes in Delaware or the Germans in Pennsylvania. Stanten contends that the blockhouse and garrison house were indigenous responses to the wilderness conditions and defensive problems faced by the New England pioneers. This thesis may shed some interesting light on the evolution of the blockhouse form in the northern New England colonies. Unfortunately it was not available from the University of Wisconsin at the time of writing.

Though blockhouses were built in most of the American colonies in the 17th century, Shurtleff is probably correct when he states that "until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century the word blockhouse connoted defense, and not a particular type of construction."⁶ In the long series of French and Indian wars which were waged along the New England frontiers from 1670 to 1760, the familiar blockhouse form, as it was introduced to Canada, took shape. The frontiers were so vast and the methods of French and Indian guerrilla warfare so subtle that each exposed settlement needed one or more fortified posts or houses into which the inhabitants could retreat in case of sudden attack. In addition to blockhouses these fortified retreats often took the form of large horizontal log houses with overhanging upper storeys and loopholes. One family lived regularly in this garrison house, and in times of crisis the house was shared with other members of the community. Building a

small blockhouse or a large garrison house involved no great expense of time, money or labour once the techniques of cornering had been mastered. The French and Indians usually avoided such posts and houses because they proved a formidable defence against muskets and arrows.

Their ease of construction, their use of readily available materials, their simplicity and their strength were responsible for the spread of blockhouses through the American colonies and later through Canada. Once they grasped the idea of the blockhouse, pioneers, British engineers and other military men were quick to adapt it to their purposes.

After the fall of forts Beauséjour and Louisbourg and of Quebec, the British military took over responsibility for fortifications in the newly won territories. The single-family fortified garrison house did not appear in Canada. Because blockhouses were built by the army for purely military purposes, a certain standardization of form took place in their design, despite the fact that they were used in a wide variety of situations.

Seven Blockhouses: A Comparison of their Construction Details

This chapter is intended as a broad introductory survey of technical details of seven blockhouses for which there is the most construction information. These seven examples cover the whole period of blockhouse construction in Canada. They also represent a wide range of shapes, sizes, functions and defensive situations. The seven blockhouses to be compared are Fort Edward blockhouse, Windsor, Nova Scotia; Fort St. Joseph blockhouse, St. Joseph Island, Lake Huron; St. Andrews blockhouse (west blockhouse), St. Andrews, New Brunswick; the octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac, Quebec; The Narrows blockhouse on the Rideau Canal, Ontario; Fort Wellington blockhouse, Prescott, Ontario, and Madawaska blockhouse, near Edmundston, New Brunswick.

Historical Background

Fort Edward blockhouse, built in 1750 by Colonel Charles Lawrence on a rise of land near the junction of the Avon and St. Croix rivers, stood just within the main gate of a small stockaded fort. It survives as the oldest blockhouse in Canada.

Construction of Fort St. Joseph blockhouse was started in 1797; it was built after a design by Gother Mann, and stood in the centre of a square palisaded fort with bastions at all four corners. The whole fort was situated on the crest of the highest ground on the island and overlooked the south channel of the St. Mary's River.

St. Andrews blockhouse (west blockhouse) was built by the inhabitants of St. Andrews in 1812. It stood on a point of land at the western extremity of St. Andrews harbour. The blockhouse was built to support a battery raised a few months earlier to protect the town against American privateers.

The octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac, built in 1814 on a triangular piece of land bordered on two sides by the St. Lawrence River and on the third by the canal which bypasses the Coteau rapids, was supported on the landward side by a ditch, palisades, redans and two other blockhouses. The sides of the triangle were defended by picketing and earth works and a battery was raised at the point.

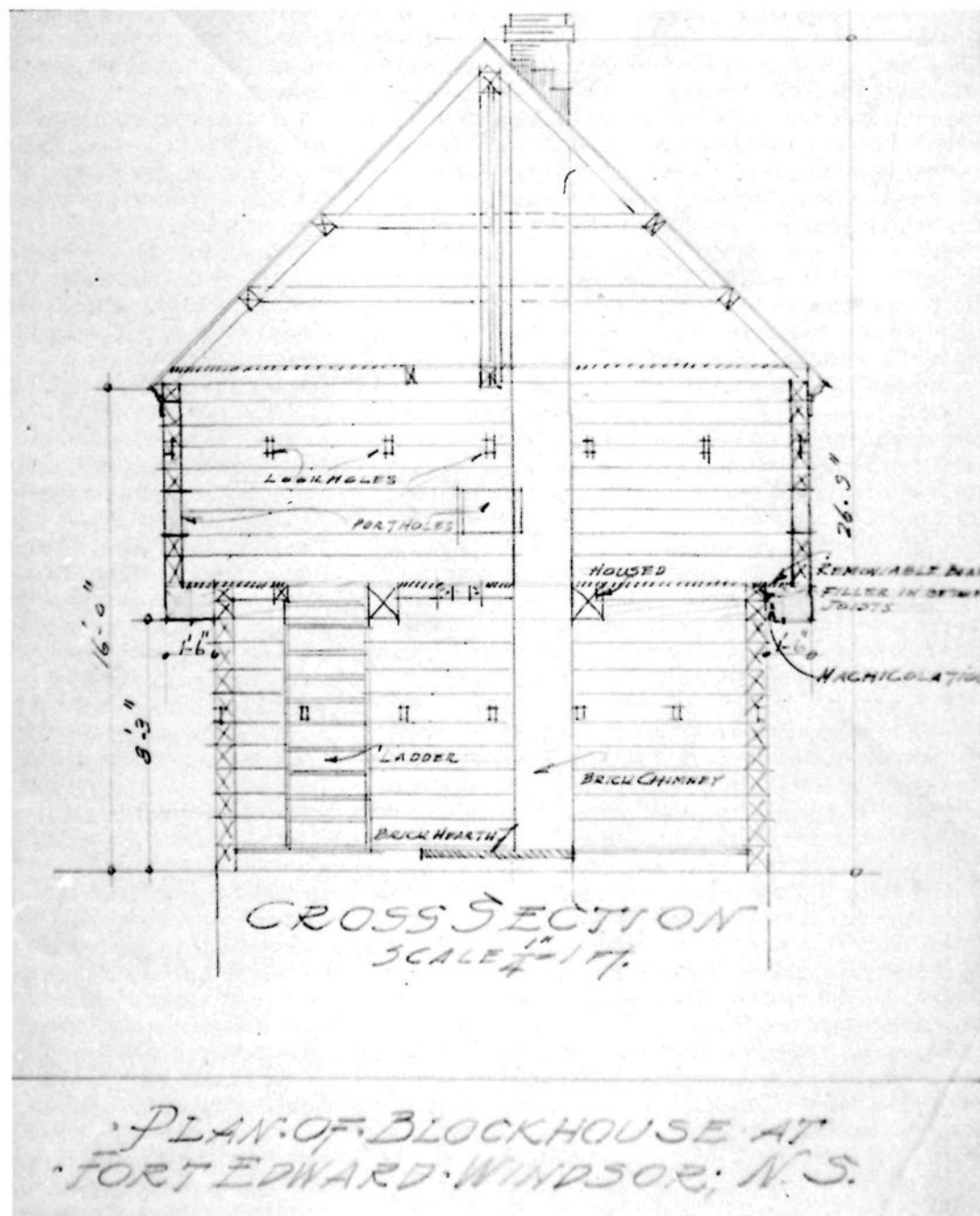
The Narrows blockhouse, which was built in 1831–32 as one of a series of fortifications protecting the Rideau canal, was located 70 feet south of lock no. 35 on the man-made causeway at the narrowest point in Rideau Lake, the top water level of the canal.

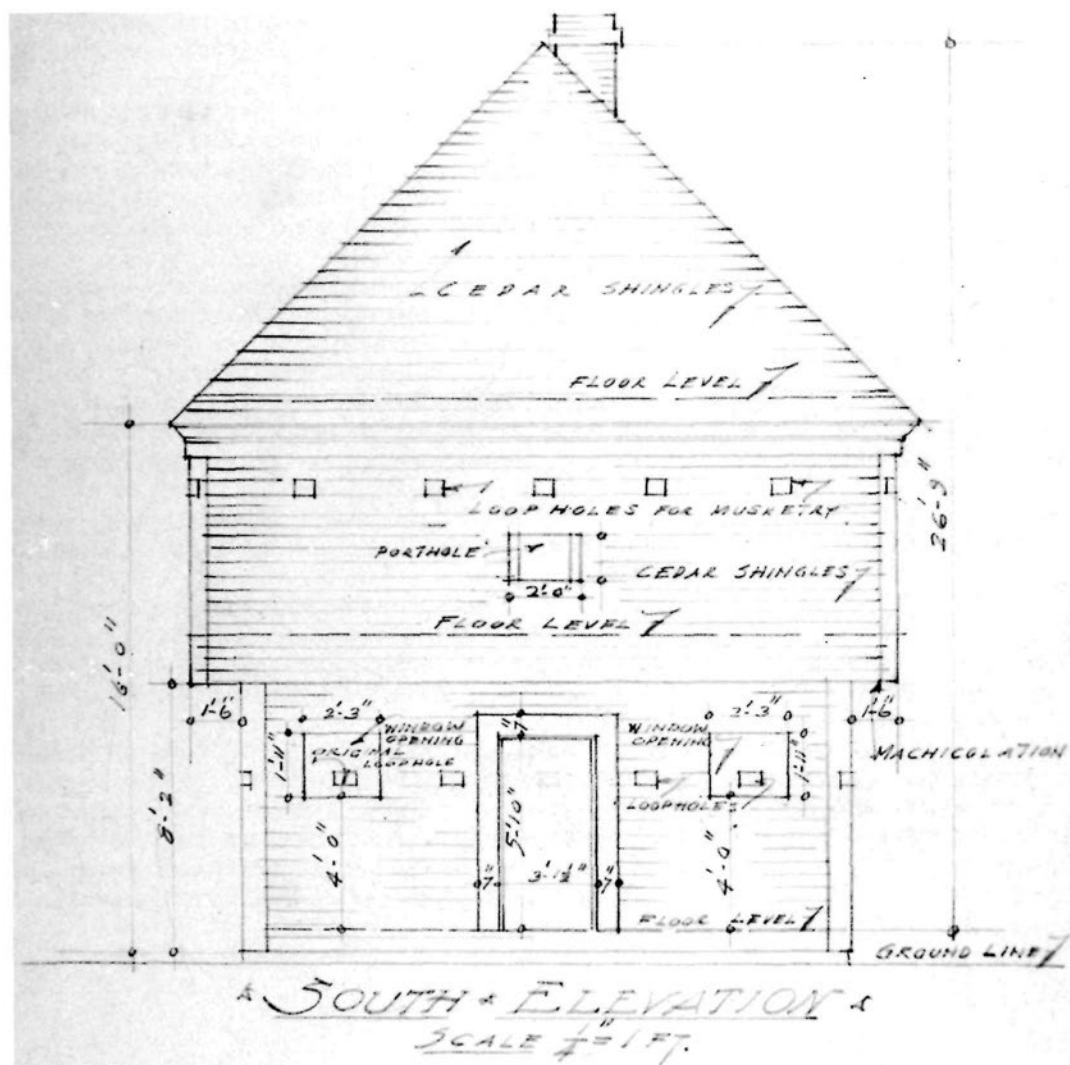
Fort Wellington blockhouse, built in 1838–39, was the largest and most elaborate blockhouse attempted in Canada. It stood in the middle of a large, strong earthen redoubt beside the St. Lawrence River.

The Madawaska blockhouse was built in 1841 at the confluence of the Saint John and Madawaska rivers. Situated on a rise of land due east of Little Falls on the Madawaska, it was built as a border post primarily to protect the portage route around the falls.

It is clear from the construction details available for these blockhouses that a certain sophistication of building techniques took place with the passage of time. Blockhouses grew bigger, were more solidly built and more carefully planned, especially after the War of 1812. An important consideration in any attempt to see an evolution in blockhouse construction over this period is the element of planning. Those blockhouses which were built in peace time, or were considered important enough to be designed by an engineer, or were built when adequate time and money were available, naturally showed the effects of such considerations. But the majority of the 200-odd blockhouses erected in Canada were built to fill an immediate need. They were hastily constructed for very temporary purposes with a minimum of time, labour and money. Such blockhouses were closer to the rude American origins of the structure. Few records and fewer examples of this type survive. The blockhouse built on the Madawaska River in 1841 was one of the last to be erected, and it was also one of the most carefully planned. If any blockhouse could be considered to represent an ideal, it would be this one. Its basement had stone walls three feet thick. Two partition walls two feet thick divided this first floor into two rooms which served as magazine and artillery stores, and a commissariat store with provisions for 100 men. The two upper storeys were composed of pine logs hewn to 15 inches square, dovetailed together at the ends and secured with hardwood dowels. The top storey was turned diagonally on the one below. The middle storey contained 24 wooden berths and was used primarily as a barracks. The top storey had curbs and blockings for traversing guns immediately behind each of the four port-holes. It was a well-planned and carefully built post. If lightning had not struck it in 1855, it might stand today as the best example of a blockhouse in Canada, and one of the most sophisticated blockhouses built in North America.

Some 82 years earlier, in 1759, Major Patrick Mackellar, an engineer stationed at Halifax, sent a proposal to the Board of Ordnance for blockhouses to be built at Halifax. If Mackellar's proposals had been accepted, his blockhouses would have





PLAN OF BLOCKHOUSE AT
FORT EDWARD WINDSOR N.S.

been identical to the Madawaska blockhouse, belying an evolutionary theory of blockhouse construction.

The posts of Dartmouth Fort Sackville and across the Isthmus I think might be much more secure with good Blockhouses than they are at present, especially for small parties, they would be better habitations, more Tenable and with a few annual Repairs, infinitely more durable. They should be built with the lower storey of masonry or even drystone if good. This Storey to be planned into small Magazines for provisions and powder and to be sunk in the ground with a Ditch and palisades round it, the two upper Storys to be of Logs Clap-boarded and Roofed as Houses are with a Stack & Chimney in the middle, The uppermost story to Lay Diagonally upon the middle one, and to project two or three feet over with a Machicouli in the projection, to Fire into the Ditch, and upon the Angles below.¹ Mackellar's proposal, even though it was never carried out, is good evidence that, even at the time of the early English settlement of Nova Scotia, engineers at least were aware of the utility of blockhouses and had clearly defined ideas about how to build good ones.

Form

The fact that engineers were not always permitted to build as they wanted or thought best did not alter the fact that blockhouses continued to be extensively used. There was, in the minds of engineers, most military men and local colonists, a fairly well-defined concept of what a blockhouse was and how it could be built. This concept was derived from the American colonial experience and was transferred to Nova Scotia and eventually to all of Canada by American emigrants and the British Army. In North America, blockhouses were usually distinguished by the following form: a single structure, two storeys high with an overhanging second storey, loopholes and portholes for ordnance, and machicolation in the overhang to permit defenders to direct a downward fire. It was this characteristic form which most blockhouses shared, with occasional modifications in shape, size and structural components, because of the idiosyncracies of individual builders and the demands of each local situation.²

Palisades

The first, fundamental defence of the blockhouse, whether it stood alone or in a larger defence system, was the palisading which surrounded it. Originally it was the palisades which determined that blockhouses had second storeys. The picketing which formed a palisade was usually composed of cedar posts

10 to 14 feet long, pointed sharply at the top. A trench was dug into the ground below frost level and the pickets lined into it, sometimes in double rows. Wooden stringers attached to the pickets by nails or pegs stabilized and strengthened the line. Loopholes were cut through the picketing, and occasionally platforms were constructed so defenders could fire over the top of the pickets. Ditches were dug outside the palisade to present an even more imposing obstacle to those attackers who might have succeeded in reaching them.

The Fort Edward blockhouse stood within a stockaded fort. The palisades, in this case, described the perimeter of the fort – a regular square 85 yards on each face, with bastions in the four corners. A ditch surrounded the picketing.

The Fort St. Joseph blockhouse also stood within a stockaded fort, a square with bastions in the corners. Platforms were built inside the bastions to mount cannon. A ditch surrounded the palisades, as in Fort Edward.

The St. Andrews blockhouse had a tall line of palisades connecting the blockhouse with the extremities of the breastwork, thus forming a sort of redan.

The octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac stood on a triangular piece of land bordered on two sides by the St. Lawrence River and on the third by the Coteau canal. The northwest side of this triangle, facing the river, was picketed as far as the battery which stood on the point.

Documentary evidence would suggest that there was no picketing at The Narrows blockhouse.

The Fort Wellington blockhouse stood in the centre of a strong redoubt built to withstand artillery fire. The palisades ran along the top of the high earthen ramparts; but palisading was of only secondary importance in the planning of this formidable redoubt.

There is no documentary evidence of palisades at the Madawaska blockhouse.

Walls

The walls of blockhouses were almost invariably built of hewn square timbers laid horizontally on each other. It was this thickness of wood which proved a relative security against musket balls and arrows. Long hardwood dowels or "tree nails" were pierced through adjoining logs at regular intervals to add strength. Small crevices between the timbers were caulked with a variety of materials. The interior walls were sometimes plastered, especially if any of the rooms inside were being used as barracks. The exterior walls were either clapboarded or shingled to prevent the rapid deterioration of the square timbers. If the

walls were not covered at the time the blockhouse was initially built, they were usually covered when time or money became available.

Those blockhouses along the Rideau canal which were built with stone lower storeys, the Fort Wellington blockhouse which was built entirely of masonry, except for the wooden gallery which ran along the outside of the third storey, and the Madawaska blockhouse, were exceptions in that they did not have square timber walls. These blockhouses were built in times of peace and were intended to be permanent fortifications; therefore more care was taken with their design and construction.

The walls of the Fort Edward blockhouse were pine square timbers, nine inches high and six inches thick, laid horizontally. The blockhouse was a relatively small one measuring 18 feet square in the lower storey. The fact that it was prefabricated in Halifax and carried overland to its destination may, perhaps, account for the relative lightness of the timbers. All the blockhouses used in the British conquest of Acadia were prefabricated like this one and carried by the troops to their respective posts. Smallness and lightness would have been an important consideration in the design of these buildings.

The walls of the Fort St. Joseph blockhouse were of hewn square timbers approximately 14 inches thick. This blockhouse and others built to the same specifications (at Amherstburg and Fort George) were intended primarily as defensible barracks and were very large – 26 feet by 96 feet. Single timbers of that length were, of course, unmanageable, and so logs of different lengths were married at irregular intervals. The internal arrangement of rooms and framing provided much-needed lateral support in these structures. Cedar shingles covered the exterior of the St. Joseph blockhouse, but were later replaced by sheet iron as fire prevention.

The walls of the St. Andrews blockhouse were hewn timbers 12 inches square. The exterior was covered with cedar shingles. This blockhouse measured 18 feet 6 inches square in the lower storey.

The walls of the octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac were of square timbers, laid horizontally on an octagonal plan.

The lower storey of The Narrows blockhouse was of stone masonry 30 inches thick and 10 feet high. Munitions were stored on this floor, which accounts for the thickness of the walls. The blockhouse was square, 24 feet on a side in the lower storey (exterior measurement). The second storey was built of hewn cedar logs 15 inches square.

The walls of Fort Wellington blockhouse were entirely of grey stone, hammer dressed. The lower two storeys had walls four feet thick; those of the third storey were two feet thick. The exterior measurement at the base of the blockhouse was 50 feet on a side.

The Madawaska blockhouse was three storeys high. The foundation rested on bedrock, so the basement (which was 7 feet high) was exposed. The walls of the basement storey were stone, three feet thick. The two upper storeys were of pine logs hewn 15 inches square, and were secured by strong hardwood dowels two feet long placed every three feet. The exterior of the first floor of the blockhouse measured 30 feet square.

Cornering

The knowledge of a variety of cornering techniques was integral to the development of horizontal log construction in the early American colonial period. In Canada there is little variation in such techniques in those blockhouses still extant. Only two cases seem to have deviated from the predominant dovetailing method of cornering.

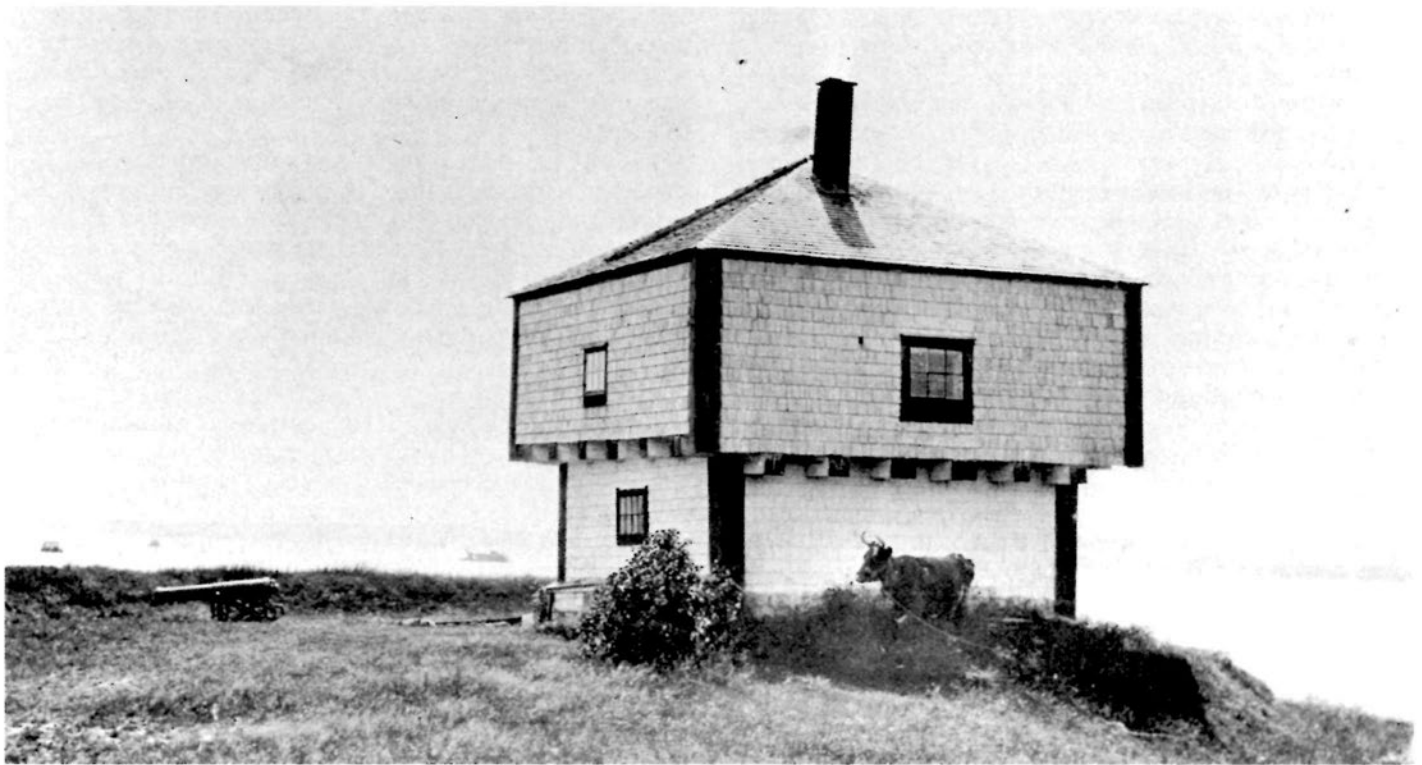
At Fort Edward blockhouse, the earliest for which there is any information, the timbers were simply halved at the ends and nailed together. This blockhouse and a number of early blockhouses built in Nova Scotia were prefabricated in Halifax and shipped with the troops as they established posts. Either the French (whom Governor Cornwallis employed to square the timber) were unfamiliar with the sophisticated methods of dovetailing or – more likely – it was thought that simply halving the ends of the timbers would facilitate the erection of the blockhouses when they reached their destinations.

The only other case where dovetailing seems not to have been used was the octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac. Here, Red River frame construction may have been used: the logs were laid horizontally but were mortised to vertical posts at the corners. This type of frame was used extensively in western Canada; the best example is the bastion blockhouse at Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Those blockhouses which had stone walls, of course, followed the whims and training of the professional masons who built them.

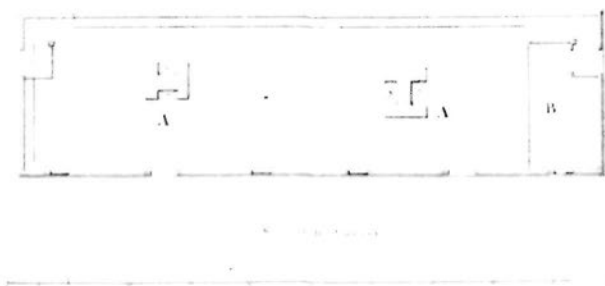
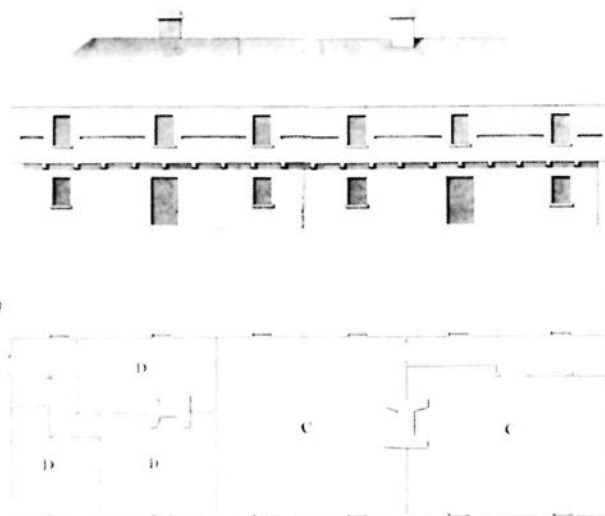
Overhang and Machicolation

Overhang and machicolation were archaic defence features, but ones which gave the blockhouse its distinctive form. The device of machicolation was a simple one derived from mediaeval fortification techniques, and made a good deal of sense in the early





*Gotther Mann
Architect 1796*



days of Indian warfare. Holes were cut through the floor of the overhanging upper storey so the defenders could direct a downward (or machicoulis) fire on an enemy who had breached the palisades and reached the blockhouse. The second storey thus provided a place of final retreat; it could conceivably have meant the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful defence of the post.

The second storey itself was an important feature of the blockhouse's defence. Because the second storey stood higher than the palisades, a garrison armed with muskets and a small amount of ordnance could direct a formidable fire in all directions. In some blockhouses the top storey was turned diagonally on the lower, thus reducing the amount of machicoulis fire which could be brought to bear, but allowing the total firepower of the blockhouse to be used more efficiently.

The Fort Edward blockhouse was built with an overhang of 17 inches on all four sides. Machicoulis fire could be directed by removing boards 11 inches wide which ran around the whole perimeter of the upper storey.

Fort St. Joseph blockhouse had an overhang of 18 inches around the perimeter of the building allowing machicoulis fire to be directed downward through loopholes cut through the floor of this overhang. Plugs were fitted into the loopholes when they were not in use.

The St. Andrews blockhouse had an overhang of two feet on all four sides. Loopholes were cut through this projection.

The octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac had an overhang of 18 inches on all eight sides. There is no information available on machicolation.

The Narrows blockhouse was built with a two-foot overhang around the perimeter of the second storey. Machicoulis fire could be directed through four portholes cut in the overhang located in the middle of each wall directly below the loopholes. The gunports consisted of a removable pine board 16 inches by 3 feet 4 inches by 2.5 inches thick.

The Fort Wellington blockhouse is the one instance of blockhouse construction in Canada in which the overhang was actually a separate gallery around the perimeter of the third storey. It was a framed wooden gallery three feet wide supported by huge stone corbels projecting from the top of the second storey. Eight doors led out to this gallery from the third-floor barrack area. Machicoulis fire could be directed through loopholes located between each set of corbels. Removable boards covered these loopholes when not in use.

The top floor of the Madawaska blockhouse was set diagonally on the lower. Machicoulis fire could be cut through the four projecting angles, where loopholes were cut along the base of the triangle formed.

Loopholes

Loopholes were cut through the walls of all blockhouses. The garrison could fire at assailants in the open area around the blockhouse without exposing themselves. Loopholes were splayed on the outside and toward the bottom to allow a defender a wide angle of fire.

The Fort Edward blockhouse had 23 single-rifle loopholes in the lower storey and 24 in the upper. The holes were 4.5 feet above floor level. Each loophole was cut and angled in such a way that lines drawn through the centres of all of them would meet in the middle of the blockhouse. This is an interesting feature and one which gave the blockhouse an effective 360-degree field of fire.

On the evidence of the available plans, there were no loopholes in the lower storey of the Fort St. Joseph blockhouse. The reconstructed blockhouse at Fort George, built on the same plan, does have loopholes in this storey. The second storey of the Fort St. Joseph blockhouse had loopholes which were long horizontal slits cut around the whole perimeter of the fort, centred between the portholes. A board, hinged above, covered the openings when they were not in use.

There is no information available on loopholes for the St. Andrews blockhouse.

There is some confusion from plans and later pictorial evidence concerning the octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac. It appears that in the first storey there were horizontal loopholes in each face on either side of the central windows. The second storey had long horizontal loopholes above the portholes in each bay. These would also have let out smoke when the cannon were fired.

There were no loopholes in the lower storey of The Narrows blockhouse since it was used for storing munitions and provisions; however, there were small ventilation ports. The second floor had one horizontal loophole 4 feet long and 4 inches high in each of the four sides. They may have had wooden plugs when not in use.

Single-rifle vertical loopholes were cut in the south and southwest walls of the ground floor of the Fort Wellington blockhouse. The magazine, armoury and storeroom on this first floor were ventilated. In the second storey, single-rifle vertical loopholes were cut through the stone, each splayed outward and

downward. Like the blockhouse at Fort Edward, all were angled in such a way that lines drawn through their centres would meet in the middle of the building. In the wooden gallery which formed the overhang on the blockhouse, the loopholes were six-inch square holes, 14 of them on each side, cut through the thin gallery walls.

The Madawaska blockhouse had eight horizontal loopholes, each eight feet long, separated by the four portholes. The same arrangement existed in each storey. The openings were filled with two-inch pine glazed sashes. Pine stoppers were hinged under the loopholes to reduce the opening when necessary.

Portholes and Ordnance

Portholes were cut in all blockhouses. They served the double function of gunports for ordnance to fire through and ventilation ports. The openings were splayed to allow guns to pivot in order to increase the field of fire. Portholes were ordinarily cut into the upper storey, since that floor projected above the palisades and any ordnance mounted would be most effective there. Large openings in the lower storey were usually cut higher in the walls and were intended as windows.

The Fort Edward blockhouse had four portholes in the upper storey, one in the centre of each side. The openings measured 1.0 feet 5.5 inches high and 1.0 feet 7 inches long. The bottom of each porthole was 1.0 feet 6.75 inches above the floor. The original ordnance consisted of four-pounders without carriages. Cornwallis was supplied with 40 of these guns for the blockhouses he contemplated. They probably rested on swivel mountings.

There were four large openings in the lower storey of the Fort St. Joseph blockhouse – undoubtedly windows. On the second storey there were six porthole-windows in each of the long sides and one in each of the short sides (located near the corner to provide light for the stairwells). Most likely these openings were simply windows for light and fresh air, since the upper storey was used as a barracks. The openings were 3 feet 9 inches above the floor and had ledges on the outside. Since there were guns mounted on platforms in the four bastions of the fort, it seems doubtful that anyone ever intended to mount ordnance in the blockhouse.

The St. Andrews blockhouse had two windows with side-hinged shutters, located in the side of the lower storey, facing the water. There were four portholes, one in the centre of each side, in the upper storey. The blockhouse mounted one four-pounder iron carronade on a standing wooden carriage.

The first floor of the octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac had openings two feet square in the centre of each face. They were three feet above the floor. Since this was a barracks room, these openings, with shutters hinged outside, were undoubtedly intended as windows. In the second storey was a rectangular porthole measuring 1.5 feet high by 4.5 feet long in each of the eight faces. These portholes were placed close to the floor. Since the blockhouse was apparently fitted up to mount a 24-pounder on a traversing platform on this floor, these openings were intended as gunports. The long slit above each porthole could serve as a loophole, and would also allow the smoke from the large gun to escape.

There were two portholes in the east, west and south walls and one in the north wall of The Narrows blockhouse. The north wall porthole retains the original dimensions – 33.5 inches long 26.5 inches high. The other portholes were later enlarged for windows. No information is available indicating what, if any, ordnance was mounted.

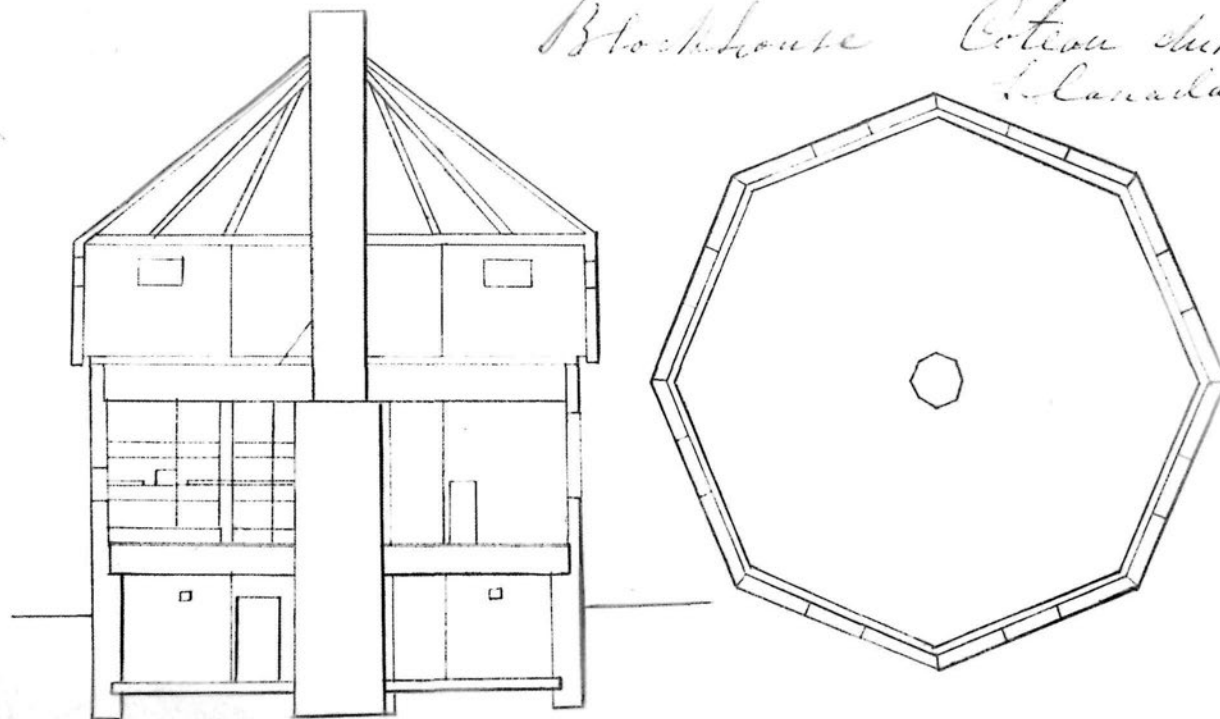
The four large openings on the second floor of the Fort Wellington blockhouse are quite high in the wall and suggest that there was no intention of mounting ordnance here. There are also windows in the gallery of the third storey. The 1838 specifications for the blockhouse instructed the contractor to make the windows in the French or English style, with two-inch-thick frames which were to be glazed.

There were four portholes, 2 feet 8 inches square, in the centre of each side of the top storey of the Madawaska blockhouse. There is no available information about the nature of the ordnance mounted. A plan of the blockhouse indicates curbs and blockings immediately behind each gunport, suggesting that a traversing gun was intended.

Roofs

All the blockhouses had pitched roofs, necessary (for obvious reasons) in the Canadian climate. The nature of these roofs was naturally determined by the shape of the underlying blockhouse. Square blockhouses – such as those at Fort Edward, St. Andrews, Fort Wellington, The Narrows and Madawaska – had pyramidal roofs. The king-post type of support was the rule in these cases, the king-post often reaching from the peak of the roof through two stories to the foundation. The long rectangular blockhouse at Fort St. Joseph had a hipped roof with queen-post truss support. The octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac had an octagonal hipped roof, with rafters spanning from each of the eight corners and the middle of each face, all bearing on the central chimney.

Blockhouse Coteau du Lac
Canada



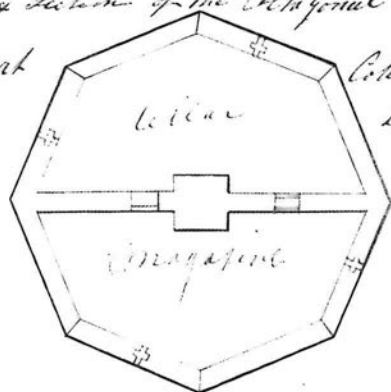
From a large block of the original
plans of the blockhouse.

[1823]

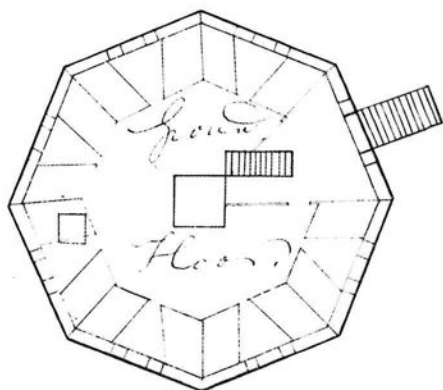
6 Plan and section of octagonal blockhouse, Coteau-du-Lac, 1823. (Public Archives of Canada.)

Plans & section of the Octagonal Blockhouse.

at

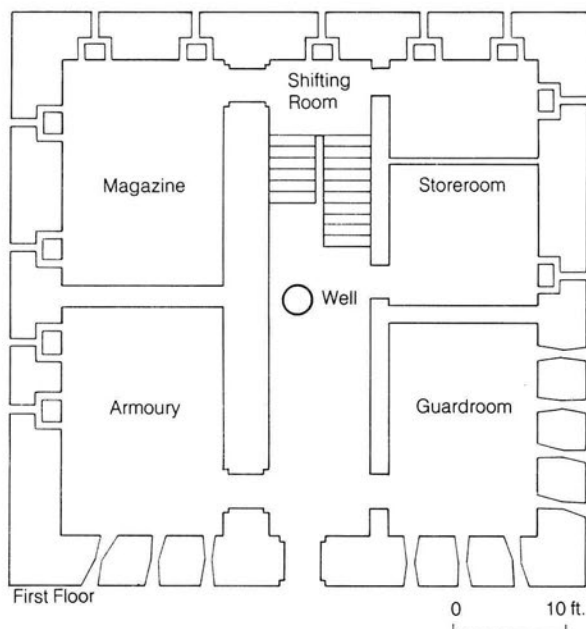


*Coteau du Lac
Lower Canada.*



From a Scrap Book of the Ordnance Office, Tower of London.

7 Fort Wellington, 1839 blockhouse. (Drawing by D. Ford from an original in the Public Archives of Canada.)



The roofs were usually covered with cedar shingles, although the blockhouses at Fort St. Joseph, Coteau-du-Lac and Madawaska had roofs covered with sheet metal. Fort Wellington had a tin-covered roof.

An attempt was made at Fort Wellington to make the roof splinter-proof by filling the space between the tie beams and the roof with a solid layer of nine-inch-thick cedar poles.

Flooring

The floors of the blockhouses were invariably laid with two-inch-thick softwood planking.

Heating

In the early period, blockhouses were heated by simple hearths or fireplaces. As stoves became more readily available in the late 18th century, these marvelous inventions were introduced. Most blockhouses had central brick chimneys and could be adequately heated with one or two stoves, although the larger ones (at Fort St. Joseph and Fort Wellington) needed more elaborate heating systems. At Fort St. Joseph, the blockhouse had two interior chimneys, each with two fireplaces on each floor, making a total of eight fireplaces in the two storeys. The blockhouse at Fort Wellington had two brick chimneys with a number of stoves feeding into them on all three floors.

Room Use and Interior Organization

Ideally, the blockhouse served best when it was designed as a self-sufficient defensible post – the magazine, armoury, storehouse and barracks all combined in a single building. Money, time and labour frequently made it necessary for blockhouses to serve all of these functions even when they were not designed to do so. They were so easy and cheap to construct, one of the more adaptable types of fortification, and had few limitations. In general the blockhouse was considered an extremely practical defense structure.

The Fort Edward blockhouse was the principal work inside Fort Edward. It was probably used only occasionally as barracks because the fort contained barracks sufficient for 200 men. Ordnance was mounted on the second storey, which was used mainly as a watchtower. The lower storey probably contained small arms and was used as a guardhouse since it was situated near the main gate.

The Fort St. Joseph blockhouse was constructed as a blockhouse-barrack. The lower storey was subdivided by wooden partitions into four rooms: an ordnance storeroom; a room for provisions and commissary stores; a room for the Indian Depart-

ment stores, and a regimental storeroom. The upper storey was divided into two large barracks for soldiers and three smaller ones for officers.

The St. Andrews blockhouse was constructed by the townspeople of St. Andrews to discourage American privateers. It was used as a small-arms depot and also as a barracks for the artillerymen. Local militia on active duty also used it. The second storey mounted a four-pound carronade.

The basement of the octagonal blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac was divided into two sections by a stone wall; one room served as a powder magazine, the other as a cellar for provisions. The first floor was fitted up as a barracks with three-tiered bunks along the outer walls. The top floor was intended to mount a 24-pounder on a traversing platform, but it is doubtful if the gun was ever actually installed. For a time in 1815, the top floor was used as a garrison hospital where hammocks were hung for the patients.

The first floor of The Narrows blockhouse was an unpartitioned munitions and provisions store. The second storey barrack would have contained about 20 men, but was usually the residence of the lockmaster and labourers.

The Fort Wellington blockhouse was the largest and most elaborate in Canada. The first floor of the three-storey stone building was divided by thick walls into four rooms and a central corridor. The magazine, located in the northwest corner, measured 20 feet by 14 feet and was vaulted. The armoury, in the southwest corner, was identical to the magazine. The other two rooms in the first floor were storerooms, each of which measured 22 feet by 14 feet 9 inches by 10 feet high. The second floor was divided into two rooms and, apparently, used as barracks. The third storey was also used as barracks with a small room later partitioned off as a hospital. The gallery around the third floor was planned to be used only for defence.

The first storey of the three-storey Madawaska blockhouse was of stone. A partition wall two feet thick divided the area into two rooms. One room served as a commissariat store with provisions for 100 men; the other as a magazine and artillery store. The second storey of the blockhouse was used as barracks. Eight wooden berths were headed against four posts supporting the upper floor, and 16 more bunks were situated against the walls. Hammocks could also be hung to accommodate additional men. The third floor had curbs and blocking behind each porthole to mount a traversing gun.

The Conquest of Acadia: Stockaded Forts and Peninsular Blockhouses of Early Nova Scotia

A study of the stockaded forts and blockhouses built during the British conquest of Acadia is important for three reasons. First, these blockhouses were the earliest built by the British in the territory which is now Canada, and thus provide material for at least a chronological comparison with others built much later. Second, the conditions under which these forts and blockhouses were built, although they were unique, nevertheless present a parallel with the conditions of the French and Indian wars in New England where the blockhouse evolved as a reliable defence. Third, these fortifications were designed and built by the British military during their first protracted experience of North American wilderness warfare. The nature and disposition of these forts provide an interesting commentary on parliament's unwillingness to spend large sums of money on a relatively unimportant province and the consequent dilemma faced by Governor Cornwallis and those who followed him. For a decade after the foundation of Halifax – until the destruction of Louisbourg and the fall of Quebec – the English in Nova Scotia were all but prisoners in their own forts. Except for Halifax, only two settlements were attempted, Lunenburg and Lawrencetown. The story of these two townships and their peninsular defence is unique in Canadian history.

Until the founding of Halifax in 1749 the only permanent English settlement in the province of Nova Scotia was Annapolis Royal. Nova Scotia, by provision of the Treaty of Utrecht, was a British territory and was nominally governed from the fort at Annapolis Royal. But "nominally governed" is the only proper description of the state of affairs. The settlement consisted of a tiny, miserable garrison in a dilapidated French fort, almost totally neglected by Great Britain, and left unmolested by the French and Indians only because it posed no threat to them. "This has been hitherto no more than a mock government, its authority never yet having been extended beyond cannon-shot of the fort," was the way Governor Phillips summarized his situation in 1720.¹ Until the middle of the 18th century, Great Britain tried neither to settle Nova Scotia nor to exercise any control over it beyond the administration of Fort Anne and Annapolis Royal.

When Halifax was founded in June 1749, the serious British investment of Acadia began. There were three motives behind this move. First, Governor Shirley of Massachusetts had been applying strong and insistent pressure for British help against the French and Indians, who were contesting the expansion of settlement in northeastern New England. Second, the British

wanted to establish a naval base in the North Atlantic to compensate for the French fortress at Louisbourg. Third, the British suddenly determined to make good their treaty claim to Nova Scotia by settling the province with newly disbanded soldiers, their families, and any others who were willing to take advantage of the generous land grants and tax exemptions which the government offered.

These three goals were not achieved immediately when Halifax was founded. The end to the French and Indian harassment of the expanding frontiers of New England did not come until the fall of Louisbourg and Quebec. The settlement of Nova Scotia was contested until the capitulation of Fort Beauséjour in 1755 and Lawrence's subsequent removal of the Acadians from their lands. Even then, Indian harassment continued. The settlement of Lawrencetown had to be abandoned in 1757 because of the fear of Indian attack, and late in 1758, after the fall of Louisbourg, Governor Lawrence complained to the Lords of Trade that Indians were still murdering unwary settlers at Lunenburg and hindering the progress of that settlement.² As for the establishment of a strong naval base to balance Louisbourg, it was not until the middle of the 19th century that the fortifications of Halifax were in any way representative of its importance. The British did not build another Louisbourg at Halifax – a fact which bears witness to the fundamental difference between the French and English imperial systems. Great Britain was content to take possession of one of the finest harbours in North America, to fortify it only as money became available or expediency demanded, and to rely, for the most part, on the power of her fleet to maintain the security of the port.

Governor Edward Cornwallis, with 400 troops and 2,000 settlers, arrived at Halifax in the last weeks of June 1749. From the beginning this settlement enjoyed at least a superiority of numbers against Indian attacks. Work on the town progressed rapidly, and by the end of the summer, a large stockaded fort, doubly picketed and with five bastions, each with barracks for 100 men, was completed. A shore battery and a battery on Georges Island provided a meagre defence from assault by sea.

Cornwallis was determined to establish British administration and authority throughout the province. Small as his forces were, he wrote optimistically to the Lords of Trade in July that *As soon as the Garrison arrives from Louisbourg, I propose to send two Companys to Minas, with Orders to build a Barrack & stay there the Winter, I shall likewise send an Armed Sloop to ly in the Bason of Minas – This will shew the French that we can master or protect them according to their behaviour, & in case*

*any of them should be decoy'd to Canada or Louisbourg or St. John's, that force will prevent their carrying off their affects.*³

A detachment was sent from Annapolis to Minas in September, but arrived too late to build barracks before winter. Instead the soldiers took up quarters in the deserted Acadian houses, erecting a triangular wall of picketing. This made rather poor security, as Governor Lawrence complained in 1753.

*The Situation which they were obliged to take up with on Account of these Houses is upon a low, flat ground, Commanded by a Hill, and so Exposed to the Weather that in deep Snows it has been often Possible to walk over the Palisades.*⁴

Nor did the detachment prevent the Acadians from deserting their lands or the Indians from passing freely about the province. On 27 November a band of 300 Indians ambushed and took prisoner a patrol of 24 men from the fort.

The second fort to be established was Fort Sackville. On 11 September Captain Goreham was sent to the head of Bedford Basin to establish a post there which would protect the communication with Minas. Cornwallis sent an armed vessel carrying "materials of all kinds, for a Barracks etc."⁵ as well as a company of Rangers. By the middle of October, the governor described both Fort Sackville and the fort at Minas as "secure," and reported that he had encouraged Acadians to clear a road from Halifax to the post and the head of the basin.⁶ By December a road eighteen feet wide had been made all the way from Halifax to Minas. Troops could be dispatched to the heartland of the Acadian settlement in a single day.

In the face of growing French and Indian resistance, Cornwallis began to realize that his small force and insubstantial little forts had no authority whatsoever. Acadians continued to desert the peninsula. Amid rumours that the Indians were massing for an attack on Halifax and that regular French troops, Acadians and Indians were gathering at Chignecto, Cornwallis firmly advised the Lords of Trade,

*Settling this Province, preserving our rights & making this Country what it is intended to be a Frontier to the other colonies, depends upon more force . . . Chignecto must be secured in my Opinion first of all, & being the general Rendezvous of the Indians & the Entrance from Canada, not less than a Regiment will suffice to carry on the Works necessary there – besides a Sloop or two of War – This will create Expence, but surely, My Lords, the sooner the Province is settled the greater will be the Economy . . . As it is impossible to say, how long the Peace may last, add Strength to the Infant Settlement while you may effect it.*⁷

Plans for a settlement and fort at Chignecto went forward all winter in both Halifax and London. The king acceded to the governor's request for a regiment and two sloops of war.

Major Charles Lawrence, with a detachment of 200 troops, four armed sloops and a schooner, arrived at Chignecto on 20 April 1750. This force was intended to establish a small post in advance of the main body of troops and settlers due to arrive that summer. One sloop of war carried the prepared timber for a small blockhouse.⁸ Lawrence was entirely unprepared for what he found there. "La Corne & Loutre are at the head of 2,500 men at Chignecto," Cornwallis wrote frantically to the Lords of Trade.

*Major Lawrence with his Detachment was obliged to reembark the same day he landed there. That all the Inhabitants of La Riviere, de Canard, Minas, Piziquid & Cobequid are about retiring from the Province threaten'd with a general Massacre by La Corne & Loutre.*⁹

Meanwhile Lawrence and his force had retired to Minas, and ultimately to Piziquid. While awaiting reinforcements, Lawrence busied himself by building Fort Edward near the junction of the St. Croix and Avon rivers. This was the third stockaded fort built by the troops in a year.

Cornwallis's naive confidence of the autumn of 1749 had given way to more sober judgements by the late spring of 1750. Facing militant French resistance and a general Indian war, the governor gave up hopes of establishing a settlement near the intended fort at Chignecto. The only course possible was to wait for the Irish regiment he had been promised, and somehow to accommodate the new settlers at Halifax.

On 19 August Cornwallis was finally able to begin operations. On that day Major Lawrence, with Lascelle's regiment and 300 men from Warburton's, marched from Halifax to Minas, where Lawrence and the troops embarked for Chignecto. The troops carried the fort with them: "two blockhouses & three large barracks frames & materials of all sorts necessary for erecting them."¹⁰ Lawrence was instructed to "secure a post & erect barracks sufficient for four hundred men at least to remain the Winter."¹¹ After a little resistance, the force was able to establish itself on the south side of the Missaguash River. The troops immediately began to construct Fort Lawrence, the fourth and last stockaded fort built by the British during their conquest. Cornwallis praised the efforts of his troops in a year-end report to the Lords of Trade.

The Difficultys I have had this Year in Establishing at Chignecto, I almost despair'd of surmounting. The Season of the Year was so late, All Materials and Provisions to be sent by Sea, a very

*ugly Navigation and no coming at it in the Winter, the Enemy constantly annoying them, All cattle drove away, Their Fuel Difficult to get tho' Coal is so near they could not come at it, as it would have taken half the Detachment to have cover'd the people and in that Case They could not have got under Cover, nor their Provisions on Shore On which depended their remaining the Winter. And Yet by the indefatigable Labour of Colonel Lawrence and poor How, this is accomplish'd; their Fort finish'd, Barrack up and I hope furnish'd with Everything for a long winter, for so I must call it, as I can furnish them with nothing, nor hear from them for four months to come.*¹²

Considering the limited resources available to Cornwallis, the first year and one-half of his government showed remarkable energy. The four forts he established successfully completed his strategy of laying the groundwork of British power in Nova Scotia. But that military power lay impotent and defensive behind the stockaded walls of the forts for the next five years until a formal declaration of war between France and England finally broke the impasse in Nova Scotia.

The policy of the French toward Nova Scotia after the foundation of Halifax was an impressively subtle one. Rather than openly attack the British fort, they used their manpower to build a fort at the mouth of the Saint John River, Fort Gaspereau on Baie Verte, and Fort Beauséjour at Chignecto. Fort Beauséjour was a small but strong fort built within sight (but out of cannon reach) of Fort Lawrence on the opposite side of the Missaguash River. The three forts – especially Fort Beauséjour – gave credibility to the French claim that the Missaguash River was the treaty limit of British territory. At the same time, the governor of Quebec supplied the Saint John and Micmac Indians with firearms, provisions and gifts. De La Corne and Abbé Le Loutre successfully directed an Indian harassment of the English settlements and forts. This strategy effectively contained the English and frustrated any hopes they had of expanding their sphere of control.

Cornwallis had greatly exceeded his financial estimates in the first two years of his administration. Because of stringent limitations on spending imposed by Parliament, the governor had trouble even in consolidating what he had won. The Lords of Trade were caught in the middle, trying to placate both Parliament and Cornwallis. After trimming the estimates for 1751 the lords firmly advised the governor that

as to publick Works you would therefore do right to carry on as many of them as the Appropriation of the Money to other Expenses will permit; but always remember that nothing is so essentially requisite to the Welfare and future Success of your un-

*dertaking, as to preserve the good Opinion and Affection of Parliament towards it, which cannot be done but by keeping to that Rule and Degree of Expence, which they prescribe in their Grants from a sense of what the Circumstances of the Nation can bear . . . We must advise you rather to postpone even the most necessary Works than to exceed the Estimate.*¹³

Cornwallis's vehement reply to the Lords of Trade gives some idea of the dilemma he faced.

I am sensible of the great advantage that would arise by keeping within the grant of Parliament, but fear it can scarce be done even with security to the Province, thus am I distracted between the Saving on the one side, and the loss of the Province on the other side, if you are determin'd that only £18,000 odd hundred pounds should be spent in the Province I think it my duty to acquaint your Lordships that the securing this Province to yourselves will be a task attended with great Expence, and not attain'd in length of time unless what is necessary for the Execution of it is given . . . for my own part, I think no Expence can be hardly to great to Secure the Province of Nova Scotia to the British Throne.¹⁴

Cornwallis, exhausted by his command, returned to England in the spring of 1752. Both Governor Hopson and Governor Lawrence, who followed Cornwallis, faced the same paralyzing situation. When war between England and France again broke out in 1755, Colonel Monckton, with 2,000 provincial troops, besieged and captured forts Beauséjour and Gaspereau and the post on the Saint John River. Peace was not finally achieved until the British eradicated French power in North America.

The four stockaded forts built by the British were inadequate picketed defences built in the emergency of the first year. Their main purpose was to establish a token British presence in hostile territory. The defences were rudimentary and protected the garrison only against musket fire. The security of the forts depended on the ditch and high, sharpened palisades which enclosed them, as well as on the blockhouses inside. Small four-pounder swivel guns mounted in the second storey of some blockhouse posed a considerable deterrent to an attacking party armed only with muskets, bows and arrows.

Fort Sackville was a small, square, palisaded fort with bastions in the corners and a ditch outside. Inside stood a barracks for 50 men and a small blockhouse. The fort stood on a knoll at the mouth of the Sackville River where it empties into Bedford Basin. It was built to protect the line of communication from Halifax to Minas.

Fort Edward was established in June 1750 by Major Lawrence. It too was a square, palisaded fort with bastions in the corners and a ditch outside. It was much larger than Fort Sackville, measuring 85 yards on a face. Inside the fort stood a blockhouse, two barracks to contain 200 men, and a storehouse. The only ordnance mounted seems to have been in the top storey of the blockhouse. Lawrence built this fort as a show of strength after he was forced to retire from his first attempt at Chignecto. A garrison was established there to watch the Acadians and to prevent them from taking their possessions from the province.

Fort Lawrence was a palisaded square, about the size of Fort Edward, with bastions and a ditch. Blockhouses within the northwest and southeast bastions provided covering fire along the faces. Ordnance (the size is unknown) was mounted on five platforms on the north side of the fort looking toward Fort Beau-séjour. In addition to the blockhouses, the fort contained barracks for 400 men, two storehouses, officers' quarters and two guardhouses. The fort was taken down in 1755 when the British decided to consolidate their forces in Fort Cumberland (formerly the French Fort Beauséjour).

The Peninsular Blockhouses

In addition to their fortified garrisons, the British attempted only three settlements in Nova Scotia between 1749 and 1755: Halifax, Lunenburg and Lawrencetown. The intended settlement at Chignecto was cancelled because of the strength of the French and Indian forces massed there. Halifax, Lawrencetown and Lunenburg had one geographical feature in common which made settlement possible in spite of the Indian war: they were all peninsulas. The narrow necks of land which connected each of them to the mainland could be easily and cheaply fortified and defended by a small detachment of troops lodged in blockhouses. Life proceeded as normally as could be expected behind these defences.

Halifax was chosen as a naval base because of its excellent harbour, not because of its peninsular situation. The original harbourside defence at Halifax was a double-palisaded pentangle with bastions and barracks for 100 men at each angle. A space 30 feet wide around the palisades was cleared and a barricade of trees was formed at the edge of the clearing. The primary concern during the first year of settlement was for the security of soldiers, settlers and the government from Indian raids; but the pressure of population and the promise of land to settlers soon determined that advanced posts had to be established if the settlement of the peninsula was to proceed.

During the winter of 1750, while rumours were flying of an impending Indian attack on Halifax, Cornwallis and his chief engineer, John Henry Bastide, decided that three stockaded blockhouses connected by a road of communication would supply the necessary defence. Each blockhouse was to contain a small detachment of men. The forts were to be situated on the highest ridges of land overlooking the narrowest point in the peninsula between the Northwest Arm and Bedford Basin.

The blockhouses were built in the spring and summer of 1750. According to Harry Piers, they were enclosed in a triangular picketing with shallow ditches around their perimeters.¹⁵ They were small, about 12 feet square in the lower storey. Piers imaginatively reconstructed these blockhouses, using the one constructed at Fort Edward in the same year as a model. Since all the blockhouses constructed in Nova Scotia during this period were prefabricated in Halifax, Piers's reconstruction is probably fairly accurate. Blockhouses were considered only very temporary works, but more elaborate fortification of the peninsula was financially out of the question and probably unnecessary.

The township of Lunenburg was established in early June 1753 for 650 German immigrants. The site chosen was about 16 leagues by sea from Halifax, on a long narrow peninsula where there had formerly been a French settlement and where "a small Picketing would inclose a Peninsula of three thousand Acres."¹⁶ Nowhere in Nova Scotia would have such an undertaking been possible at the time, except on a peninsula. The basic prerequisite of settlement was the possibility of cheap security for the settlers. Governor Hopson sent 160 men under the command of Major Lawrence to protect the settlers and to build defensive works. Lawrence's journal of his proceedings at Lunenburg in the summer of 1753 provides an unusual and interesting account of the difficulties faced in the settlement.

On the afternoon of 8 June 1753, the day after the convoy arrived, Major Lawrence and Captain Morris, the surveyor, decided on the situation of the town and the blockhouses for its defence. The line of palisades and the blockhouses (which had been prefabricated in Halifax and shipped with the troops) were to be situated at the extremity of the 300 acres of cleared land.

The blockhouses were unloaded from the boats and hauled ashore the first evening. The morning of the next day, settlers shouldered the heavy square timbers and carried them the half-mile to the top of the hill. By ten o'clock the same morning the carpenters had set up the first storey. At nightfall, all the timbers for both blockhouses had been carried up the hill, and a road from the higher blockhouse to the water at the back of the hill

had been cleared. The carpenters showed less enthusiasm on the second day of work, and it was not until a week later that troops were able to occupy the two blockhouses. Meanwhile, Lawrence employed 30 Germans to cut pickets and ordered a detachment of troops to cover them. At week's end, discouraged by the settlers' refusal to help drag guns up to the blockhouses, Lawrence commented on their character and described how critical the situation was.

*The Settlers had now slept 7 night in ye harbour of Maliquash. A long dreary period in ye situatn. In all yt. time they had done little for ymselves & begrudging ye loss of every momt. were not disposed to enter into ye spirit and meang. of the previous tasks to wc. they were summond. Yet these were absolutely indispensable. The Alarm of a single night & ye havoc of a single Indn. wd have defeated ye whole design and drawn ym back to Halifax. What they called ye Kings works and public stores, were works and stores for yr. own security and preservatn. without wc. they cd not have been safe nor ye settlemt have proceeded.*¹⁷

By 18 June Lawrence was able to write Governor Hopson that the guns were mounted in the blockhouse, and that he had employed between 300 and 400 settlers in digging the trench and cutting 3,000 pickets "wc. according to our Calculatn. will be sufficient for ye line from water to water."¹⁸ Apparently the troops and settlers enjoyed a security of numbers, for there were no signs of Indians all summer. The job of cutting a trench and digging in the pickets proved a far heavier task than Lawrence had originally calculated, and it was not until 8 August that the line was finished from the top of the hill to the harbour-side. Another month was occupied in continuing the palisades to the water on the other side of the peninsula. A small log house was built at the end of the picketing on the harbourside to guard the shallow water at that end.

By the end of September, Lawrence had returned with his troops to Halifax, leaving the militia to keep guard in the blockhouses. The militia system lasted only two months before a small insurrection among the settlers forced Lawrence to send Colonel Robert Monckton with 200 troops to confront the insurgents. Monckton brought the leaders of the rebellion to Halifax, but thereafter about 40 troops were kept at Lunenburg to man the defences. After this incident, the settlement prospered, although continual harassment by Indians prevented it from expanding outside of the peninsular picketing to any degree.

Lawrencetown, ten miles east of Dartmouth, was the third settlement attempted. The site was chosen for the same reasons as Lunenburg; it was an easily defended peninsula and had

cleared land. Encouraged by the fact that the proprietors of the township had picketed in the peninsula at their own expense, Governor Lawrence sent 200 troops with the first settlers on 16 May 1754. The troops cleared a road as they marched. They also carried a blockhouse with them, which the executive council had decided should be supplied in order to encourage settlers. Lawrence could dispense with 200 troops only for a short time and eventually, when the blockhouse had been made secure and the picketing fully set in, only 40 Rangers were left to man the defences.¹⁹

The settlement of Lawrencetown lasted only three years. Prospective settlers, fearful of the Indians of the eastern shore, declined to take up offers of land. One by one the original landowners drifted back to the security of Halifax. On 13 October 1757, Colonel Monckton wrote to the Lords of Trade that *His Majesty's Council having taken the Affairs of Lawrence Town into Consideration, have come to a Resolution of withdrawing from thence the few Inhabitants that remained, as they were in continual apprehensions from the Enemy in their Neighbourhood which prevented their being able to Cultivate the Lands or even to venture abroad without the most imminent danger of being killed. This has accordingly been done and the Troops and Blockhouse brought away.*²⁰

All the blockhouses described in this chapter were small portable buildings of fairly lightweight timber. The timbers were squared in Halifax and shipped with the troops to their respective posts. This prefabrication undoubtedly contributed to a certain standardization of the form. They involved a bare economy of design, construction and cost. The logistics of the military situation in Acadia demanded such simplicity, and the economies of parliament prevented anything more elaborate. Forts and blockhouses were planned as temporary answers to what the military considered temporary problems. As fortification on an *ad hoc* basis, the military had discovered and successfully used the blockhouse; it remained to be seen what it would do with the form in other emergencies.

Blockhouses and Coastal Batteries in the War of 1812

The outbreak of war between Great Britain and the United States in June 1812 exposed the coastal communities of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to the threat of attacks by American privateers. A conciliatory agreement reached by the frontier towns of Maine and the governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia did little to alleviate the problem of privateers from states farther to the south. Batteries with blockhouses behind for support were constructed at the more important harbours on the coasts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, at Lunenburg, Liverpool, Yarmouth, Digby, Parrsboro, Guysborough and St. Andrews. But while the frontier battles were won and lost in Upper and Lower Canada and a lively privateering and naval war was waged on the Atlantic, the Maritime provinces, for the most part, remained spectators to the action. The possibility – if not the probability – of invasion remained a constant threat, but the temporary coastal fortifications were never tested.

The War of 1812 was unpopular with the majority of the citizens of New England, who had little sympathy or understanding for the grievances of the Western War Party in Congress. On the frontiers of Maine, the announcement of the declaration of war was promptly countered by a gesture of friendship toward the neighbouring settlements in New Brunswick. A town meeting held in Eastport, Maine, unanimously voted a resolution to “preserve as good an understanding as possible with the inhabitants of New Brunswick, and to discountenance all depredations on the property of the people of the provinces.”¹ This announcement was greeted with relief by the inhabitants of St. Andrews, nearest British town to Eastport, and evoked a reciprocal gesture from them. The declarations were received as good news by the governments of both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. On 3 July 1812, Governor Sherbrooke of Nova Scotia informed the executive council of the Eastport declaration. In response, the members of the council advised the governor to issue this proclamation:

Whereas every species of predatory Warfare carried on against the defenceless Inhabitants living on the shores of the United States contiguous to this province and New Brunswick can answer no good purpose, and will greatly distress individuals. I have therefore thought it proper by and with the advice of His Majesty's Council to order and direct all His Majesty's Subjects under my government to abstain from molesting the Inhabitants living on the shores of the United States contiguous to this Province and to New Brunswick and on no account to distress or molest the goods or unarmed coasting vessels belonging to the defenceless inhabitants of the frontiers, so long as they shall

*abstain from on their Part any Acts of hostility or molestation towards the Inhabitants of this Province and New Brunswick. It is therefore my wish and desire that the subjects of the United States living on the Frontiers may pursue their usual trade and occupations without molestation so long as they shall act in a similar way towards the frontier inhabitants of this Province and New Brunswick.*²

Whitehall supported this policy; the British were preoccupied with Napoleon's armies in Europe, and the war in North America was as unpopular with the ministry as it was in New England. The British government wanted only to end the conflict quickly, and appreciated any peaceful developments.

On the local level, the proclamation was a wise one. First, neither Nova Scotia nor New Brunswick had sufficient military resources to undertake offensive movements against Maine: moreover an open military operation against New England would undoubtedly have provoked a similar and more destructive response from the populous northern states. Second, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Upper and Lower Canada (and even Great Britain) needed a continuous stream of provisions which only the Americans could supply. By keeping the peace on the northeastern frontier, the British hoped that smuggling and even open trade would keep supplies moving in spite of wartime conditions. Third, at the beginning of the war there were neither adequate naval forces nor fortifications along the coast to prevent destructive privateering raids by American adventurers. The proclamation, Sherbrooke and the council hoped, would at least buy the time needed to erect some defences.

Events at St. Andrews, New Brunswick, provided the clearest example of the effects of the war on small coastal towns. Situated on the boundary as it was, St. Andrews was able to maintain an amicable and profitable relationship with the nearest American post at Eastport. Despite their importance as commercial centres for trans-shipment and smuggling, neither town was of any military significance to the war objectives of either nation. Consequently, both towns adopted completely defensive attitudes. Fortifications were built and the reinforced militia drilled on each side of the border, but neither town was willing to give up the lucrative opportunities which the war presented for the sake of insignificant depredations on the other's territory. The primary fear in St. Andrews was not the town's immediate American neighbours, but licensed privateers from further south. The nature of St. Andrews' fortifications reflects this concern.

At the beginning of the war, the only defence work in St. Andrews was Fort Tipperary. Standing behind and above the town, this small stockaded work served only as barracks for the token garrison force stationed at the border. It had been built in 1808 when war with the United States seemed imminent. Despite the lack of interest of both the provincial government and the British military in fortifying the harbour in 1812, the citizens of St. Andrews considered the danger real enough, and set to work on their own account.

Shortly after war was declared, the civilians and militia of the town turned out to provide money and labour to begin construction of defences. Two batteries, one at each end of the town, were "thrown up by the inhabitants to defend the entrances of the Harbour against the attempts of Privateers upon the Shipping."³ They were crude works and certainly did not meet professional standards. The only ordnance the townspeople could get in these early months was reported to be "1 eighteen [pounder], one Nine, and one four pounder Carronade."⁴ Also there were only 30 rounds of ammunition for each gun. Colonel Gibbons, an officer of the New Brunswick militia, visited the works early in 1813 and suggested that the batteries be "secured from being turned by a predatory force of the above description, by the erection of a substantial Block House immediately in the rear of each."⁵ Gibbons returned to the town in early spring to superintend the construction of the blockhouses. They were completed by June.

Captain James McLaughlan, the resident Royal Engineer at Saint John, travelled to St. Andrews in May 1813 and severely criticized the batteries. He wrote to Major Gustavus Nicolls, the Commanding Royal Engineer in Halifax, that "they [are so] badly constructed that the tide at high water is nearly upon a level with the holes of the embrasures."⁶ McLaughlan remained in St. Andrews for a month to supervise the improvements he considered necessary. He also arranged to have heavier ordnance sent to strengthen the works. During the summer, a third battery and blockhouse were constructed at Joes Point to protect the ferry crossing there, and to cover the shipping in the St. Croix River.

These batteries were simple semicircular earthworks. By late 1813 each of them mounted three 18-pounders on traversing platforms. Two nine-pounders were positioned outside the breastwork of each at the water's edge. Immediately in the rear stood a two-storeyed loopholed blockhouse 18 feet square. A five-pounder iron carronade on a standing wooden carriage could fire through any of the four portholes cut in the upper storey of each blockhouse.⁷ Besides mounting ordnance to

cover the battery, the blockhouses served as barracks for artillerymen and militia on active duty, and as small-arms and ammunitions depots.

Money for the construction of the two original blockhouses and batteries was raised by subscription from the inhabitants of St. Andrews. Christopher Scott and Robert Pagan, two leading merchants of the town, contributed a large share of the funds; Scott later claimed that he had personally spent £175 on the West Point blockhouse.⁸ Colonel Gibbons had said that he could promise no remuneration, but felt sure that once the military authorities realized the necessity and value of the works, they would reimburse the civilians for their expenditure. They did not: they refused Scott's request for compensation, arguing that the West Point blockhouse had been built to protect private property. These early defences at St. Andrews were the only fortifications built during the war by private financing.

In Nova Scotia the more prosperous coastal towns also feared assault by American privateers. Although these towns were of no strategic significance, Governor Sherbrooke and Major Nicolls shared the expressed sentiments of the provincial assembly that the most exposed settlements needed some sort of protection. An emergency session of the assembly was convened on 21 July 1812 to consider measures to deal with the war. On Saturday, 25 July, a committee of the whole house considering supply voted that

*a sum not exceeding Eight Thousand Pounds, should be granted for erecting Block Houses, and other temporary Works at the most exposed points; and for providing and arming Boats, and for defraying the incidental Expences incurred by this species of Defence for the security of the Province.*⁹

This money was put at the disposal of the governor and council. Under the direction of the Commanding Royal Engineer, private contractors were engaged to build the blockhouses.¹⁰ The construction of batteries and blockhouses was supervised either by the local commander of the militia or by one of the Royal Engineers stationed at Halifax. Accordingly, in the fall of 1812 and the spring and summer of 1813, batteries and blockhouses were built at Lunenburg, Liverpool, Yarmouth, Digby, Parrsboro and Guysborough.

At Lunenburg, two works were erected in the fall of 1812 for the security of the town and the defence of the harbour. One blockhouse was built above the western end of the town on Windmill Hill. It was two storeys high, loopholed and picketed in and immediately in front of it a battery was constructed. The guns mounted in the battery were three iron 12-pounders, one iron nine-pounder and two brass six-pounders.¹¹

Another blockhouse and battery en barbette were situated about a mile and one-half from the town on Jesser's Point, which juts sharply into the harbour. The blockhouse had two storeys and was built on a stone foundation.¹² A brass four-pounder was mounted in the upper storey. The battery on the point mounted one iron nine-pounder and three brass four-pounders.¹³

At Liverpool, on a point of land at the eastern entrance to the inner harbour, a blockhouse and battery en barbette were constructed late in 1812. The two-storey blockhouse was built in the open gorge of the earthwork battery. The second storey of the blockhouse mounted two three-pounder brass carronades. From the battery, three iron 12-pounders controlled the entrance to Liverpool harbour.¹⁴ Farther out in the harbour, two advance batteries were constructed facing one another from opposite shores, one at Black Point on the western side, one at Wreck Point on the eastern.¹⁵

In Yarmouth harbour a four-gun battery with a blockhouse in the rear was built on Bunker's Peninsula. The battery was located at the southwest point of the peninsula, and the guns covered the entrance of the harbour. In 1814 the battery mounted two iron 12-pounders on iron carriages and two brass three-pounders.¹⁶ A small redoubt, a square earthwork, stood behind the battery. Inside the work was a two-storey blockhouse, a wooden magazine and a small guardhouse. The upper storey of the blockhouse mounted one iron four-pounder.¹⁷

Digby Gut, the narrow channel leading from the Bay of Fundy to Annapolis Basin, was fortified in 1812 to provide an advance defence to both Digby and Annapolis. Two four-gun batteries with supporting blockhouses were built, one on each side of the gut about 50 feet above water level. Four 18-pounders mounted in each battery discouraged any attempts by Americans to enter the basin.¹⁸

On a hill slightly above and behind the middle of the town of Digby, a solitary blockhouse was built in 1812 to oppose an enemy landing. The blockhouse provided a rendezvous for the militia and served as an arms and munitions store. Here, in 1813, a non-commissioned officer lived and took care of the stores.¹⁹

On a high hill immediately behind the town of Parrsboro, a large two-storey blockhouse was built in 1813. It provided a place of defence for the town, and the guns mounted in it protected the harbour. A gunboat service was based at Parrsboro harbour to protect the ferry crossing Minas Basin and to provide a patrol for the entrance to this busy waterway. The gunboats mounted brass six-pounders.²⁰

Apparently a blockhouse was built at the town and harbour of Guysborough.²¹ This was the only fortification built during the War of 1812 to protect the less populated eastern shore of the province. No information could be obtained about its situation in the town.

At Sydney Mines, on the north shore of the Spanish River, three miles below the bar and nine miles from the town of Sydney, a blockhouse and four-gun battery guarded the coal-mining area. This battery and blockhouse dated from the American Revolution, but were repaired in the crisis of 1812. As early as 1759 a blockhouse and small battery had been established at this point for the protection of soldiers mining coal. During the War of 1812, the battery mounted four 12-pounders on traversing platforms. A non-commissioned officer of the Royal Artillery and six gunners lived in the blockhouse.²²

The sole survivor of all the blockhouses built during the War of 1812 is the west blockhouse at St. Andrews. Visual evidence and limited technical information seem to indicate that most of the blockhouses varied only slightly from this one. They were all built for similar purposes: support for batteries, accommodation for artillerymen and militia manning the guns, arms depots, and rallying points for the militia. All such fortifications were temporary works, intended primarily to repel privateers. There is no evidence to suggest that any of these defences ever came under attack. As early as November 1812 it was known that commissions issued to privateers by the American government expressly forbade any incursions on shore.²³ This prohibition, coupled with the defensive measures financed by the provincial assembly, combined to make life in the coastal communities peaceful for the duration of the war.

Blockhouses and the Defence of River Communications

The whole period of blockhouse construction in Canada was one in which travel, commerce, and military communications and campaigns proceeded mainly along water routes. Exploration, the fur trade and settlement followed these natural roads into the interior. Territorial boundaries were, for the most part, defined by military control of the waterways. Not unnaturally, the majority of the fortifications built by the British in Canada defended water routes.

By the Treaty of Paris in 1763 England gained possession of the French empire in North America above the Louisiana Territory. Military occupation and control of this empire was accomplished simply by garrisoning the old French forts and by pursuing a policy of alliances with the Indians. The administration of this wilderness and the control of the territory centred in Quebec. Until well into the 19th century, British military strategists believed firmly that the security of British North America rested on the retention of Quebec. Quebec's security rested on the one hand upon maintaining British naval supremacy and on the other upon a system of forts south and west of the St. Lawrence.

Blockhouses, either as isolated works or in support of river batteries, were used extensively to fortify the routes of potential invasion of Quebec. They served as small advance posts to major fortifications, and as intermediate strategic defences between larger works. The posts guarded narrow river channels, portages, small harbours and canals. Small bodies of troops at these posts were intended to harass an enemy as he approached and to spoil his timetable. They could evacuate their own positions quickly if they had to. The posts also helped to maintain long routes of communication, and provided arms depots and rallying points for the local militia.

Four types will be used to illustrate the use of blockhouses: first, the blockhouses built on the rivers south of Quebec and Montreal during the American Revolution; second, the fortifications built between Montreal and Kingston in the War of 1812; third, blockhouses built on the Saint John River in the years 1812–14, and fourth, the fortification of the Rideau Canal in the years 1831–32.

Lower Canada, 1778–83

The rapid advance of the Americans against Montreal and Quebec along the Hudson River-Lake George-Lake Champlain route in 1775 jolted the British into their first serious consideration of the inadequacies of their frontier defences. With the arrival of reinforcements from England in 1776, Carleton drove the de-

pleted American forces into retreat, but in the campaigns of 1776 and 1777 Carleton could do little more than re-establish his control over the head of Lake Champlain. The myth of the superiority of British forces had been shattered in those two years. When Sir Frederick Haldimand replaced Carleton as commander-in-chief in 1778, he focused his attention on strengthening fortifications. The major military activity in Lower Canada for the remainder of the war was defensive – the consolidation of routes of supply and communication, the improvement of frontier forts and the beginning of a temporary citadel at Quebec.

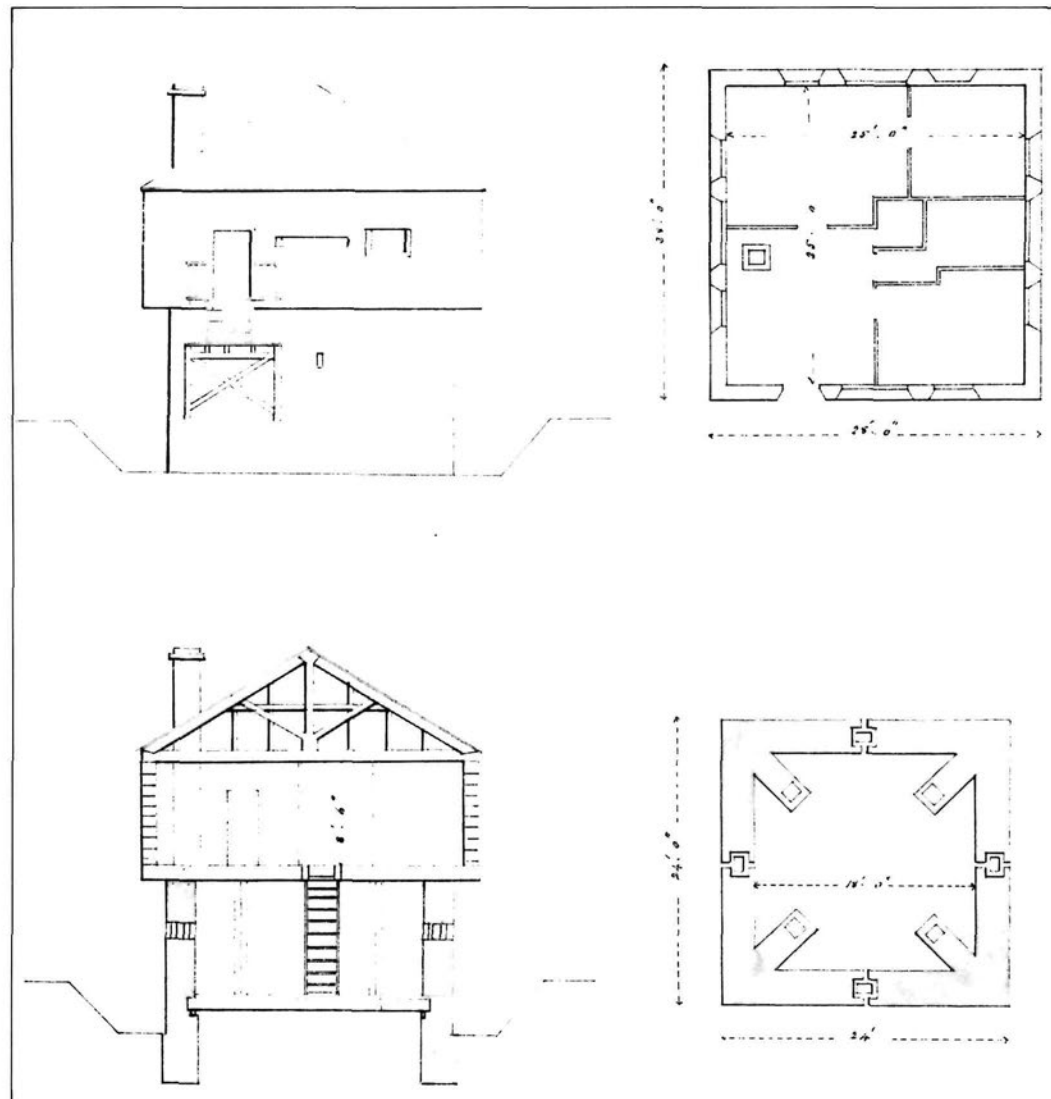
Immediately after he assumed command, Haldimand (with the energetic co-operation of his chief engineer, Major William Twiss) undertook the defensive measures he considered necessary for the security of the province. A fort on Carleton Island, near the entrance to Lake Ontario, was begun in the summer of 1778. Twiss also occupied himself with rebuilding and reconsidering the fortifications at Ile-aux-Noix, Saint-Jean and Chambly. A major stores depot and barracks was begun at Sorel. In answer to Lord Germain's sanguine request that a citadel should be built at Quebec, Haldimand wrote, *I shall not fail to take the proper steps for erecting a Citadel at Quebec in such situation as Assisted by the Engineers I shall be able to judge is most Advantageous . . . but I think it, in the mean time, necessary to inform your Lordship, that the indispensable works carrying on for the Security of the Frontiers, which I conceive to be the most immediately requisite – furnish much more Employment than, with the Troops under my Command, can possibly be executed this year.*¹

This posture of defence continued throughout the war, the steady improvement of the four forts on the Richelieu continuing until 1783.

Two blockhouses were built along the Richelieu route during Haldimand's command. The first to be constructed was on the east side of the river, opposite Fort Saint-Jean where rapids ended the boat transport from Lake Champlain. The blockhouse was begun in the summer of 1778. In October of the same year, a parapet of earth was raised around it and a deep ditch was dug around the whole. An abatis was thrown up on the other side of the ditch and the woods were cleared for 200 yards around the post.² The blockhouse protected the east side of the river, and the detachment posted there patrolled the paths and roads behind it.

During the winter of 1778–79, a sawmill was built on the La-colle River, about a mile from the Richelieu, to provide planks and boards for the improvements being made to Ile-aux-Noix,

8 Plan and section of The Narrows
blockhouse, Rideau Canal, 1825.
(Public Archives of Canada.)





Saint-Jean and Chambly.³ It had been intended to build a defence for the sawmill at the time it was built, but other pressing matters delayed this until the autumn of 1781, when a blockhouse was built to protect the sawmill and provide barracks for the workmen employed there.⁴ A lighthouse was constructed at the same time to relay messages between Pointe-aux-Fer and Ile-aux-Noix, both of which could be seen from the eminence on which the blockhouse and lighthouse stood.

Strengthening the posts on the Richelieu route was Haldimand's most pressing care, but not his only one. In an attempt to keep American agents from entering the villages on the south shore of the St. Lawrence and stirring up dissent, Haldimand established a blockhouse on the Yamaska River in 1778.⁵ It was located about six miles below the first forks in the Yamaska, near the wide cart road leading to Saint-Charles.⁶ Fourteen men were stationed at the post to protect the communication and to observe the French and Indian inhabitants. Twiss explained to Haldimand that "there are from 59 to 70 Inhabitants who are exceedingly well armed, and certainly were by no means Friends to Government, as well as very disobedient to the Capt. of Militia."⁷

In September 1779, Haldimand received information that the Americans were cutting a road to Missisquoi Bay at the northern end of Lake Champlain. The governor wrote Germain, informed him of these developments, and stated that the rebels "will probably invade the Province from above by Lake Champlain, by the Rivers Yamaska and St. Francis, all these avenues and there are others into it, are well known to them, and whichever Route they take, they are sure in finding a number of Friends ready to assist them."⁸ A year later, Haldimand decided that the solitary blockhouse on the Yamaska was not enough to guard that approach. He ordered Captain Twiss to construct another blockhouse farther up the river toward Missisquoi Bay.⁹ In an earlier instruction to Twiss on the subject of the new blockhouse, the governor stated that he wished "to preserve it a frontier Post, therefore Permanent, which you will consider in the construction of it."¹⁰

The situation chosen by Twiss for the new work was on the west side of the river at the bottom of the rapids on the Yamaska, about 21 miles up-river from the lower blockhouse. The new blockhouse was to stand on a hill 30 feet high overlooking Ile-à-l'Ail. The forest was cleared 250 yards from its site, and the small island was cleared to provide a garden for the troops.¹¹ In December 1781, Twiss visited the post and reported that "the Work is exceedingly well finished, and by having a bomb-proof

cellar, and being surrounded with a picketting and glacis, may be considered a Post of considerable defense."¹²

Earlier in the war, Haldimand had expressed concern about the unfortified Kennebec-Chaudière route to Quebec. He was determined to prevent a repetition of Arnold's success in bringing troops to the outskirts of Quebec by that route in 1775. To remedy the defenceless state of the river, the governor ordered a picketed blockhouse to be built at the upper part of the settlements. A detachment of Loyalists and a company of the 34th Regiment were ordered to the area in October 1778 to build and garrison the work.¹³ No further information has been discovered about the location or disposition of the blockhouse.

Haldimand was also extremely concerned about the speedy reinforcement with both men and supplies of the western posts in the event of an attack from Lake Ontario. In 1778 the governor ordered Twiss to establish a post at Carleton Island to protect the communications and speed supplies to the western forts. A year later Twiss was again sent to the St. Lawrence west of Montreal, this time to supervise the construction of a canal around the Coteau rapids.¹⁴ Twiss planned improvements to the canal, and also built two blockhouses to defend it. They stood on the land side of the canal and were two storeys high, loopholed, machicolated and built in the form of a trapezoid. In December 1779 Twiss reported that the post on the canal was "secure against any Attack of Musquetry."¹⁵

The Kingston to Montreal Route, 1812–14

By the outbreak of the War of 1812, American expansion west of the Alleghenies had proceeded to such an extent that an enemy invasion of Canada from Lake Ontario was a very real possibility. Moreover, with the Loyalist settlement of Upper Canada, the British were no longer defending only the fur-trade posts west of Montreal. Complete neglect of the defences of the frontier posts exposed the long line of communication and supply to an easy interruption by American raiding parties. The extensive road system built by the Americans in upper New York meant that a large army on the Niagara River, Oswego and Sackets Harbor could be easily supplied. The British, who had few troops to spare from their European entanglements, wanted only an early end to the war and from the beginning settled for a defensive strategy in Upper and Lower Canada. Even this was difficult to implement in the western territory; the neglect of the frontier forts was responsible.

In the course of the war, the British commander-in-chief, Sir George Prevost, met this new threat on Lake Ontario with two measures. First, he strengthened Kingston's garrison, beginning

a substantial fort there and establishing a very busy naval yard and shipbuilding works to achieve naval superiority on the Great Lakes. Second, he constructed a series of blockhouses and batteries along the St. Lawrence at intermediate, critical points between Montreal and Kingston. The line of defences along this stretch of the St. Lawrence River was evolved for three reasons: protection of the *batteaux* convoys by which all supplies to the upper posts had to travel; protection of towns and villages against American raiding parties, and harassment of a major American invasion along this route, if the British lost control of Lake Ontario. In the latter case, the British believed that if the Americans were delayed, the invasion would fail. A large army could not be sustained by living off the land and the American troops would gradually withdraw. This assessment was borne out when Wilkinson's invasion failed in 1813.

The first and most important defensive position above Montreal was the Coteau rapids. The canal and blockhouses built by Twiss in 1779 for its defence still existed, but because of the increase in wartime traffic through the canal and its greater importance as a defensive situation, both the waterway and its defences were considerably improved during the War of 1812. Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres, the Commanding Royal Engineer in Canada, recommended, after he inspected the post in December 1812, "A Block House on the Point to contain 200 Men, also to enclose, and entrench the position; to be armed with two 12 pounders."¹⁶ A large octagonal blockhouse was finished by 1 June 1814. A battery was constructed on the point of land toward the river. The two blockhouses on the opposite side of the canal and the other buildings erected there were entrenched with ditch, palisades and abatis.¹⁷

Bruyeres had also recommended in his letter to Prevost that a blockhouse to contain 40 men and a battery in front of it should be constructed on Prison Island. This island was located on the opposite bank of the Coteau rapids. A blockhouse and buildings for prisoners of war had been built there during the American Revolution, but they were in total decay.¹⁸ The works which Bruyeres recommended were begun in the spring of 1813.¹⁹ The defences erected at the canal and on Prison Island provided a considerable obstacle to an enemy passing up or down the dangerous rapids.

Also at Bruyeres' suggestion, a blockhouse was constructed at the mouth of the Raisin River in 1813. This was the next post up-river from the Coteau rapids, at a point where the St. Lawrence broadens out. The blockhouse was established to provide protection to *batteaux* stopping there, and also to defend the shore road and bridge crossing the Raisin River. Lieutenant

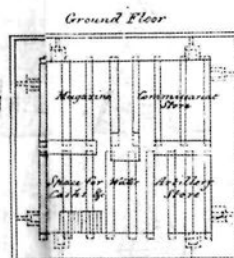
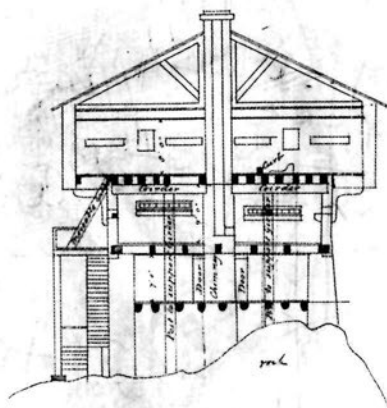
Colonel Nicolls recommended in 1814 that two 12-pounder caronades be mounted on the blockhouse, which had no ordnance.²⁰

Two miles above Cornwall, a little below French Point, the St. Lawrence narrows considerably. Nicolls, in a report to Prevost after a tour of inspection in December 1814, considered this spot (called the Widow Barnhart's) a perfect place for preventing an enemy from passing down-river. Nicolls wrote to Prevost *that ground rises gradually to about 250 from the River . . . A work might be constructed for land defence, and I think to commence here by a River Battery of 4 18 prs. and building Block-house Barracks for the Troops, would be the best protection for Cornwall on this side.*²¹

A little farther up-river at Point Iroquois, Nicolls discovered another height of land which perfectly commanded the river passage. Since the high ground was too extensive to be occupied by a single work, the Commanding Royal Engineer recommended the construction of "two Redoubts with a large Block-house within each and a River Battery."²² Nicolls considered his suggestions for permanent works at the Widow Barnhart's and Point Iroquois the most immediately necessary for defence which could be taken between Montreal and Kingston. He communicated his opinions to Lieutenant General Drummond at Kingston who agreed. Orders were given immediately for the requisition of materials from the commissariat for the three blockhouses.²³ The works were probably begun in the early spring of 1815, but by the time Nicolls had finished his tour of inspection, the war had ended, and the works he had recommended were never completed. These proposals illustrate how blockhouses and batteries might have been used effectively for the protection of river communications.

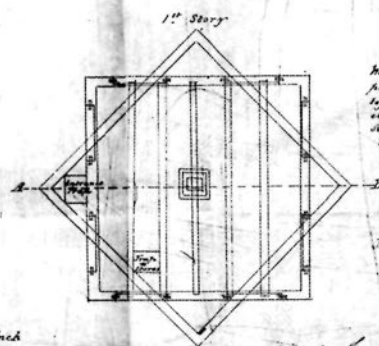
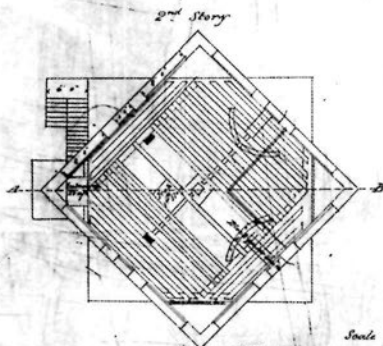
At Chimney Island, opposite the town of Johnston, a blockhouse was built late in 1814. Earlier in the year, a parapet had been raised at the lower end of the island. The current ran fast between the island and the town, and Nicolls considered the position suitable for a blockhouse and battery. During his tour in December 1814, he ordered Captain Gaugreben to build a blockhouse immediately, to finish the parapet and to construct ten platforms for artillery.²⁴

The town of Prescott is situated at the end of the long series of rapids which begin at Lake St. Francis. It was at Prescott that provisions were transferred from small *batteaux* to larger ones for the remainder of the journey to Kingston. Opposite Prescott stood the large American town of Ogdensburg, New York. From this town American raiding parties attacked settlements along the Canadian side of the river throughout the war. Lieutenant



Thickness of Masonry
 outside walls at bottom 5' 0"
 at top 3' 0"
 interior walls 2' 0"
 Chimney square 4' 0"
 Doors 2' 0" wide & 6' 6" high
 Beams 1' 0" thick cedar

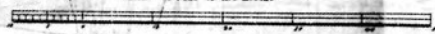
Walls 1' 5" thick pinned to 1st Story
 at the 4 points of junction with
 iron pins 1' 0" long. Machicolis
 fire at each projecting angle.
 Beams 1' 5" x 7' supported in centre
 by wooden chords 1' 5" x 8"
 four projecting angles supported
 each by 3 pine knees. Landing
 below entrance 8' square
 entrance trap 4' 0" x 4' 0". All
 ladders inside are movable



Walls 1' 5" thick made of squared
 pine timber dovetailed and pinned
 together with 8' long nails 1' 0" long
 every 2' 0" square pinned to basement
 story with 16 iron pins and straps

33 8 wooden berths are headed against
 the posts supporting the upper floor
 and 4 against the walls
 Total 26 berths in lower floor.

Scale 10 Feet to an Inch



(Signed) J. LeCompte
 Lieut. Royal Eng.

(Copy) J. H. Thompson
 Draftsman



Colonel Bruyeres, in his report to Prevost in January 1813, opined that Prescott was "the essential point to be first strengthened."²⁵ A battery had been erected on the shore near the town. Bruyeres informed Prevost that he had instructed Captain Gaugreben "to erect without delay a Block House on a small commanding spot in the rear of the present Battery which it will completely protect."²⁶ The blockhouse erected there was a large, square one-storey structure. The roof was made bomb-proof and may have mounted ordnance. The blockhouse stood in the centre of a square earthen redoubt and served as barracks for a large garrison.²⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Nicolls visited the post shortly after it was completed, and described the fort to Prevost as

*a great mass of earth badly put together: a work here may be an object as near the head of the Rapids and commencement of using small Vessels; in other respects, the site is not judicious as concerns the land and the breadth of the River is too great to prevent the passing of boats.*²⁸

The blockhouse and redoubt stood about where the present Fort Wellington is located.

Bridge Island, at the eastern extremity of the Thousand Islands, was fortified with a blockhouse in the spring of 1814. Lieutenant Colonel Drummond ordered the blockhouse to be built in May 1814.²⁹ The blockhouse was large enough to hold a company of soldiers, and mounted a 12-pound carronade and a six-pound iron gun in the upper storey. An 18-pounder on a traversing platform stood in advance of the blockhouse. Thirty soldiers of the 57th Regiment were stationed there with six artillerymen in 1814.³⁰ When Nicolls visited the post in December 1814, the fort had not been picketed in. He suggested to the commander of the detachment that surprise of the post be prevented by erecting an abatis around the perimeter of the island. Bridge Island was a normal stopping place for *batteaux* moving up and down the river.

Captain Forsyth's daring and destructive raid on Gananoque in September 1812 amply demonstrated to the British command the vulnerability of these frontier towns and of the communication by land and water. In Forsyth's raid, the bridge over the Gananoque River had been destroyed and the arms and munitions stored in the town were seized. Construction of a blockhouse to protect the harbour and the new bridge was begun in January 1813.³¹ A plan of Gananoque drawn in 1815 shows the large blockhouse surrounded by an octagonal log parapet and beyond it, square picketing. Nicolls, in his report to Prevost, described the ordnance mounted in the blockhouse as "two 12-

pr. Carronades, 2-4 and 1-3 pr."³² Gananoque blockhouse was the last fortified post on the St. Lawrence until Kingston.

The Saint John River, 1812–14

In 1812 there were only two major towns in New Brunswick: Fredericton, the inland capital, and Saint John, the port at the mouth of the Saint John River. The only defences in the province at the beginning of the War of 1812 were at Saint John. They consisted of a few small shore batteries and the dilapidated Fort Howe above the town. Fredericton was considered indefensible. During the war, the existing defences at Saint John were strengthened, and several new, temporary works were erected. Because of the superiority of the British navy and the relative strategic insignificance of Saint John, the defences erected to protect the harbour and town were neither elaborate nor strong: they merely provided security against small, predatory attacks.

There was a strategy already set out, should Saint John be attacked. If the troops were forced to retreat, they were to embark on the Saint John River in a flotilla of boats. They were to take up positions in their retreat up-river to retard or prevent enemy pursuit.³³ To facilitate this defence of the river and to protect the communication between Saint John and Fredericton, two blockhouses and a battery were established in 1813 along the river. Political motives influenced the decision to construct these works. As Lieutenant Colonel Nicolls explained to Governor Sherbrooke,

*These Works, I recommend as much in a Political, as Military Point of view – they would become Rendezvous for the Militia, as well as afford Lodgement for the small Detachments of the Regulars, at present at those Places, and would have the Beneficial Effect of giving confidence to the Natives, at a cheap rate, and show them that it is intended to defend every Avenue to the Province as long as possible.*³⁴

Oromocto blockhouse was built, as Nicolls had recommended, in 1813. The blockhouse was located 22 miles below Fredericton on the right bank of the river. Here the Oromocto River joined the Saint John and a road began which led to St. Andrews and Magaguadavic. The post was established to protect both the river and the road.³⁵

The second location which Nicolls chose for a post on the Saint John River was Worden's Ferry. At this point, about 30 miles above Saint John, the river narrowed to 400 yards.³⁶ The blockhouse and battery constructed here in 1813 effectively commanded the river and the shore road on the opposite side. The road in question was the principal land communication be-

tween Saint John and Fredericton. A semicircular earthwork battery was constructed about 150 yards in the rear of the battery on a commanding height. Two four-pounders were mounted in the upper storey of the blockhouse.³⁷

Rideau Canal Blockhouses, 1831–32

The Rideau Canal system was developed as an alternative to the St. Lawrence for the transportation of military supplies between Montreal and Kingston. The experience gained during the War of 1812 demonstrated to the British authorities that, if the western posts and settlements were to be maintained, a naval superiority on Lake Ontario was essential to preserve the extended line of communication and supply. During the war Kingston had been considerably strengthened with troops, and its harbour had become the naval and shipbuilding base for the provincial marine.

Kingston was the crucial link in the long line of communication between Quebec and Lake Superior. The St. Lawrence route was so exposed to the populated American border that an interruption of communications, supplies and the movement of troops could be made at will almost anywhere along the river. Consequently the British military had to find an alternative route. The Ottawa-Rideau river connection, if the necessary canals were built, perfectly suited the need. Between 1826 and 1832 the construction of the Rideau Canal went forward under the general supervision of Lieutenant Colonel John By, R.E.

The canal system, when completed, was a 123.5-mile route including a total of 47 locks. Its major strategic feature was that it ran perpendicularly away from the American border. But the fortification of such a large area proved as problematical as that of the St. Lawrence route itself. Obviously the locks which created the artificial waterway were the most vulnerable to destruction. Colonel Nicolls (he had been promoted in 1825 and had become the Commanding Royal Engineer in Canada) outlined the problem to Roger Byham, the Secretary to the Board of Ordnance:

*To protect in all its parts, from an enterprising Enemy, about 30 miles distant, a Line of Water Communication 148 [sic] miles long in which there are 47 Locks, and various long Dams, from 10 to 63 feet high, and to which a small number of men, in a few hours, may do more damage than could be made good again, during the summer season (little can be done in this way in Winter) is a matter of no trifling consideration, especially when endeavouring to prevent the expense of protection exceeding what the object would justify.*³⁸

In 1828, a committee appointed to consider a variety of matters relating to the works on the canal had recommended for defensive purposes only

*Lock Houses (which will serve as a rendezvous for Militia) as well secure protection against small numbers, until the general settlement of the Country will identify the preservation of the Navigation with the property and interests of the neighbouring Inhabitants; will assist in the general defense, and will point out clearly the expediency, nature, and situation of more important Works.*³⁹

The committee instructed By to purchase the necessary land for these houses. It had previously (in 1827) directed him to construct the "Lock Masters Houses in such a manner, and in such a situation, that they may become defensible Guard Houses, and a protection to the Locks and Dams at the several Stations."⁴⁰

Colonel By did not consider small lockmaster's houses sufficient defence for the canal. In 1840 he wrote to Gother Mann, the Inspector General of Fortifications, that he had postponed the erection of defensible guardhouses until his own proposal for building blockhouses at all the locks was considered. By recommended the construction of a total of 22 large blockhouses, one to defend each of the strategic points. The blockhouses could also serve as lockmasters' houses and quarters for the labourers. He described the works he proposed.

*The lower part of these blockhouses I propose building of stone, there being a sufficient quantity remaining at each station from the rock excavation to enable that part to be built of masonry, with walls four feet thick, at the same price as timber. These walls would support strong flooring beams, with a layer of masonry, to render the lower stories fire-proof and nearly bomb-proof, as shown by the Section. The roofs and timber-work I propose covering with tin, which will render these buildings very durable and difficult to destroy by fire, as tin remains free from rust in this climate upwards of sixty years. I am therefore most respectfully of opinion, that these blockhouses would lend much to the general strength of that part of the country, and recommend the forming a square redoubt round each, which would add much to their formidable appearance, and serve as mustering for the militia of the surrounding country . . . These block-houses are proposed on a large scale, that they may serve as secure depots in time of war for provisions, ammunition and small arms, for the militia, as large villages are forming at every station where there are locks building.*⁴¹

12 View of Fort Edward on the Piziquid River, Nova Scotia, 1753, by Capt. John Hamilton. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)



By's proposal was rejected because of the exorbitant cost which would have been necessary to complete the works. Despite the Board of Ordnance's reluctance to vote funds for the defence of the canal, By undertook on his own responsibility the erection of five blockhouses in 1831.⁴² The largest one, at Merrickville, measured 50 feet square in the lower storey, and was intended to contain 36 men in barracks. The walls of its lower storey were of stone, three feet thick. This blockhouse was constructed on the principles, proportion and design which By had suggested to Mann in 1830 as being the proper defence for all the important positions along the canal. Four other blockhouses were begun in 1832, one each at Kingston Mills, The Narrows, Burritts Rapids and The Isthmus. They all resembled each other but the one at Burritts Rapids was completed only to the first storey. They were built on a smaller scale (28 feet square) than the one at Merrickville, but on principles similar to those utilized in the large blockhouse. They were intended as permanent works, and care was taken in their construction. The lower storey of each, built of stone with three-foot-thick walls, was used as a store for ordnance, arms and ammunition. The upper storeys were built of hewn square timber, loopholed and machicolated. The upper floors usually served as lodgings for the lockmaster and, occasionally, for the labourers.

Many of the remaining strategic points along the canal route were later fortified with the "defensible Lockmasters houses" as originally planned. The buildings were one-storey loopholed stone or log structures.

Blockhouses and Harbour Defence

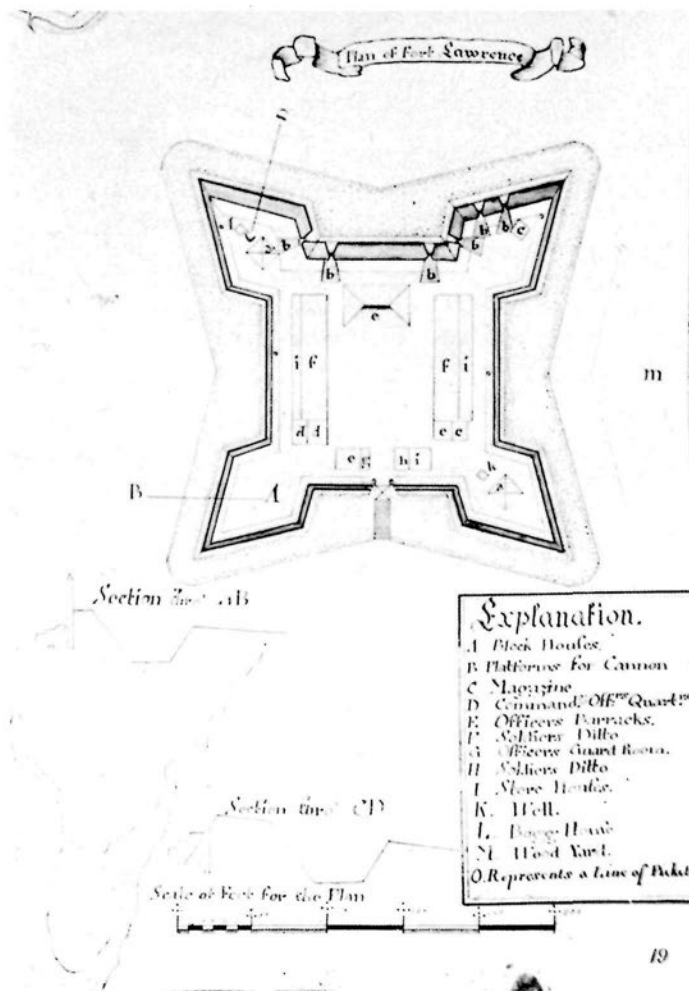
Blockhouses played only minor roles in the extensive, sometimes elaborate fortifications built for the security of harbours such as St. John's, Newfoundland, Halifax, Saint John, New Brunswick and Kingston. They were used, for the most part, as temporary expedients for defence in times of crisis or war, while the plans for permanent works of fortification for these harbours were endlessly shuffled between the engineers, the Board of Ordnance and parliament.

The regulations of the Board of Ordnance permitted a local commander to undertake only temporary, emergency fortifications on his own authority. Small batteries, blockhouses and redoubts – inexpensive works which could be built quickly in moments of crisis – accounted, therefore, for many of the works of defence in these harbours. Such works were built by different engineers with conflicting ideas, often on the fragments of earlier plans or on the ruins of earlier works. In England the prevailing attitude of the government was that the security of ports in British North America could be achieved much more cheaply and effectively by maintaining the superiority of the British fleet than by building permanent land defences. The commander of a colonial station and his chief engineer may have held contrary opinions, but the superior wisdom of Whitehall usually prevailed.

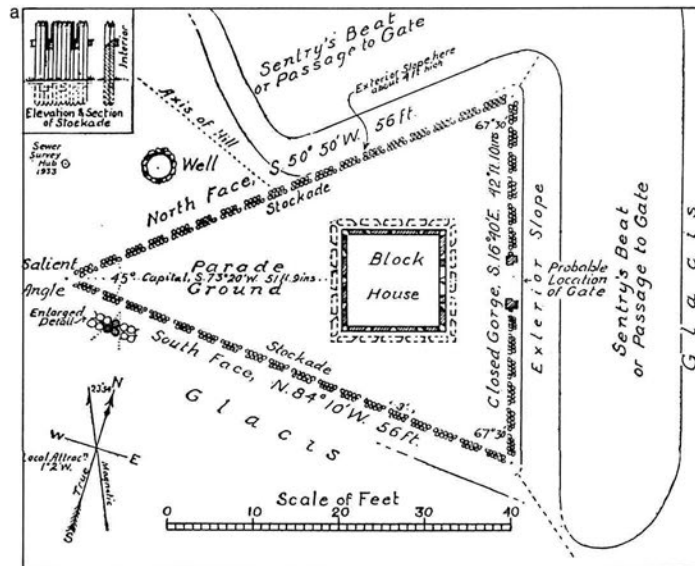
The geographical contours, the different uses and varied strategic importance of each harbour and town determined the nature and history of the fortifications built in the four harbours mentioned above. The variation was considerable. Blockhouses were usually advanced posts to the main point to be defended, and provided defensible barracks which could occupy a redoubt, support a battery, protect a road, or be joined by picketing to other blockhouses to defend an extensive tract of land which could not be regularly fortified.

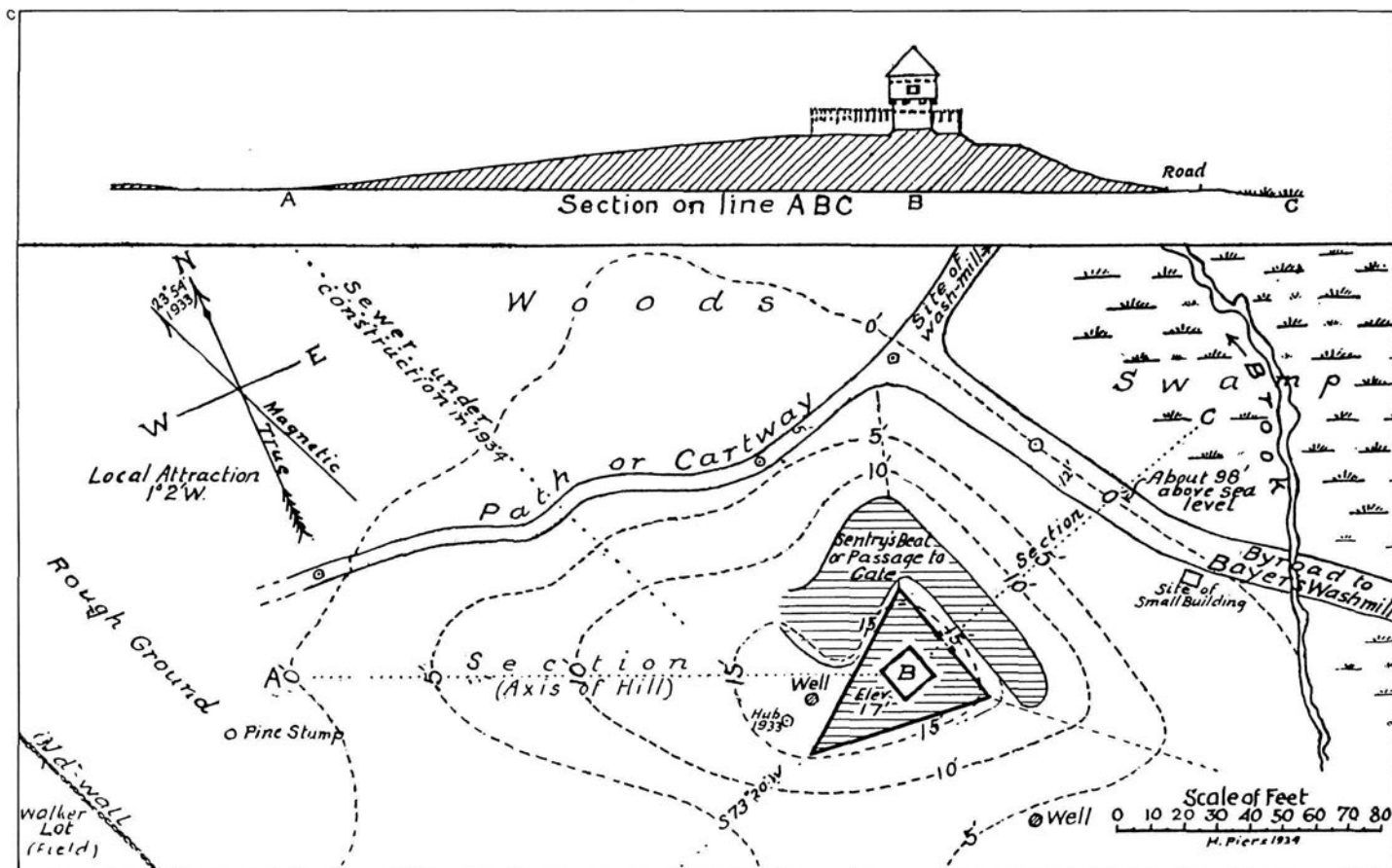
St. John's, Newfoundland

From the year 1583, when Sir Humphrey Gilbert finally and officially claimed the harbour for the Elizabethan crown, St. John's became the main refuge of the British fishing fleet in the North Atlantic. In times of war, the fishing vessels were convoyed to St. John's in the early spring, dispersed to favourite fishing waters in summer, and reassembled in the harbour in October to be convoyed back to Britain. As well, St. John's became the administrative port for the "admiral" of the fishing fleet. Although the economics of the English West Country fishing industry discouraged long-term settlement, seasonal habitation gradually gave way to a permanent establishment. In the long struggle between England and France for control of the New-



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foundland fisheries during the first Elizabeth's reign, fortifications were begun for the defence of the harbour.

Although a small stockaded fort (Fort William) had been built in 1790 for the accommodation of troops, measures for defence of St. John's had, from the beginning, been concentrated at the harbour's narrow entrance. The soaring cliffs which formed the small gut at St. John's made the harbour a natural stronghold. Until early in the 19th century, the succession of sea-level batteries, chains and towers in this entrance provided the main defence of the harbour. Little more was needed. A few guns at the mouth of the harbour made St. John's almost impregnable to assault from the sea.

The gradually sloping ground at the back of the harbour behind the town could not be defended, however. Four times the town of St. John's was attacked and forced to surrender. (It was taken by Le Moyne d'Iberville in 1696, by Saint-Ovide de Brouillon in 1708, by D'Haussonville in 1762, and finally by Amherst, who recaptured the fort in 1762.) Each time, the successful assaults came from the landward side behind the town. The tiny Fort William was destroyed and rebuilt no fewer than three times. Several coves and bays to the north and south of St. John's provided a number of easy landing places for troops. If an attacking fleet went unobserved, a surprise attack from the land could not be repulsed.

The British government was unwilling to spend huge amounts of money to fortify St. John's against a regular siege. As long as the fleet was considered secure and the small regular garrison housed, a seasonal town could not justify further expense. After the embarrassment caused to the British crown by the easy French victory at St. John's in 1762, Captain William Debbeig was sent out to investigate the harbour defences and to look for possible alternatives to the existing defences of St. John's. Debbeig's instructions clearly outlined government opinion of fortifications in Newfoundland.

The Protecting the Vessels, Seamen, and Fishing Utensils from a sudden Attack, as has been said above, is the main point. The protection of the Inhabitants settled on the Island, is neither practicable nor desirable. The Choice of a secure port where ships can retire to, seems to be the only means of affording them protection; and Batteries and Forts, at the same time that they defend the Entrance may afford security to the Stores. A large Fortress which would require a numerous Garrison, would afford no protection to the Shipping against a Force capable of laying Siege to it, and against a lesser force, the Batteries which are proposed for the Defence of the Entrance of the Harbour alone would be sufficient . . . As to the Garrison

that can be allowed, their number must entirely depend on the size of the Works, and that must again depend on the Situation of the Ground. The less number requisite to defend the Works, the better; but Two Hundred men, or three Hundred at the most, if necessary, may be granted.¹

Captain Debbeig duly made his recommendations, which were ignored for almost a decade. During the American Revolution, when Britain was again forced seriously to reconsider the defences of the port, a strengthening of the works and the erection of new fortifications were ordered. Captain Robert Pringle superintended the works, which followed closely Debbeig's earlier recommendations. New batteries were built at the harbour mouth, a chain was installed across the gut, and Fort Townshend, an earthwork, rose above the town behind Fort William.²

In 1793, war between England and revolutionary France again brought the fortifications of St. John's into focus and under criticism. Colonel Thomas Skinner, the Commanding Royal Engineer at St. John's, finally turned the opinion of the government toward considering a citadel. Neither Fort William nor Fort Townshend adequately covered the town or harbour. Each fort provided only security for its own garrison – but even this was an uncertain safety: it had been conceded by all the engineers ever stationed at St. John's that these forts were commanded from the ranging hills behind the town. Signal Hill, the north-side eminence at The Narrows, could, with proper fortification, be made into a final, safe retreat against a regular siege. It commanded the harbour but could not completely protect the town. If the British were to keep Newfoundland, Skinner and all the engineers who followed him argued, Signal Hill was the point to be fortified.

It was at the back of the highest ridge on Signal Hill that the British built the only blockhouse for defensive purposes in the history of St. John's. The blockhouse was begun in 1795 and was intended to be the focus and high point of the Signal Hill defences. The lower storey was 30 feet square and built of stone. This storey was considered bomb-proof and contained space for 150 barrels of powder and other artillery stores. The upper storey was used as quarters for officers and artillerymen; it was wooden, and was turned diagonally on the storey below. The roof was flat and was intended to mount ordnance. Two batteries, east and west of the blockhouse, were built at the same time.³

In the two succeeding decades an extensive system of fortification was built to occupy Signal Hill, but under no systematic plan. The blockhouse was demolished in 1814 to make way for

a Martello tower – part of an extensive proposal for a permanent citadel by Captain Elias Walker Durnford, R.E. This tower and most of the works which Durnford proposed were never built. Two blockhouses were built later on the hill, but were used mainly as signal towers and seem to have had no defensive significance.

With this one exception, the absence of blockhouses at St. John's is, for the most part, explained by the government's reluctance to fortify the town. The only measures taken for defence at the back of the harbour were Fort William and Fort Townshend, which were established solely for the security of the government and regular troops. Wooden musket-proof blockhouses would have done little to defend the batteries located in The Narrows. Batteries were established at various times at the out-harbours and coves near St. John's but, unlike the rest of Canada, no blockhouses were built to barrack the troops or protect the batteries at these points.

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Like St. John's, Halifax was an important naval base from the day it was founded, but the geographical features of Halifax harbour, unlike St. John's, provided no easy answers for protection against sea assaults. The relative vulnerability of the harbour, however, was balanced against the fact that an attack on Halifax had to be made directly by sea: no suitable landing place for troops existed short of St. Margaret's Bay, 25 tortuous miles to the west. Consequently little attention was ever given to the landward defences at Halifax except in the very early period. Efforts at fortification were concentrated at points on each side of the harbour entrance, and on a series of citadels behind and above the town. The ultimate safety of the harbour rested with the power of the British navy. Frantic attempts at fortifying Halifax in times of war alternated with extended periods of total neglect in times of peace. The 14 blockhouses built in the Halifax defence system between 1749 and 1808 were temporary buildings erected in emergencies.

The three peninsular blockhouses described earlier were the first to be built at Halifax. These blockhouses were constructed early in the first winter of the settlement in an attempt to seal off the peninsula from Indian attacks. The rapid growth of the town, however, and the large garrison stationed there continued to discourage any attempt by the Indians against the peninsula. The three small blockhouses built to meet the rumoured emergency of that first winter very soon became unnecessary defences.

The Naval Yard

In 1762 the rumour that a large French squadron was cruising the North Atlantic and the subsequent capture of St. John's, Newfoundland, in July of that year necessitated hurried preparations at Halifax. Work on Citadel Hill was halted in order to provide men to strengthen the batteries at the south end of the peninsula. Attention was also given for the first time to the defences of the naval yard. Building of the dockyard had been started in 1759, and its site, north of the town, was a bad choice from the point of view of defence. Major John Henry Bastide, the Commanding Royal Engineer at Halifax, had informed General Amherst a year earlier that "the Naval Yard [could] not possibly be brought within the line of Defense proposed for the Town."⁴ The naval yard's security lay in the fact that an enemy could attack it only after passing the fortifications farther out the harbour. In the emergency of 1762 the sole measure taken for the defence of the dockyard and the stores deposited there was the entrenchment of Maugher blockhouse.⁵ This blockhouse – placed on a small hill above the dockyard – had been built before the crisis.

Work on the Halifax fortifications was completely suspended with the coming of peace in 1763. The problem of the naval yard defences was left without attention until the American Revolution. By that time, a great quantity and variety of naval stores for the north Atlantic fleet was deposited at the Halifax dockyard. Concern about the safety of these stores was responsible for the government's taking more temporary measures for the defence of the yard in 1775. Lord Suffolk wrote to Governor James Legge on the subject,

The ruinous State of the Fortifications at Halifax had been the Subject of frequent consideration, but as the ablest Engineers who have been consulted upon it have concurred in opinion that the Harbour is too extensive and the advantages of Attack too many to admit of any regular effectual plan; all Ideas of that kind have been laid aside.

*It is judged proper however upon the present occasion to direct that some Works upon a temporary plan of defence should be constructed for the Security of the King's Naval Yard, and the Board of Ordnance will by this conveyance send out orders to that Effect to the principal Engineer at Halifax.*⁶

A month later, in November, Legge reported to Dartmouth that Captain William Spry, R.E., was employed "in preparing some Temporary Works for the security of the [naval] Yard."⁷ In September 1776 Spry advised General Eyre Massey that three bastions behind the naval yard were finished, and a double stockade with loopholes completely surrounded the yard. Two

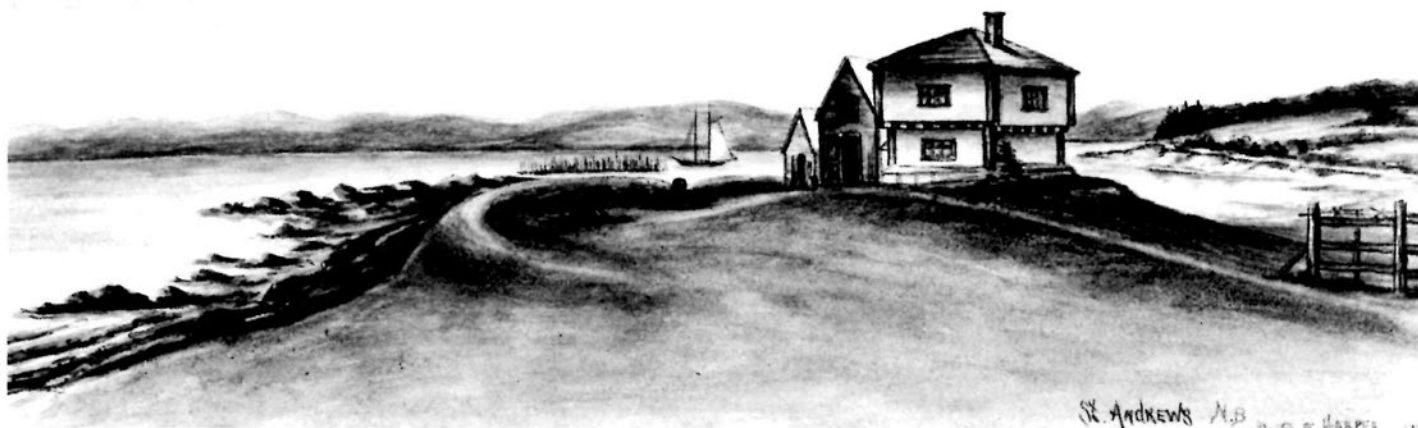
15 Watercolour by Harry Piers of the middle peninsular blockhouse, Halifax, 1751. (*Public Archives of Nova Scotia.*)

15



16 Watercolour by Miss S.E. Harper of the west blockhouse at St. Andrews, New Brunswick. (*New Brunswick Museum.*)

16



blockhouses had been constructed outside the north and south walls of the enclosure. Spry also reported that the blockhouses intended for guardrooms to the bastions and as secondary defenses of the lines were "ready to raise."⁸

Fort Needham, north of the naval yard, was also begun in 1776. It was an earthen redoubt constructed on Pedley's Hill, and was intended to cover both The Narrows and the naval yard. It contained barracks for 50 men. A blockhouse called Fort Coote was built at the northwest end of the naval yard on a projecting point. It covered the naval yard and protected the approach to Fort Needham. Three 18-pounders were mounted at Fort Coote.⁹

None of these defenses for the naval yard was ever tested, but Captain James Straton, R.E., wrestling with the same problem in 1796, criticized the earlier temporary works. *As for putting the Dock Yard, hors d'Insult – from an Enemy besieging Citadel Hill Work – it is impossible – not even the strongest Fortress that could be erected on Needham Hill, would prevent it – much less the two little Redoubts that were there, and the three detached Bastions open in the Gorges, and connected only by a common Picketing, the whole lying on the side of a Hill Just above the Dock Yard, whose summit effectually commands those Works – and everything near it. They never could have resisted a spirited Attack.*¹⁰

Two other blockhouses were built at Halifax during the Revolution. A large octagonal blockhouse three storeys high, 50 feet in diameter and designed to barrack 200 men was constructed in 1776; it was built in a large square redoubt on the summit of Citadel Hill.¹¹ The hill's defenses consisted, at that time, of a maze of batteries and irregular earthworks begun by Bastide in 1761 and elaborated by Spry during the Revolution. The earthen redoubt which occupied the top of the hill mounted 14 24-pounders in its embrasures. The blockhouse was built in the centre of the square. Eight six-pounders mounted on the building's second storey could be fired through portholes in all eight faces of the octagonal blockhouse, and effectively covered the guns of the redoubt.

Fort Massey, a square earthen redoubt on a small hill south of the citadel at the junction of present-day South and Queen streets, was also built in 1776. Spry reported to Massey on 4 September 1776 that "two 24 pounders [are] mounted, the post defensible, and will be finished in ten days."¹² This redoubt covered the southern approach to the citadel and protected greenbank and barbette batteries situated below it. A blockhouse designed to accommodate 39 men was built in the southeast

corner of the redoubt. Two barracks and a small magazine were also included in the work.¹³

The fortifications at Halifax were again permitted to fall into disrepair after the end of the American Revolution. The next crisis to erupt was the war between England and France in 1793. His Royal Highness, Edward, Duke of Kent, had taken command of the forces in Nova Scotia in 1792. The war with France provided Edward with the excuse he needed to proceed with his plans for reshaping the defenses at Halifax. In spite of the Board of Ordnance's attempts to obstruct him, Edward managed, during his command at Halifax, to carry out an extensive revision and strengthening of the Halifax fortifications. Among his works were two blockhouses.

In 1795 Edward ordered a blockhouse to be built in the rear of the York Redoubt. Construction of this eight-gun battery had been started the year before to guard the western entrance to the harbour. The blockhouse was intended as a keep for the battery and for the small powder magazine nearby. Artillerymen stationed at the battery were lodged in the blockhouse, and its second storey mounted two small carronades.¹⁴

Another blockhouse 40 feet square was built inside Edward's star fort on Georges Island, and provided barracks for the regular troops stationed on the island. The blockhouse was designed to lodge 40 men.¹⁵ Its roof was left flat in order to mount additional ordnance within the fort.

The renewed war with France in 1807–08 occasioned the building of more defence works at Halifax. The works which the Duke of Kent had built a decade earlier were patched up, and two new works were begun at the north end of the peninsula. Fort Needham had fallen into ruins since the American Revolution, and it was completely rebuilt in 1808. A battery was constructed to protect The Narrows at the same time. Midway between the refurbished fort and the new battery, a blockhouse was built in 1808. It stood slightly to the north of Fort Needham, and mounted two 12-pounders in its second storey. It also contained a small magazine. This blockhouse covered the battery and protected the northern approaches to Fort Needham.¹⁶ Another blockhouse was constructed inside Fort Needham redoubt in order to replace the barracks, which were out of repair. General Hunter had received approval to erect a stone tower in the fort, but the shortage of time and manpower forced him to build the blockhouse as a temporary measure.

Repeated proposals had been made since 1760 to provide once more for the defence of the narrow neck of the peninsula. The recommendations made usually suggested a series of redoubts with blockhouses and batteries en barbette to occupy

the high points of land between the Northwest Arm and Bedford Basin. Fort McAlpine, which General Hunter ordered built in 1808, was the only defence ever erected for this area. It was a large pentagonal redoubt with a two-storey pentagonal blockhouse inside which was begun in the summer of 1808. The work was intended to cover the approach to Halifax from the Bedford road, and to prevent troops from landing on the north shore of the peninsula.¹⁷ The three blockhouses built in 1808 were the last to be erected in Halifax.

Saint John, New Brunswick

The harbour and town of Saint John was a post of only minor importance to the British. But by the time of the American Revolution the supply of timber from the Saint John River area was becoming absolutely necessary for providing masts for the British navy; moreover the river was the only communication route between Quebec and Halifax in time of war. The troublesome raids made by Ethan Allen and his company of rangers into New Brunswick and Nova Scotia prompted General Massey to write to General Howe in 1777 asking for reinforcements to establish a post at the mouth of the Saint John River, a request which Howe approved. In November 1777, Massey sent Captain Shudholme with 50 men and two frigates to establish the post. With them were a small blockhouse (prefabricated in Halifax) and four six-pounders to be mounted in it, to facilitate the troops' task.¹⁸ The blockhouse was erected, palisades dug in, and an abatis thrown up before winter set in. A barracks for 100 men was added during the winter. The post was named Fort Howe. It was situated on a high ridge at the northern extremity of the harbour, which it commanded; immediately across the harbour from it were the ruins of Fort Frederick. Another blockhouse was built the next year, at the other end of the high ridge overlooking the Saint John River.¹⁹

In the crisis of 1793, Governor Thomas Carleton thought it proper and necessary to build some temporary defences against sudden attack. Dorchester Battery was erected at the southern end of the Saint John peninsula. Behind it, a 20-foot-square blockhouse was built to protect the new work. The blockhouse mounted four four-pounders in the second storey. Mortar Battery, Graveyard Battery and Prince Edward Battery were built in the same year. Carleton informed Dundas that he had undertaken these works on his own authority, but that "by the voluntary assistance of the Inhabitants, I was Enabled to execute [the works] without incurring any expence to Government."²⁰

Not until the War of 1812 were any further measures undertaken to defend Saint John. With the outbreak of the war, attempts were made to put the town and harbour into a state of defence sufficient to repulse any small, sudden American attacks. If there was ever a large regular siege, the troops at Saint John were to embark in a flotilla of boats and retreat up the Saint John River, which could be easily defended against a pursuing army.

The fortifications built at Saint John during the War of 1812 were concentrated on the peninsula where the town stood and along the western shore of the harbour. (The eastern side was considered indefensible.) The British strategy was that, if the harbour could be adequately covered by the guns of the peninsula, the western shore and Partridge Island, then the enemy could not land on the eastern side. If a hostile fleet could be kept out of the harbour, there was no suitable landing place closer than 50 miles to the east.²¹

The line of defence began with Dorchester Battery and blockhouse, which were located on the southwestern tip of the peninsula. The battery and blockhouse were built in 1793 and were strengthened during the War of 1812. In 1815 the battery mounted two 24-pounders on traversing platforms. The blockhouse, which was 20 feet square in the lower storey, stood immediately in the rear of the battery. The blockhouse's upper storey mounted two four-pounders to cover the guns in front and to prevent an assault by land in the rear.²²

Mortar Battery was located 211 yards west of the Dorchester emplacement. In 1811 this battery mounted three 24-pounders on traversing platforms, two eight-inch mortars and one eight-inch howitzer.²³ The battery was a semicircular earthwork which was intended to cover the entrance to the inner harbour.

Graveyard Battery was located 150 yards north of Mortar Battery. It was a semicircular work which mounted three 24-pounders on traversing platforms²⁴ and commanded the inner harbour. It had no blockhouse.

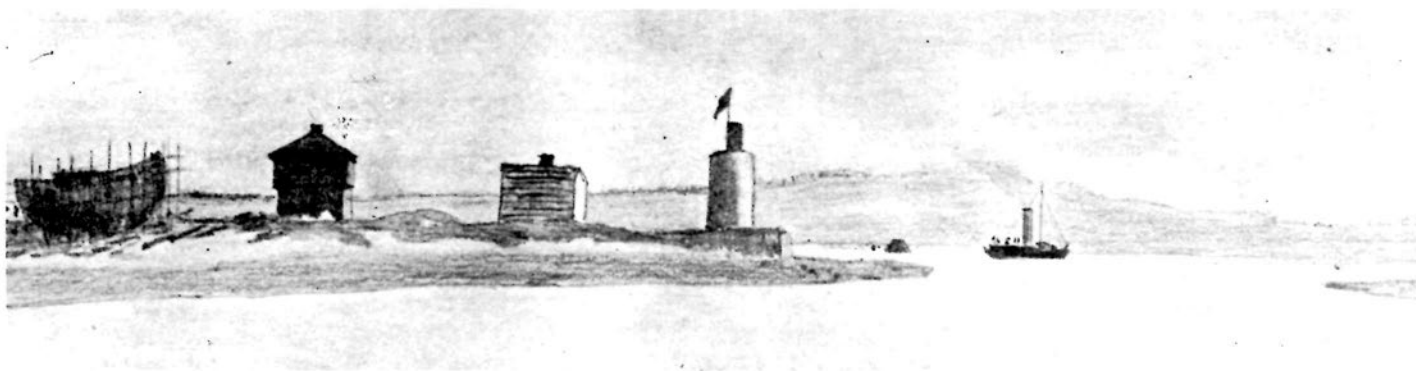
About a quarter of a mile from the Graveyard Battery guns was a small circular barbette work called Prince Edward Battery. The five 18-pounders mounted there commanded the inner harbour.²⁵ The work was situated near water level.

At the back of the town, on a hill commanding the main road into the settlement from the interior, Johnston's battery and blockhouse were built. This work was begun in 1811 and was completed during the war. The battery mounted two nine-pounders on wooden platforms. The second storey of the blockhouse contained two four-pounders.²⁶

17 Watercolour by Capt. Reid of the east
blockhouse at St. Andrews, New
Brunswick. (*New Brunswick Museum.*)

18 A sketch of the Liverpool blockhouse.
(*Public Archives of Nova Scotia.*)

17



18



At the northern end of the harbour, at the base of Fort Howe hill, stood the stone powder magazine capable of containing 750 barrels of powder. On the hill above the magazine, Fort Howe, the small stockaded work built in 1777, lay in near ruin. The rotten stockades and four six-pounders in the blockhouse provided a focal point for the defence of the town and magazine below.²⁷ Slightly to the west and rear of Fort Howe stood the blockhouse built in 1778. This position commanded Fort Howe and the mouth of the Saint John River.²⁸

The fortifications defending the western shore of the harbour began with Fort Frederick. This fort, which had been established in 1758 by Colonel Robert Monckton, was in almost total decay. The fort stood at water level, on a small point of land near the mouth of the river directly across the harbour from the town and Fort Howe. In July 1812, Captain McLaughlan, the resident Royal Engineer at Saint John, decided that the fort should be reconstructed. He believed that guns situated at this point would provide a good extra defence of the inner harbour and the town, and would support the batteries on the opposite shore. If an enemy succeeded in taking Fort Frederick, he could not turn the guns against the town; the fort was commanded by the heights of Fort Howe.²⁹ Nicolls, the Commanding Royal Engineer at Halifax, could see little sense in spending money to rebuild a fort which was commanded on all sides.³⁰ However, Major General George Smith, the commander of the New Brunswick forces, instructed McLaughlan to proceed with his plans for reconstructing Fort Frederick and to begin the one-storey blockhouse the latter recommended be built there.³¹

A blockhouse called Fort Drummond was begun in July 1812. It was built 1,400 yards along the western shore from Fort Frederick and was identical to Dorchester Battery blockhouse. It mounted one four-pounder and one six-pounder on wooden carriages in the upper storey.³² The ammunition for these guns was stored at Fort Frederick. The Drummond blockhouse stood on a hill which commanded the road to Musquash. If an enemy were to land in Magaguadavic Bay, he would have to pass the work in an advance on the town.

Carleton Tower, the first Martello tower to be built at Saint John, was begun in July 1814. The tower stood on a hill 200 yards behind Drummond blockhouse and commanded both the blockhouse and the road to Musquash as well as the western side of the harbour. Three four-pounders were mounted in the second floor of the tower and two long 24-pounders were mounted on its top.³³

Partridge Island, at the southwest end of Saint John Harbour, was the final and most important defence on the western side. Late in 1812, the lighthouse on the island was converted to a musket-proof barracks for 60 men. The level ground on which the lighthouse stood was enclosed with an earthen parapet 5.5 feet high. Six 24-pounders mounted behind the parapet³⁴ commanded both the eastern and western channels of the harbour. In November 1812, McLaughlan began a blockhouse in the opposite quarter of the parapet curve from the lighthouse.³⁵ This blockhouse was built to provide quarters for the officers stationed on the island, and a cookhouse for the men lodged in the lighthouse.

The seven blockhouses described above were the only ones constructed at Saint John.

Kingston, Ontario

The necessity of establishing an alternative post at the head of the St. Lawrence River developed in 1794, when Britain finally agreed to withdraw her troops from those western posts which lay, it was determined, in American territory. The post at Carleton Island, which Twiss had begun in 1778 and which had served as the naval depot for Lake Ontario and as the transshipment point for supplies to the western posts, had to be abandoned. Despite some serious objections about shallow water and the problems of fortifying the place, the British chose as their alternative Haldimand's Cove, near Kingston. Approval of the site and authorization to fortify it came from England in 1794. The Duke of Portland wrote to Dorchester, *should Haldiman's Cove, near Kingston, be found to be better adapted than any other place, for the immediate purpose of a Military Post, and for connecting the necessary Communication and Carriage of Stores etc. between Lower and Upper Canada, your Lordship will of course fortify it with that view.*³⁶

The problem of strengthening the cove to protect the naval depot proved to be a formidable one. The high ground at Point Henry could not be occupied as a citadel without an elaborate and expensive system of fortification. The rising ground on the west side of Kingston harbour behind the town commanded the harbour, Point Frederick, Navy Bay and the dockyard. No single system of defence could occupy the whole area. In the absence of any simple, inexpensive solution to the problem of defending Kingston, the British relied on continuing peace with the United States and ignored the question of the harbour's fortifications. A report on the state of the fortified military posts in Upper Canada, prepared by Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres for Prevost in August 1811, did not mention Kingston.³⁷

Sir George Prevost was aware of the undefended state of Kingston, and fully realized that an American attack on the post would cut communications between Upper and Lower Canada and deprive the British of the naval resources of Lake Ontario.³⁸ Several times in the first year of the War of 1812, Prevost considered moving the naval stores to York in order to get them away from the American frontier; but the need for a strong post at the head of the line of navigation of the St. Lawrence and the momentum of the war delayed his decision.

In the meantime, Kingston had become established and would have proved difficult to move. The naval depot, dockyard and shipbuilding yards remained where they were. The post's importance increased as the war proceeded. The garrison was increased considerably in the summer and fall of 1812, and temporary works for the harbour's defence were begun. During the war, extensive work was undertaken at Point Henry for the protection of the naval yard. A series of batteries and blockhouses was erected at various other points in an attempt to protect the town and harbour. These works were all temporary ones, intended to take the best advantage of the ground that time allowed.

In the first months of the war, a battery was begun on Point Frederick to protect the entrances to Kingston harbour and Navy Bay. A small blockhouse was constructed behind the battery in order to cover the work and to provide barracks for the artillerymen. When Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres visited Kingston in December 1812, he recommended that another blockhouse be built on Point Frederick. This blockhouse was to be much larger than the one supporting the battery: 48 feet square in the lower storey, and capable of barracking 160 men in hammocks. Bruyeres hoped that this blockhouse would provide additional protection for the dockyard.³⁹ Work on the blockhouse began in the spring of 1813. It was located where the Martello tower on Point Frederick now stands.

To protect the outer channels of Kingston harbour, a small blockhouse and single-gun battery were established on Snake Island in 1813. The island is about four miles southwest of the mouth of the harbour.⁴⁰ Work also began in 1813 on the defences for the western side of the harbour and the defence of the high ground behind the town. The object of the batteries and blockhouses built there was to prevent an enemy landing on the western shore near the town. In addition, if the Americans could have occupied the rising ground behind the town, their cannon would have commanded the entire area, except Fort Henry. However, the ground was too extensive and time

was too short to prepare anything but a series of small works connected by a line of palisades.⁴¹

The defences on the western side of the harbour began at Murney's Point where a redoubt (consisting of an earthwork battery with blockhouse en barbette) was constructed in 1813.⁴² About midway between Murney's Redoubt and the battery on Mississauga Point, a small blockhouse was built on the water's edge to protect the end of the line of picketing behind the town.⁴³ On Mississauga Point, a four-gun battery co-operated with the battery at Point Frederick to defend the entrance to the inner harbour. Behind Mississauga Point, on rising ground which commanded the battery, blockhouse no. 1 was built. Blockhouse no. 2 was erected on a triangular piece of land at the corner of Grass and School streets. This work was the second in the line of palisades rising behind the town. Blockhouse no. 3 was the next work in the line. Here the picketing was formed into a bastion and the blockhouse stood in the gorge.⁴⁴ Midway between this work and blockhouse no. 4, a redan was formed in the palisading and a line barracks established. Blockhouse no. 4 was situated on a hill overlooking the main road entering Kingston from York. The picketing at this point was formed into a bastion with the blockhouse inside. Blockhouse no. 5 commanded the main road out of Kingston toward Gananoque, and was the last post in the line. The picketing was formed into a bastion around the blockhouse, and then continued sharply down the hill to the water's edge.⁴⁵

Since all the blockhouses built in this line of picketing were erected at the same time and for the same general reasons, it may be safe to assume that they were very similar to each other, if not identical. They were all intended primarily as defensible barracks. Blockhouse no. 5 measured 30 feet square in the lower storey, and was reported to be capable of containing 45 men on iron bedsteads.⁴⁶ Blockhouse no. 2 was described as being similar to no. 5.⁴⁷ The only visual evidence available is a painting of an "old blockhouse at Kingston"; the blockhouse is not identified (see Fig. 39) but is probably no. 5.

The ten blockhouses built at Kingston in the War of 1812 were the only ones ever erected there.





Blockhouse Barracks of Fort George, Fort Amherstburg and Fort St. Joseph

Most of the blockhouses in Canada were built, to a greater or lesser extent, as barracks for troops. But the large blockhouses built in 1796 at Fort George and Amherstburg, and in 1797 at Fort St. Joseph, are unique in one sense: the peculiar course of events determined that the entire garrison and most of the stores were lodged in a single blockhouse of a stockaded fort. These forts are excellent examples of the temporary and expedient measures adopted by the British in times of peace, which proved completely inadequate in wartime when cedar pickets and musket-proof blockhouses were no match for the frontier war in the making. These three forts spelled the end of the viability of stockaded works on the Great Lakes system. Each of them was, appropriately, destroyed in the War of 1812. Fort George was burned to the ground by heated shot from American guns; Fort Amherstburg was burned by the retreating British; Fort St. Joseph was abandoned by the British and burned by the Americans.

By the provisions of Jay's Treaty (1794) which finally settled the boundary dispute in North America, Great Britain promised to withdraw her regular forces from the western posts within two years. The withdrawal of these troops to British territory meant the establishment of three new frontier posts: Fort George on the Niagara frontier; Fort Amherstburg at the mouth of the Detroit River, and Fort St. Joseph on St. Joseph Island in Lake Huron. Because the treaty had settled the outstanding point of contention between Great Britain and the United States, a long period of peace was expected. Consequently Parliament was not inclined to spend a great deal of money to establish strong frontier defences. The three posts which were built were designed principally to be inexpensive, temporary, defensible storehouses and barracks. Political and commercial considerations outweighed those of the military. The forts had to be maintained and garrisoned to provide a rendezvous for the Indians, and a mechanism for the distribution of gifts and supplies to them which would, Britain hoped, assure the necessary alliances against the eventuality of another war with the United States. The posts were also maintained in order to protect and control the fur trade.

While the entire establishments of Niagara, Detroit and Michilimackinac were removed across their respective waterways, the original large blockhouses built at the three posts were designed as catch-alls for stores and troops. A good example is provided by the blockhouse on St. Joseph Island. In 1806, the room use of this blockhouse was as follows: the upper storey

was divided into six rooms, including two large ones for the soldiers and four smaller ones for officers' quarters; the lower storey was divided into four rooms, including an ordnance store-room, a room for provisions and commissary stores, one room for Indian Department stores and one for regimental stores. All were in a very crowded condition.¹

The three original large blockhouses were all built from a single plan prepared by Gother Mann, the Commanding Royal Engineer in Canada.² They were large enough to contain immediately those stores which had to be put under cover. The blockhouses measured 96 feet by 26 feet in the lower storey and 100 feet by 30 feet in the upper. The upper storey, because it was used as a barracks, was loopholed for rifle fire. The sequence in the establishment of the forts was the same in all three cases: large blockhouses were erected in 1796 to accommodate the troops and necessary stores, followed closely by the erection of magazines to keep powder dry and of picketing to prevent stealing and to define the work. Finally, over a period of years, each fort grew slowly and found its own level, determining which buildings were necessary to allow the proper functioning of each department.

Fort George

Fort George³ was begun in 1796 on a point of land about a mile from the mouth of the Niagara River, just in advance of the town of Newark which was then the administrative capital of the upper province. When completed the fort consisted of six bastions connected by 12-foot-high cedar picketing; the whole was surrounded by a ditch. Guns were mounted in the six solid earth bastions. Inside the fort stood three blockhouses, one large one flanked by two smaller ones, north and south. The large blockhouse, called the "Centre Blockhouse," was the original building in the fort. It measured 96 feet by 26 feet in the lower storey. In 1803 the upper storey was divided into four small rooms for officers' quarters and two large rooms for soldiers.⁴ The lower storey was divided into one large room for ordnance stores and two smaller rooms for regimental stores. The "North and South Blockhouses," as the two smaller ones were called, were built in 1797 to accommodate the increased garrison. They were identical buildings, each measuring 41 feet by 21 feet in the lower storey. They were used as barracks and could contain 100 men each.⁵ An octagonal blockhouse was constructed in the southeast redan of the fort in 1800. This work was constructed to help cover the powder magazine, which was inside the fort near the southeast bastion. The fort

also contained a storehouse, officers' quarters, guardhouse and kitchen.⁶

The poor location of Fort George (it neither commanded the mouth of the river nor protected the town) and the vulnerability of the wooden defences were perfectly demonstrated in the War of 1812. Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres had warned Prevost a year before the war that the frontier posts were badly placed and extremely vulnerable. He stated that

*There is not one situation that can be considered as a safe depot. The works are faced and lined with wood, the bastions connected by palisades. The buildings are of wood, liable at all times to accident by fire, and within the power of an enemy to be burnt whenever he chooses to undertake it.*⁷

The Americans chose to undertake it on 25 May 1813. A heavy bombardment by the American batteries silenced the guns of Fort George and burned every wooden building in the fort by noon. The following day the main assault began and, in the face of overwhelming odds, Brigadier General Vincent gave orders for the British troops to retreat. Before they left, the British spiked their guns and set fire to the magazines.⁸

The position was recaptured by the British in December of 1813, and the fort was partially rebuilt. They also captured the American Fort Niagara. With Fort George partly rebuilt, Fort Niagara in their hands and the beginnings made on a fort at Mississauga Point, the British were assured of control of the mouth of the Niagara River for the remainder of the war. After the peace treaty, Fort George was gradually allowed to fall into ruin, and the main British efforts for defence were transferred to the more strategic Mississauga Point.

Fort Amherstburg

The fort at Amherstburg⁹ (alternatively called Fort Malden) was begun in 1796. The site, which was chosen as a replacement for Detroit, was at the western entrance of the Detroit River into Lake Erie. The fort was located opposite Ile Bois Blanc, thereby commanding the eastern channel of the river which passed inside the island. This channel was the main shipping route, and had to be used by all but the smallest boats.

The fort was similar to Fort George but enclosed less space. Four small bastions faced with timber were connected by a predominantly cedar picketing. The square measured 80 yards on a face, and the whole fort stood about 30 yards from the river. In the centre of the fort stood a large blockhouse similar to the centre blockhouse at Fort George. The upper storey was again divided into four small rooms for officers and two large ones for troops. In 1803 the lower storey was divided into five rooms,

two used by the adjutant, two used as a mess and kitchen and one large room used for ordnance stores.¹⁰

After the American assault on York in May 1813 and the destruction of Fort George a few weeks later, the post at Amherstburg was all but cut off from reinforcements and supplies. With the American fleet under Commodore Perry completely in control of Lake Erie, it was only a matter of time before the fort at Amherstburg would have to be abandoned. In the face of a naval blockade by Perry and the threat of a land assault by General William Henry Harrison, Major Henry Proctor, commanding at Amherstburg, ordered a retreat on 26 September 1813. Before they left, the soldiers destroyed the barracks, shipyards and remaining fortifications.¹¹ Proctor's retreating army was defeated at Moraviantown mission on 5 October 1813.

Although the Americans rebuilt the fort during their occupation of it, and the British continued their restoration after the peace was signed, there is no further evidence that blockhouses were ever again constructed in the fort.

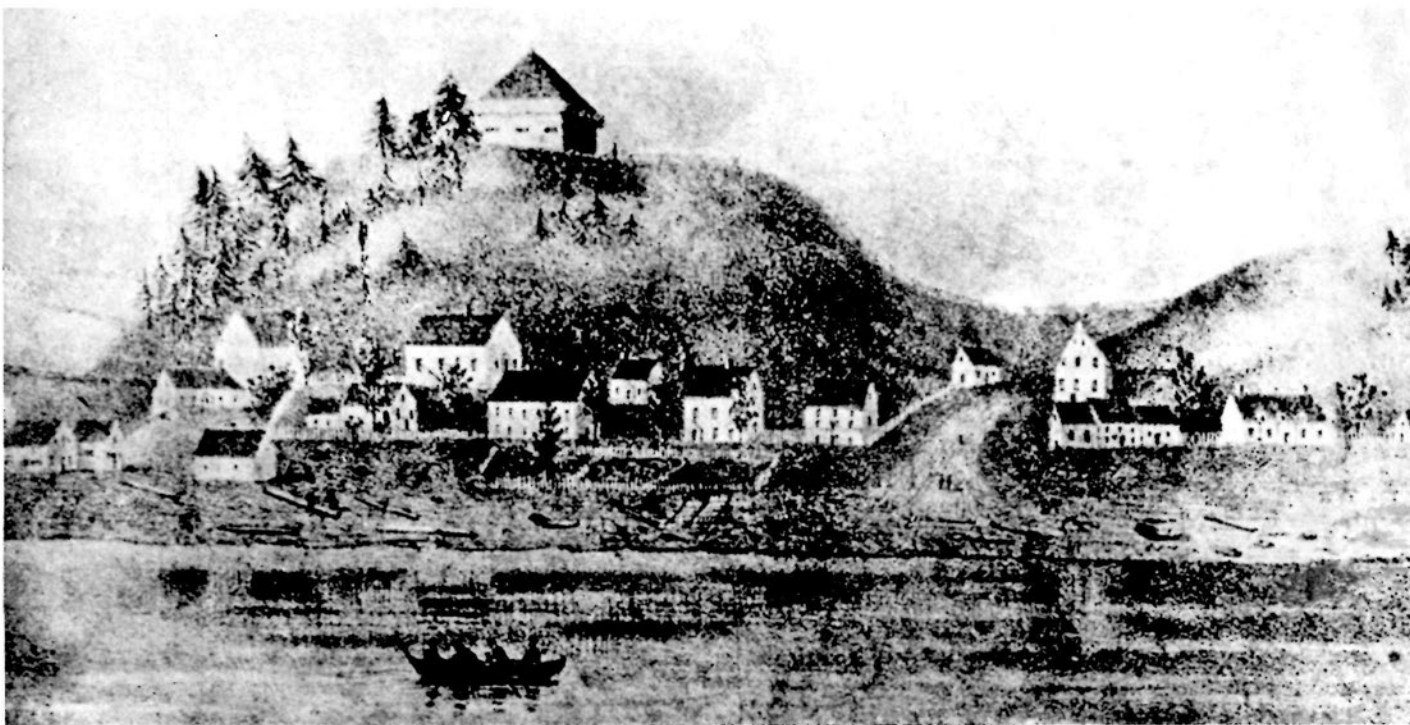
Fort St. Joseph

Fort St. Joseph¹² replaced Michilimackinac in 1797 as the most westerly of the British fortified posts. The fort was 1,500 miles from Quebec by the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes route. The situation chosen for the new fort was on a small promontory of St. Joseph Island at the entrance to the St. Marys River. The fort was intended to be the general rendezvous for the Indians and fur traders of the area.

A large blockhouse, similar to those at Fort George and Amherstburg, was begun first. Lieutenant Lacy of the Royal Engineers, supplied with a plan by Gother Mann, was sent in the spring of 1797 to superintend the erection of the blockhouse. Captain Peter Drummond, in command at the island, was instructed to begin preparing materials for the blockhouse pending Lacy's arrival.¹³ The blockhouse was begun that summer, but for lack of materials could not be completed the first year.¹⁴ Lieutenant George Landman, R.E., was ordered to St. Joseph the next spring to complete the blockhouse and to begin other works on the site.¹⁵ Landman supervised the construction of the fort until it was completed in 1800.

The post, when finished, resembled Amherstburg. It was a picketed square 100 yards on a side with bastions in the corners. Guns were mounted in the two bastions facing the river. The large blockhouse, exactly like those at Fort George and Amherstburg, stood in the middle of the square. Other structures in the fort included an arched stone magazine, a kitchen, two storehouses, officers' and men's guardrooms. The top floor

21



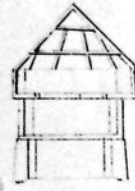
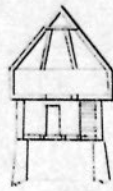
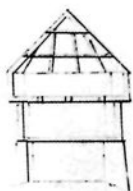
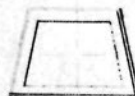
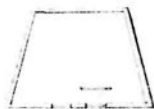
22



Coteau du Lac

*N° 2 Blockhouse
Is a bad state*

*N° 3 Blockhouse
Not worth repair*



of the blockhouse was divided into four small officers' rooms and two large rooms for soldiers. The lower storey was divided into four storerooms.¹⁶

Captain Bruyeres reported to Prescott in August 1811 that the fort was "in bad disrepair and incapable of any defence."¹⁷ Captain Charles Roberts, who commanded at St. Joseph when war was declared in 1812, was of the same opinion. Rather than risk defeat on the island, Roberts determined to take offensive action; accordingly on 16 July 1812, he led his small detachment and a band of Indians in a successful attack on Michilimackinac. Because of Michilimackinac's superior strength and position, the British were able to maintain the post throughout the war. The fort on St. Joseph Island remained unoccupied, and was burnt to the ground by an American force raised against Michilimackinac.

The fort at St. Joseph was never rebuilt.¹⁸ The British began fortifying Drummond Island in Lake Huron after the war. When that island was awarded to the Americans, the British retired to Penetanguishene.

Conclusions

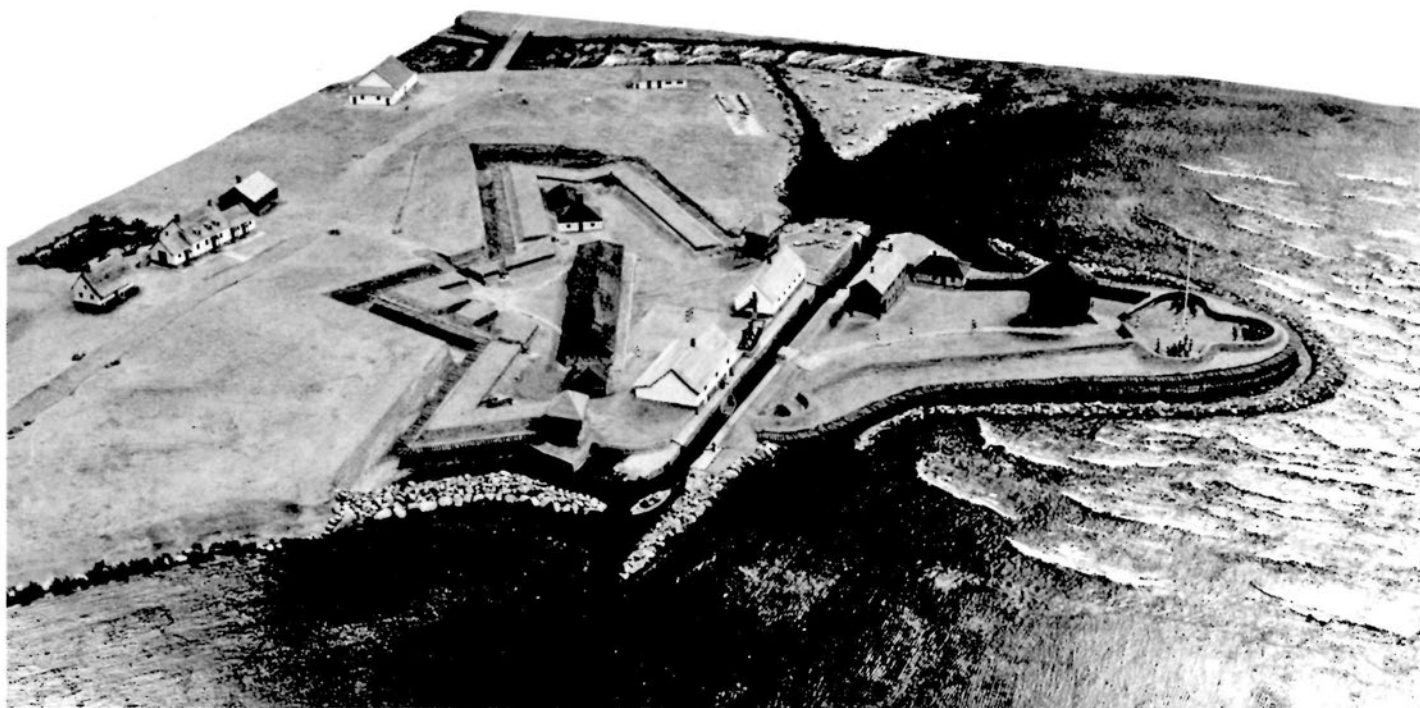
Most of the blockhouses built in Canada were designed and erected only as temporary fortifications. In most cases, the blockhouses answered the need for inexpensive and easily constructed defences which individual crises demanded. The blockhouse was a defence which could be built quickly, using local materials, without any large expenditure of labour or money. It was therefore adapted to a wide variety of situations, and was used as an isolated post, as a keep for a battery, inside a stockaded fieldwork, or as part of a more elaborate system of permanent works. In each case the blockhouse provided essentially a barracks which could be defended against musketry. The size, shape and construction details varied with function and with the skill and idiosyncracies of individual builders.

Although the two-storeyed horizontal log design prevailed it was not a rigid type of construction. Somewhere, amid the variations in design and function, a woolly definition of the blockhouse type might be found: it was a single defensible structure, usually composed of thick horizontal logs, machicolated, two-storeyed, loopholed for muskets and portholed for ordnance, and was normally a barracks for a small detachment of men. But the best definition possible, if definitions are necessary, is that of example; one may take a blockhouse like that at Mada-waska, which was complete in every respect, and use it as a standard for comparison, although ultimately each blockhouse must be studied as an individual structure.

Two closely related factors were responsible for the extensive use of blockhouses as fortifications in British North America. First, the enormous territory to be defended, both on the Atlantic coast and along the interior frontier waterways, demanded numerous small posts to provide local defences, and often to maintain and protect an extended line of communication. Second, parliament was unwilling to spend the enormous amounts of money which would have been necessary to systematize and fortify permanently the important Atlantic harbours or the strong points along the interior frontier. Most blockhouses were temporary answers to the basic dilemma of money and security.

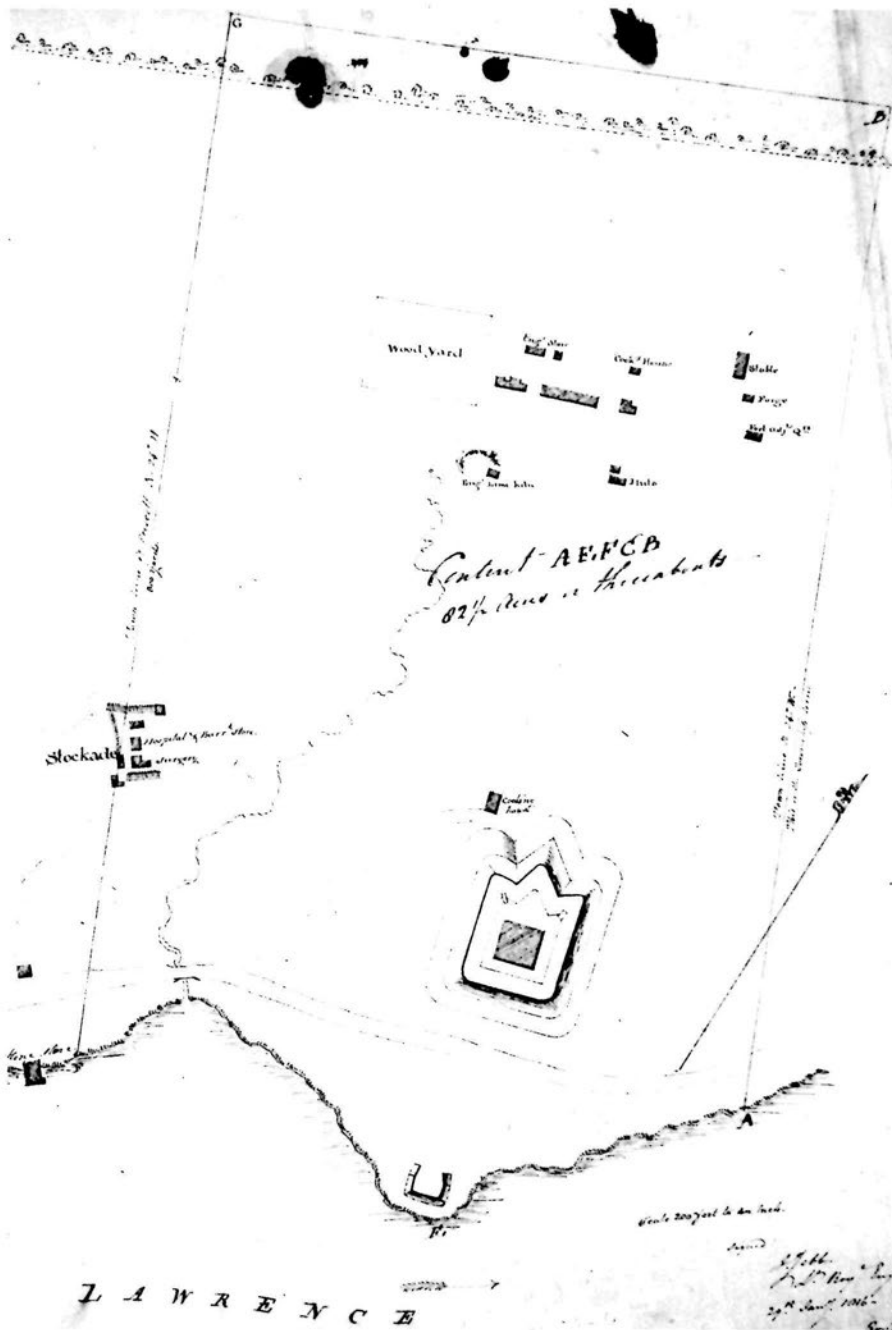
In the British conquest of Acadia, the first war waged by the English against the Indians in Canada, the blockhouses were closest to the earlier American origins. They were built as temporary defences against muskets and arrows, in situations where there was little chance of artillery being used against them. Blockhouses were built in the important smaller Atlantic coastal communities during the War of 1812 to provide temporary defences against American privateers. In these situations, the blockhouses assumed a secondary defensive role after the

harbour batteries, and served mainly as keeps and barracks for the artillerymen. Along the inland frontier waterways of Canada, blockhouses, either by themselves or in support of batteries, served as advanced or intermediate posts between the more regularly fortified strong points. These blockhouses provided a local defence, housed small detachments of troops and helped protect the various lines of communication and supply. They were also useful in providing rallying points for local militia. In regular fortifications of important harbour defences and interior strong points, blockhouses were invariably used as temporary expedients to strengthen these positions in times of crisis, while the intended permanent systems awaited the outcome of crises and the decisions of Whitehall.



25 First blockhouse at Fort Wellington, 1813. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

26 Merrickville blockhouse, August 1969.
(Photo by author.)



Part II A Catalogue

Introduction

Part II is a catalogue of blockhouses in Canada, listed alphabetically, usually by blockhouse name; where several successive blockhouses were built in the same area, they are listed alphabetically by place name followed by blockhouse name. In addition each blockhouse is identified by date of construction, followed by a chronological list of relevant documentation.

This section of the report is intended to provide a documentary history of each blockhouse. This list of blockhouses is not a complete one, but is a preliminary attempt to organize the documentation, incomplete as it is. It is hoped that this arrangement of sources will supply the need for a quick and convenient reference tool and a coherent context from which future research can proceed.

Amherst Island Blockhouse, 1839?

[Notification of application from the Ordnance] for a steady non Commissioned Officer, or Private, to be permanently stationed at Amherst Island, (18 miles distant,) in charge of a Block House lately erected there, and which has hitherto been in charge of a man attached to the Militia.¹

Amherstburg, Bois Blanc Island Blockhouse, 1796

The Block House and Battery on the Island of Bois Blanc is ridiculous in the extreme: a landing may be effected on different parts of that Island without molestation; an intelligent Enemy may without loss or danger turn the Battery against ourselves.¹

Amherstburg, Naval Yard Blockhouses, 1797

The Estimates for . . . Covering the second floor of the right flanking Blockhouse . . . are approved.¹

The following Estimates have been approved, namely,...to construct a picketing round the Blockhouse at the Naval yard.²

The sick at present occupy the lower part of the Blockhouse No. 2 which is improperly situated. A barrack room for 24 Men, and a building not in any manner calculated for the purpose . . . I should recommend to fit up the two blockhouses No. 2 and 3 situated near the naval yard with double berths on the new construction to accommodate the troops. The lower part of No. 2 is at present made use of for a hospital, the upper part as Quarters for 24 men. No. 3 is at present made use of for two officers quarters. If fitted up each blockhouse would contain 48 men.³

There are two small Detached Block Houses constructed as a protection to the Marine Arsenal they are occupied as officers Quarters and are contiguous to the Navy Yard.⁴

Amherstburg, No. 1 Blockhouse, 1796

The Expences for weatherboarding the Blockhouses and for inclosing the Timber and wood yards, being directly contrary to the General Orders of the 21st January 1795. His Excellency the Commander in Chief does not approve, nor will he authorize any Payment to be made for materials purchased or workmanship performed on account thereof.¹

3rd [Estimate]. for plastering the partitions between the officer's and men's quarters in the Blockhouse opposite the Isle aux bois blanc and for adding a second partition to be also Plastered, amounting to Five pound, eighteen shillings, His Excellency is pleased to approve of.²

His Excellency has been pleased to approve the Estimate for weatherboarding the Blockhouse, amounting in workmanship to Forty three Pounds three shillings.³

The Estimates for . . . Lathing and Plastering officers quarters in the Ordnance Blockhouse – Building a Porch and making Partitions, shelves etc . . . are approved.⁴

The Estimates received in your letter of 15th May 1st for taking down the South Chimney of the Ordnance Blockhouse, and rebuild it with two fireplaces on the Lower floor . . . are approved –

The Removing of the fixed ammunition, from the Ordnance Blockhouse to the Temporary Magazine is approved.⁵

It is intended to throw a Picketing all round the Blockhouses, a sufficient quantity of Pickets may be cut by the Troops during the winter, as you propose – They must not be less than from Five to Eight Inches Diameter, and twelve feet long.⁶

The estimate for clearing round the Powder Magazine, and for fitting up Officers Quarters in Blockhouse No. 1 – and repairing others is also approved.⁷

The Estimate for fitting up additional quarters for Officers in the lower part of the North end of the Ordnance Blockhouse, amounting to £30:4–5/2 Currency is approved.⁸

The roof of the large blockhouse No. 1 within the Fort will require to be shingled, it is at present only covered with Boards very defective and admits to rain. It will also be necessary to paint the weather-boarding to preserve it.

There are not sufficient quarters to lodge troops at this post. I should recommend to convert the whole or greatest part of this Blockhouse into new quarters to be filled with double berths on the new construction. The upper part is 100 ft. long, 30 ft. wide contains at present 4 rooms, occupied by the commanding officer, two rooms soldiers quarters for 60 men. One room Serg^t. Major, and 2 M. Serjeant. The lower part is 96 feet long, 26 feet wide contains at present two rooms occupied by the Commanding Officer – two rooms by the Adjutant, two rooms and a kitchen made use of by the Mess, and one room for Ordnance Stores. The two rooms made use of by the Mess are converted to Soldiers Quarters and the men are removed from the lower part of No. 2 Blockhouse into the fort. If converted into soldiers barracks, the upper part would contain 4 rooms for 100 men. The lower part the same. In all eight rooms for 200 men with great ease.⁹

The White-washing the rooms occupied by the soldiers in Blockhouse No. 1 within the fort must be delayed until the new double-berths are put up and repairs in plastering completed.¹⁰

The roof of the blockhouse also requires either being newly covered or at least undergoing a thorough repair as there is not a room either in the officers or Mens Quarters that does not admit the rain as fast as it falls.¹¹

Fort Amherstburg: Situated on the East Bank of the River Detroit at the Head of Lake Erie. Is a Square Field Work consisting of four small Bastions faced with framed Timber, . . . and out of repair.

The Bastions are connected with a line of Picketing similar to Fort George in bad repair, and cannot be considered as capable of any Defence. The Troops are lodged within the Fort in a large Block House that contains Quarters for about three officers and 80 Men.¹²

Ash Island Blockhouse, 1814

I have made arrangements for the better defence of our frontier on Ash Island by increasing the strength of the Battery, and the building of a Blockhouse in its rear, and inclosing the whole with strong palisades.¹

The present Battery on Ash Island, may be considered as efficient for the defences of the Western channel, when enclosed by the log Blockhouse, and palisade averting also the additional substance of parapet now forming.²

Baie Verte Blockhouse, 1756

[Estimate for repair to] Blockhouse at Bay Verte. 9 Square Shingling to be ripped & new laid by Agreement, £9.¹

Bridge Island Blockhouse, 1814

Bridge Island is a good rendezvous for boats passing up or down; there is a Blockhouse for a Company here in which are mounted a 12 pdr. carronade & 6 pdr. iron and in a circular Battery an 18 pdr. on a traversing platform, There is also on the island a light 6 pdr. I found the officer endeavouring to put up a miserable picketting in hard frozen ground with a banquette to fire from, I directed him to secure himself from surprize, as the river freezes across here, by an abbatis around the island and informed him the battery and blockhouse are the proper places for defence with his small detachment; 30 of the 57th and 5 artillery.¹

I have found that the Boats and Batteaux have been frequently under the necessity of stopping between Brockville and Gananoque on coming up from the Lower Province; a part of the Country infested by swarms of disaffected people who are constantly in the habit of communicating with the enemy in spite of all vigilance, and as Bridge Island which is situated about 15 miles from the former and 16 miles from the latter place, affords good shelter for Boats, and an approved site for a work of defence, I have directed Captain Morton to procure some person willing to undertake the erection of a Block House upon it by contract.²

The Post very cold & uncomfortable & if the Block House is not put into better condition it will be next to impossible for the Party to stay there during the winter –

The Sergeant says that they could do tolerably well if they had two Stores allowed them & the windows Doors, & Partitions repaired and fixed. The Chimnies are the worst I think that I ever witnessed – I staid one night in the place & between the Smoke and the Cold it was intolerable . . . I could not determine the exact number of Panes of Glass as it is cut to fit the musket sashes.³

Report on the Situation and Post at Bridge Island, made . . . October 6th – 1815:

- 1st: Block House 43 feet by 24 feet, outside, of Hewn pine timber, white washed on the outside, covered with shingles. Entrance in, by strong double doors, of thick double oak plank – well spiked together, hung with strong Iron Hinges & fastened with an Iron Bar – The said entrance in the upper Story – by a Step Ladder & good Railings . . . No Door or Window, in the lower Story, except Musket Portholes.
- 2nd: Stack of Chimnies, in the Block House with two funnels, in good condition, in regard to repair, but extremely Smoky. –
- 3rd: Musket port Holes, on each side and ends of the Block House – above and below –
- 4th: Ports made for 5 pieces of Ordnance in the Upper part. Present State –
 - 1st: Doors, Ports, Step Ladders etc as above described.
 - 2nd: 18 Musket port, window sashes . . . the Glass yet remains, in about half the number.
 - 3rd: Hinges to the above sashes . . . taken away or broke.
 - 4th: 2 Sashes of 12 lights each without glass. . . .
 - 5th: 3 Window Shutters to Ports. . . .
 - 6th: 1 Large Table in good condition. . . .
 - 7th: 3-Arm Racks – one of which out of repair.
 - 8th: 28, traps or port Doors, to the ports even with the upper floor. . . .
 - 9th: Partitions, forming two Rooms of 14 feet by 11 each and a small Store Room – part of this partition is taken away, the remainder wants repair, & also two inside doors are wanted which appear never to have been fixed –
 - 10th: Lock to the Store Room Door, taken away.⁴

Burlington Blockhouses, 1814

Burlington Outlet: a two gun battery completed, a Blockhouse constructing under the direction of Lieut. Ingaerville.¹

Burlington: This Post in my humble opinion is of the greatest importance to the operation in Upper Canada; . . . I consider it to be capable of being made defensible by a very insignificant force, or of containing in Security a considerable one; with the necessary Depot of Stores in general; here is a Magazine, two Blockhouses & extensive Commissariat Storehouses in good preservation when I visited the Post.²

Burlington Heights: A blockhouse was constructed, and some earth works were thrown up on the heights, during the war: abandoned and in ruins.³

Châteauguay Blockhouse, 1814

Timber for two Blockhouses squared – and three Cubic Toises of Stone and Ten Bouviques of Lime on the Spot for 1st Blockhouse . . . If no Delay in forwarding the Required Materials, one Blockhouse will be erected by the Month of Sept^r¹

I also enclose an Estimate for Chateauguay for the Expence of Cutting down and Squaring the Timber required for the Blockhouses, which has been charged to the Workmanship for raising them – with one for clearing the ground in front of the Blockhouse which is to be erected on Right Bank of the River; as contracted for, which is in my opinion a reasonable price the Wood being exceedingly thick and good sized Timbers.²

Foundation to Blockhouse dry. 13 Toises of Stone on the spot. waiting Lime to commence upon it. The timber required all squared.³

W. Hilton has returned from the Block House on the Chateau Gai River – and has brought over Sundry Barrack Stores (no Bedding) from that place – nothing now remains in it but some Rough Tables & Forms made on the Spot.⁴

Report and Estimate of the probable expense of repairing and whitewashing the Blockhouse at Chateauguay.⁵

Chaudière River Blockhouse, 1778

I have a Detachment of Loyalists, and a Company of the 34th Regiment upon the Chaudière, at the upper part of the Settlements on which we have Picketted Fort, and are building a Blockhouse.¹

Chimney Island Blockhouse, 1814

I visited this island of which I enclose a Plan and Section, it is a spot of which the Americans would probably take possession to obstruct the Communication; as your Excellency may observe that with timber sufficient to secure themselves from shells, a little dressing and thickening the parapet and a few platforms they have already a work constructed for them. The current runs very strong here, above the Island is a ripple almost a rapid, at the lower end of it an eddy – & landing on both sides – with a view to occupy this Island at the shortest notice, Capt Gaugreben has been desired to prepare a Blockhouse and 10 Platforms, and as Johnstown is an open town and without any particular defensive advantages, the troops there seem very convenient for this purpose.¹

Chippawa Blockhouse, 1794

The Blockhouse might be weather Boarded and the crevices of the Log Work pointed, this would preserve the building, and I should imagine make it sufficiently warm. I cannot recommend Lath and Plaister, Plaister, being very expensive, and liable to damage in rooms inhabited by Troops.¹

The Village of Chippawa or Fort Welland, is situated on each side of a river of the same name, which here joins the Saint Lawrence. A wooden bridge is thrown across this stream, over which is the road leading to Fort Erie. The former fort consists only of a large blockhouse near the bridge, on the northern bank, surrounded by lofty pickets; it is usually the station of a subaltern officer and twenty-five men, who are principally engaged in conducting to Fort Erie the transport of stores for the service of the troops in the upper part of the province, and for the engineer and Indian departments.²

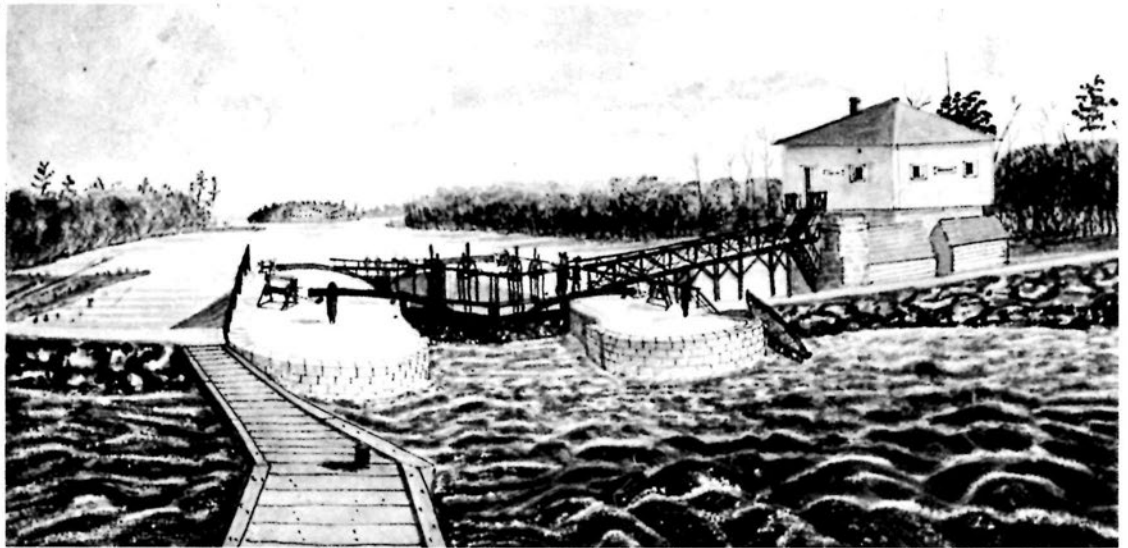
The Blockhouse will require to be weatherboarded and painted to secure the building. The upper Floor is 76 feet in length 28 feet wide 10 feet high, contains 2 Officers Rooms and One Soldiers Room for 36 men. The ground floor is 72 feet in length 28 feet wide, 10 feet high, made use of a Provision & Transport Store. The Soldiers Room will require to be plastered and White washed – The fireplaces repaired, nine new double moving Births to be made.³

Fort Chippawa: Situated on the North Bank of the River Chippawa about 16 Miles from Fort George. It is the termination of the carrying Place, 9 miles from the West Landing at Queens-town and 1-1/2 Miles above the Falls of Niagara. This Post can only be considered as a Transport Post for depositing, and forwarding public Stores to the Upper Lakes; it consists merely of a large Block House containing quarters for one officer, and 36 Men, and storeroom sufficient for the Stores deposited there. It is enclosed with a Line of Picketting very much decayed, and cannot be considered capable of any Defence.⁴

Chippawa: There is a Creek of considerable importance a Tete du Pont covers the Bridge & an Extensive line of Fieldwork is constructed (which requires improvement) to aid in Defending the passage of this Creek, one flank of the position lodges on the Niagara River, the other although somewhat strengthened by a Square Redoubt and inclosed Blockhouse in an advanced position where the creek forks, yet I consider it would require infinite precaution not to be turned on this flank & assailed in

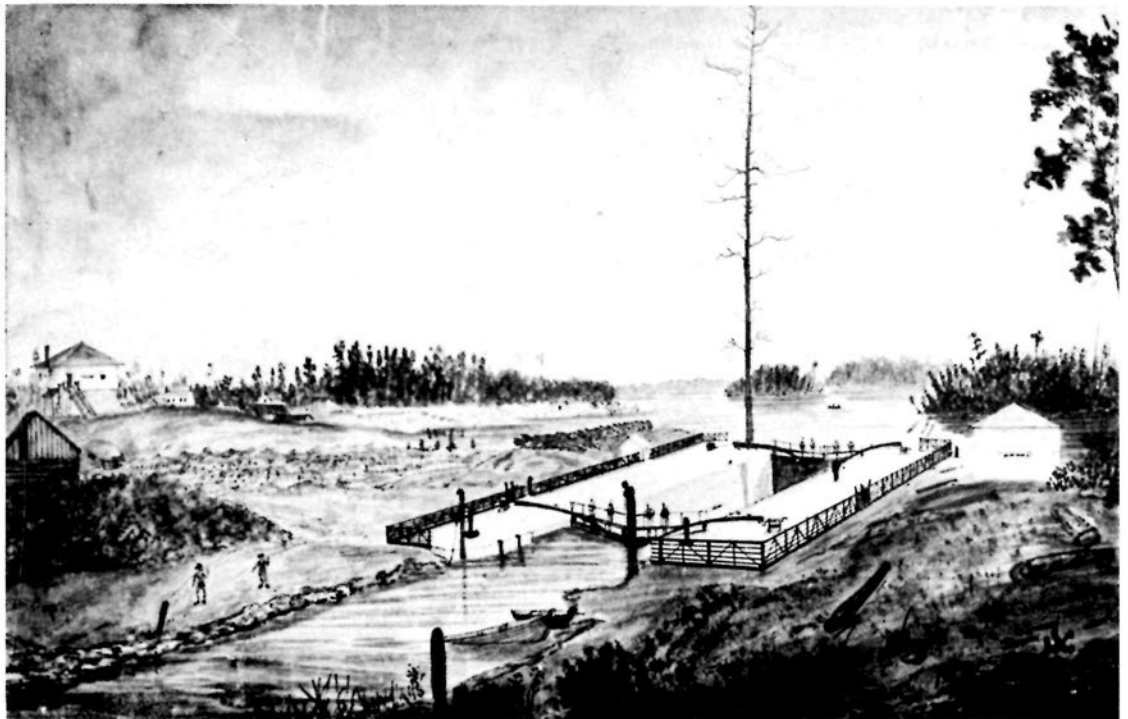
27 Blockhouse and locks at The Narrows on the Rideau canal, 1841, by Capt. Thomas Burrowes. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

27



28 "Lock &c. at the Isthmus," 1841, by Capt. Thomas Burrowes. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

28





the rear, as there are roads of interior communication from Fort Erie, & the passage of the Creek might be effected at other places.⁵

Coteau-du-Lac Blockhouses, 1779

There are two small Blockhouses, compleat, and a most excellent Storehouse capable to contain 3000 Barrels of Provisions, one side of this Post is well Picketed, and the other is so covered with Abbatis, as to be secure against any Attack of Musquetry.¹

Two Blockhouses. Occupied as Barracks and Barrack Masters Quarters.²

Coteau-du-Lac, Octagonal Blockhouse, 1813

Coteau du Lac nine Miles above the Village of the Cedars is a most essential, and important position. which effectively commands the passage of the Rapids at this point. This Post should be strengthened, and occupied as soon as possible. I recommend to construct a Block House on the Point to contain 200 men, also to enclose and entrench the position; to be armed with two 12 Pdrs. and 2 brass 6 Pdrs to serve as moveable guns to take post on some very commanding, and projecting points between the Post, and the Cascades.¹

Block-House – for 200 Men – Complete in every respect, except the Chimney, part of the stones to Back & Jambs[?] having fallen out, owing to the Quality, not being fire proof, which breach has caused a small rent to Masonry – its [sic] other respects it is substantial. The Jail[?] can be remedied by repairing Masonry & facing the Interior with Bricks.²

W. Cleghorne the assistⁿ Barrack Master at the Post of Coteau du Lac has been ordered by Captain Park of the Royal Marine Artillery to deliver over the Upper Story of the New Block for a Garrison Hospital and is now Converted to that purpose, which being contrary to the original plan of appropriation Building having been fitted up as a Barrack for the accommodation of 148 Men.³

Octagon Block House . . . log building with a Stone Basement for Powder Magazine and Cellars for provisions, the Second Story is fitted up with Births as a Barrack and to mount a 24 pounder on traversing Platform on top 25 feet to Wall Plate and 36 feet in diameter.⁴

There is an old fort, containing three wooden blockhouses, barracks of stone, with roof composed of logs of wood, for 288 men, and a magazine at Coteau du Lac. Everything is in decay and ruin, and not worth the expense of putting in repair.⁵

The blockhouse being in a dilapidated state and not fit for any defence was ordered to be taken down or fired by Captain Phillpotts, R.E., and finding it not safe for men to take it down was set fire to and burned to the foundation to prevent the enemy making a lodgement behind it in their intended attack on the fort.⁶

Dartmouth Blockhouse, 1750

That the Alderneys People consisting of about 300 were settled on the other side the Harbour at the Saw Mill where there was a Blockhouse.¹

Dartmouth: This Post is a line of Palisades about 3/4 of a mile round with Redans, Block Houses, and a Bastion to flank the Line, the Palisades are almost rotten and many of them dropt down. This Line was made for the Safety of some of the first Settlers who established there in a Township, but they have now all abandoned it.²

Digby Blockhouse, 1812

A Blockhouse has been built. There is a non-commissioned officer of Artillery in charge of stores at this place.¹

Digby Blockhouse: The Blockhouse is on a hill behind and overlooking the town. Object of the work – to oppose any landing at this point and to annoy an Enemy passing the gut into the Basin of Annapolis. The wooden Blockhouse is in tolerable repair, the spare arms of the militia are deposited here.²

Plan 35: Above the town of Digby and nearly about the middle of it from East to West is a lot of One Acre on which a Block House stands. It was purchased from Mrs. Mary Hughes for £17-10. The deed dates 22 August 1837. It is perfectly useless to Government and should be sold, it will bring about £20.³

Digby Gut, East and West Blockhouses, 1812

Plan No. 38 On the Digby [sic] on Western side of the Gut of Annapolis, and within five Miles of the town of Digby are the remains of a four Gun battery and a Block House in a state of ruin. Four eighteen Pounders without Carriages are laying on the ground.

This property which consists of One Acre with a right of road to it was purchased of Dennis McGrath in 1813 – it is of no value being an entire bed of rock. It is a fine commanding situation about 50 feet above the level of the Water.¹

[East Blockhouse]: It is a place of much importance commanding the whole entrance from the Bay of Fundy into the Annapolis River. There has been a similar battery, and there is yet a similar Blockhouse to those on the west side of the Gut. Four Iron 18 Pounders are still on the Ground. This Block House like the other is in ruins. It might be sold.²

Fort Anne, Annapolis Royal, Bastion Blockhouse, [1812]

[A] Blockhouse Stands in the North East Bastion the foundation was laid by French the lower Story is applied as a Guard Room, the Middle and upper Stories have been built within these few years. The first is pierced for 8 guns but has only 6-4 pounders mounted which with their carriages ammunition & stores are in a serviceable State the upper Story is pierced for four Guns Two 4 pounders only are mounted. A Corporal and ten Men of the Royal Artillery are Stationed here in charge of the Stores.¹

There is likewise a Blockhouse in one of the Bastions near the entrance in tolerable repair.²

The Blockhouse at Annapolis Royal was pulled down, some fifteen years ago, to make firewood for its caretaker, one Mr. Hall, with the sanction of a barbarian, I mean a minister of the crown.³

Fort Edward Blockhouse, Windsor, Nova Scotia, 1750

I sent Gorham with his Company to Piziquid Monday last, with Orders to post himself in the most convenient place & build a Blockhouse.¹

Capt. Rous will sail for Halifax in eight days. He brings no news from the Bay, but that Major Lawrence was erecting a Blockhouse upon a Point that commands the Entrance of the Rivers Gasparo & Canard.²

I omitted to acquaint you that Major Lawrence is raising a Blockhouse and a Small Fort in a most advantageous situation upon Piziquid River.³

The next work I shall mention is Fort Edward, on the Windsor River, running into the bason of Mines: – This is a small square fort of 85 yards exterior front, with bastions, a ditch, and a raised counterscarp, and is composed of sods. Here are eight pieces of cannon mounted. This fort . . . was built early in the settlement of the Province, first intended as a place of security against the Indians, and repaired and improved in the beginning of the late war to protect the inhabitants of Windsor from the ravages of the American privateers. The situation of this fort, for present purposes, is ineligible; it does not answer for the defence of the river, and is commanded by different heights surrounding, some of which are very near. Here are wooden barracks for 200 men, but much out of repair, a block house, a temporary magazine, and a good provision store.⁴

There is a wooden Blockhouse and wooden barracks, within what has formerly been a square Redoubt. The whole is in a very unserviceable state.⁵

Fort Erie Blockhouse, 1796

The upper part of the Blockhouse made use of as a Provision and Transport Store will require to be Weatherboarded and painted to preserve the Building. It is 54 feet long 30 feet wide 8 feet high in the upper floor projects two feet from the lower part which is built of Stone. – The Door and Window Shutters require some repair, and sliding Shutters for the Loopholes wanted.¹

The old fort [Erie] on the west side of the entrance into the lake, consists of no more than a few houses, a blockhouse of logs, with some habitations for commercial people, and one or two store-houses. A new stone fort, in the form of a quadrangle, is now constructing on rising ground behind the block-house. A company of soldiers is usually stationed here, and the men are chiefly employed in assisting to conduct the transport of stores.²

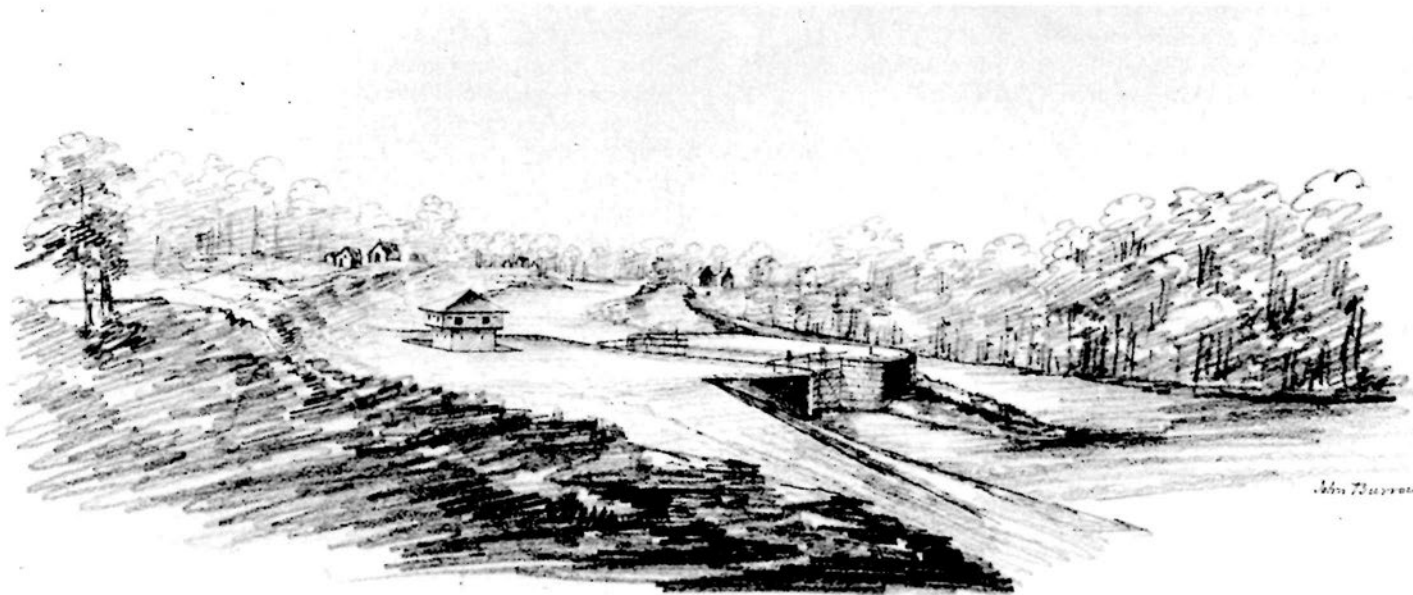
Fort George, Centre Blockhouse, 1796

The Estimate of the Expence of Materials for fitting the Partitions between the officers and men quarters in the Blockhouse at Navy Hall, with bricks, and supplying the quantity of Bricks exceeded in building the Powder Magazine, amounting to Twenty-Seven Pounds, one shilling and six pence Currency, . . . His Excellency has been pleased to approve of.¹

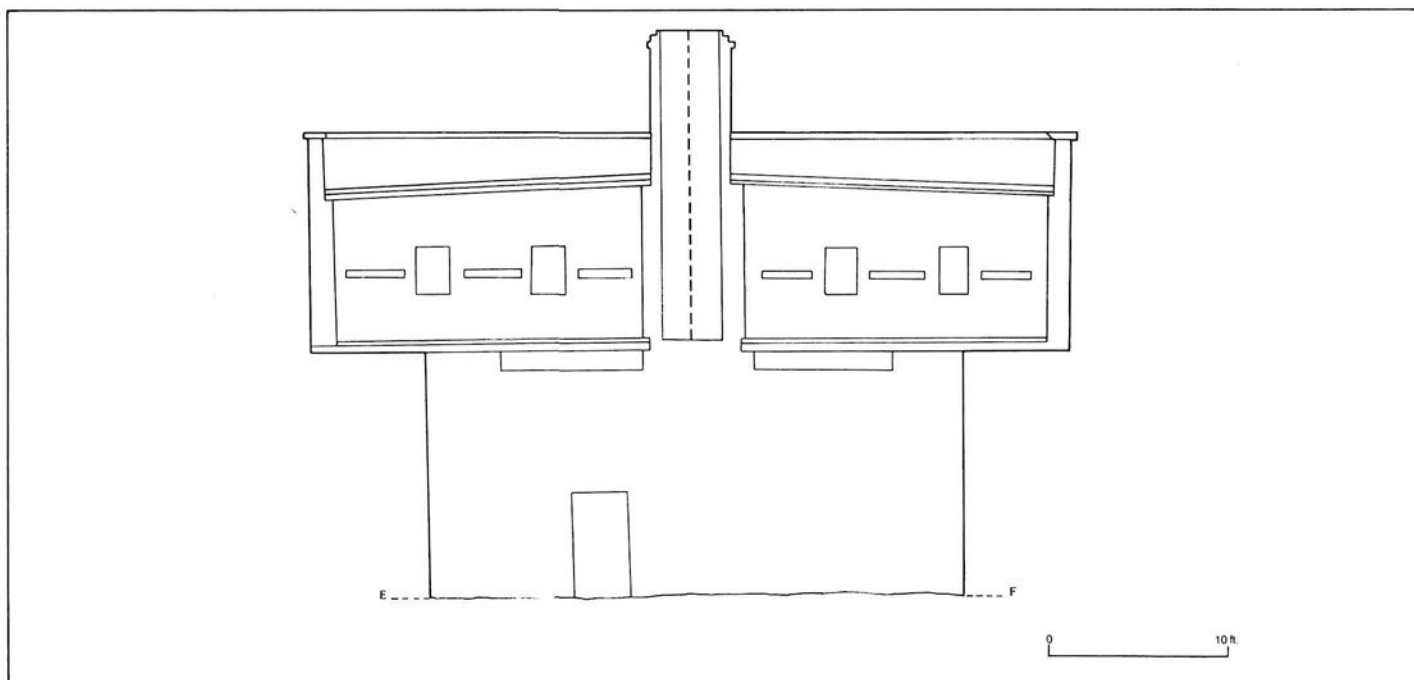
30 Burritts Rapids locks and blockhouse in 1832, by John Burrows. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

31 Section of blockhouse on Signal Hill, Newfoundland. (*Drawing by S. Epps from an original in the Public Archives of Canada.*)

30



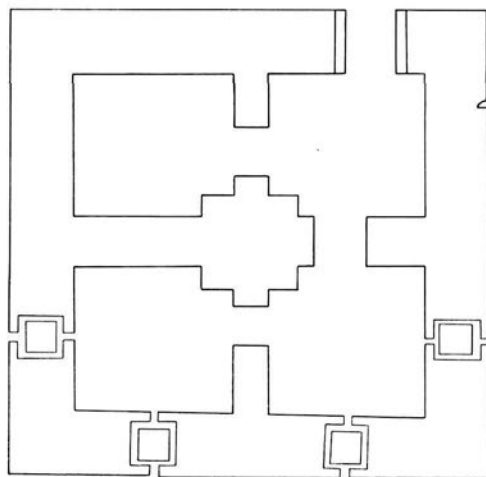
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32 Floor plan of blockhouse on Signal Hill, Newfoundland. (Drawing by S. Epps from an original in the Public Archives of Canada.)

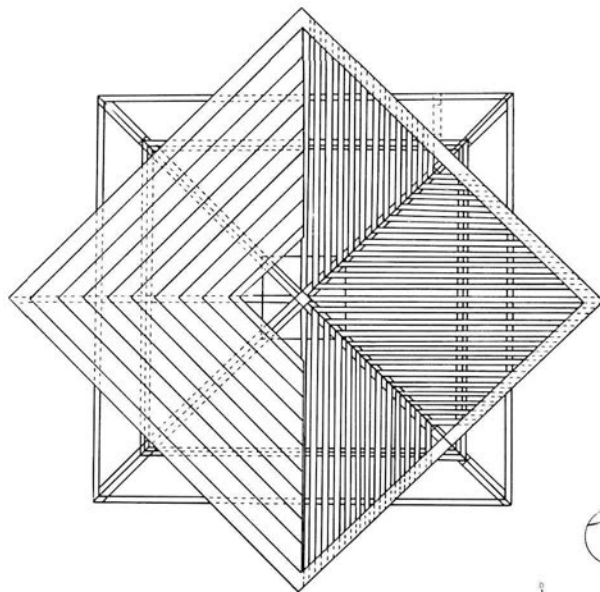
33 Floor plan of blockhouse at Signal Hill, Newfoundland. (Drawing by S. Epps from an original in the Public Archives of Canada.)

32



0 10 ft

33



0 10 ft

As soon as the Powder Magazine at Fort George is reported to you fit to receive the Gunpowder, and the Store in the Blockhouse appropriated to the Ordnance Department is finished, the Commander in Chief desires you will give the necessary directions to move them from the Temporary Shed and other places where they are now lodged.²

I have the honor . . . to inform you that an Estimate for building two additional kitchens for the use of the Troops in the large Blockhouse at Fort George, . . . has been approved.³

The Four Blockhouses in the Fort all require to be Weather-boarded, to preserve the Buildings and to make them more secure against the weather they should also be painted. The Centre Blockhouse is 100 feet long 30 feet wide 9 feet high in the Upper Floor, contains four rooms for Officers Quarters at present occupied by One Captain and One Subaltern and two rooms for Soldiers Quarters will contain 80 men in a crowded state – 60 with convenience – The ground floor is 96 feet long, 26 feet wide, 12 feet high contains One large room filled with Ordnance Stores. . . . It would be adviseable to convert the whole of the Building into Quarters for Soldiers, and to erect a separate Building for Ordnance Stores – It would then contain 200 men with ease.⁴

Fort George, North and South Blockhouses, 1797

I am directed by the Commander in Chief to inform you, that it is intended to erect next spring, Two Blockhouses at Fort George, for the accommodation of about one hundred men – The Deputy Commissary is directed to provide the necessary materials, and the Engineer will receive by this opportunity the usual communications from Colonel Mann on the subject.¹

The rooms in the Blockhouses will greatly relieve the present want of quarters and the General hopes they will be finished soon.²

His Excellency heard with much satisfaction that the Blockhouses are nearly finished; the present scarcity of Quarters for the Officers will be supplied in a certain degree when they are ready.³

The North Blockhouse is 44 feet long 24 feet wide 9 feet high in the upper part contains One Room for 36 men – The Ground floor is 41 feet long 21 feet wide 12 feet high One room for 32 men. The South Blockhouse is a similar building in every re-

spect. New Double Births are required for these Blockhouses. The Chymnies to be repaired, all the Rooms to be painted and white washed and the Ceilings to be Battened.⁴

Fort George, Octagonal Blockhouse, 1798

A Plan for the constructing some other buildings at Fort George, has been approved by the Commander in Chief, Colonel Mann will furnish the Engineer with Instructions respecting them – An Hospital, Guardhouse and small Blockhouse to be placed near the Magazine, it is intended should be built first.¹

The Octagon Blockhouse is 28 feet diam^r in the Upper Floor & 9 feet high. The ground floor is 25 feet diam^r and 12 feet high made use of for lodging part of the Ordnance Stores.²

£8. . 17. . 9 (in No. 1) for connecting the Picketting round the Octagon Blockhouse at Fort George, and which as Captⁿ Nicolls reports, and as it appears to me, is essentially necessary for the security of that Building and the Ammunition etc. therein.³

Fort Lawrence Blockhouses, 1750

This morning Lt. Col. Lawrence marched from hence with Col. Lascelles Regiment & three hundred men of Col. Warburtons for Minas. There they will embark for Chinecto, They carry with them two blockhouses & three large barrack frames & materials of all sorts necessary for erecting them.¹

Fort Sackville Blockhouse, 1749

This day Capt. Gorham with his Company is gone to establish himself at the Head of the Bay [Bedford Basin] in order to keep open in all Events the Communication with Minas & command the Bay.¹

This is a Small square Palisade Fort with four Bastions, it stands upon a rising ground but is commanded by a Hill, towards the Town, the palisades are very small and almost Rotten. There is a Barrack for an Officer and 30 or 40 men under the same Roof, much out of repair.

There is a small Blockhouse for the party to retire into, in case of the palisades being forced.²

Fort Saint John Blockhouse, 1778

A small Work for the better security of the Block House on the East side of the River will I hope be completed in about a Week or ten Days, and effectually secure it against a surprise. . . .

would therefore humbly propose that as much Timber as possible be felled round the Block House, to the distance at least of five hundred Yards, and at the same Time think it highly requisite that the several small Roads and Paths be rendered impassable as much as possible by felling Trees across the same where necessary, which will render the approach of any enemy with Cannon exceeding difficult to lodge themselves either to annoy the Block House, or any of the Works of the Garrison on the West side of the River.¹

Block House . . . totally in ruins.²

Fort St. Joseph Blockhouse, 1797

As it is intended to send Mr. Russell, the master Carpenter to St. Josephs Island early in the spring to superintend the construction of a Blockhouse which will be erected thereon this summer.¹

I am directed by the Commander in Chief to inform you, that it is intended to build next spring a Blockhouse for the use of the Troops stationed on the Island of St. Josephs which is design'd to be constructed in such a manner as to afford the necessary rooms for Military stores and Provisions also.

The Storekeeper General is directed to furnish you with a list of such materials as it is necessary to be provided for this purpose, . . . The object at present is merely to prepare the materials.²

Lieutenant Lacy of the Royal Engineers goes up to Island of St. Joseph, for the purpose of constructing a Blockhouse on the South extremity of that Island for the use of the Troops stationed there, and takes up with him a few Civil Artificers.³

I am now by Command of His Excellency General Prescott to inclose for your information, a Copy of the Approved Estimate of the said work [the Blockhouse], and to desire you will give every aid in your power towards the completion thereof, by furnishing all the Artificers you have at the Post, capable of being employed, and as many Labourers as can be spared, on the requisition of Lieut. Lacy of the Royal Engineers who is sent up on purpose to construct this work, . . . Mr. Lacy is furnished by L Colonel Mann with every Instruction necessary, and the Commander in Chief trusts the materials as enumerated in the List furnished by M: Craigie, will be ready on his arrival.⁴

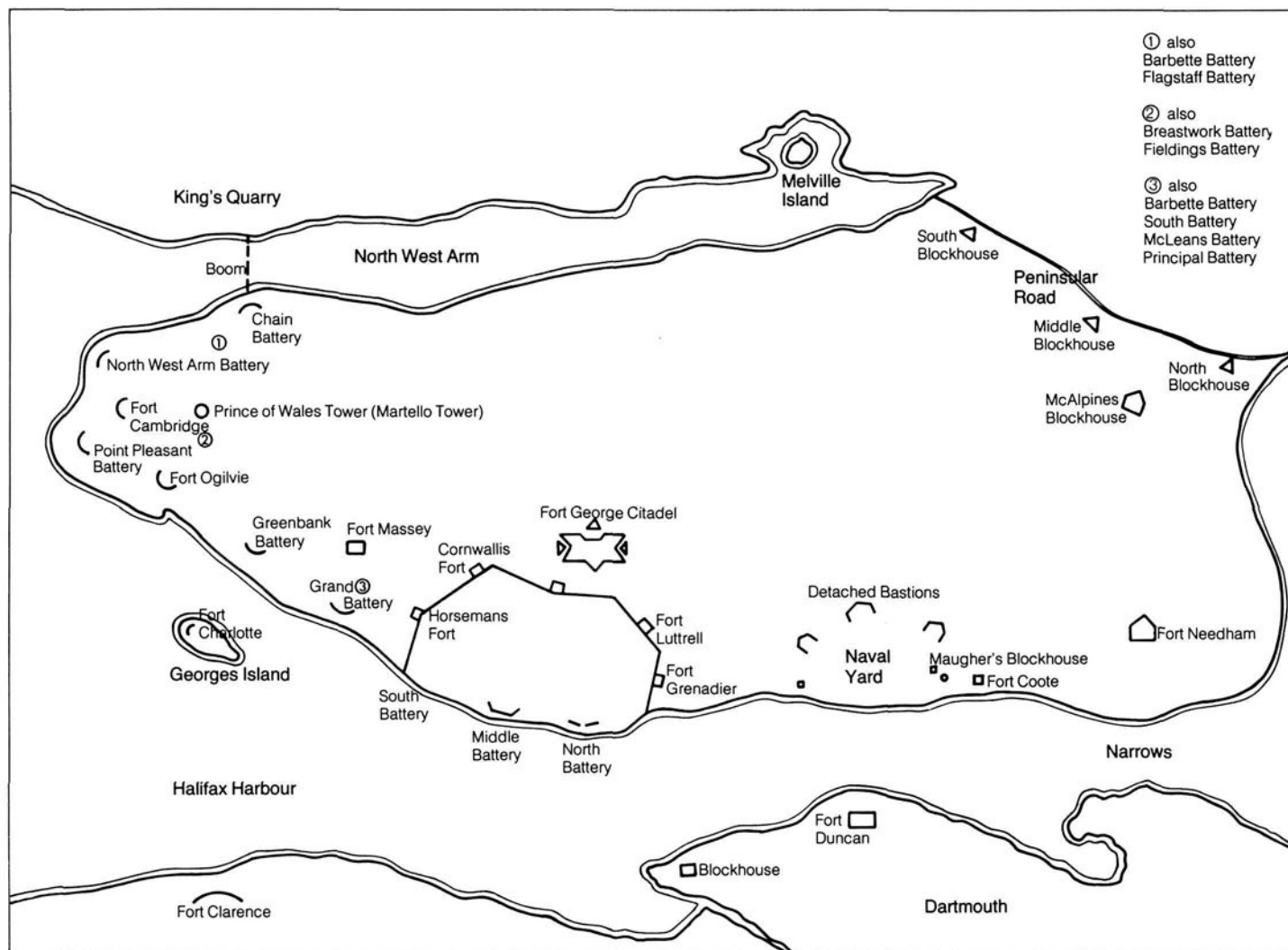
I am very sorry to observe, that I am very apprehensive we will not be able to get into the new Blockhouse building near this post, This Season, as their [*sic*] are a Quantity of the Materials for Building & other Different Stores for this post, are yet to be sent from Amherstburg.⁵

The following buildings are to be constructed next summer at St. Joseph's, Viz¹ – A Wharf – Guard house – Temporary Powder Magazine, and strong Picketing round the buildings, as a security against any Insult from Indians – and the Wood round the Blockhouse to be cleared away.⁶

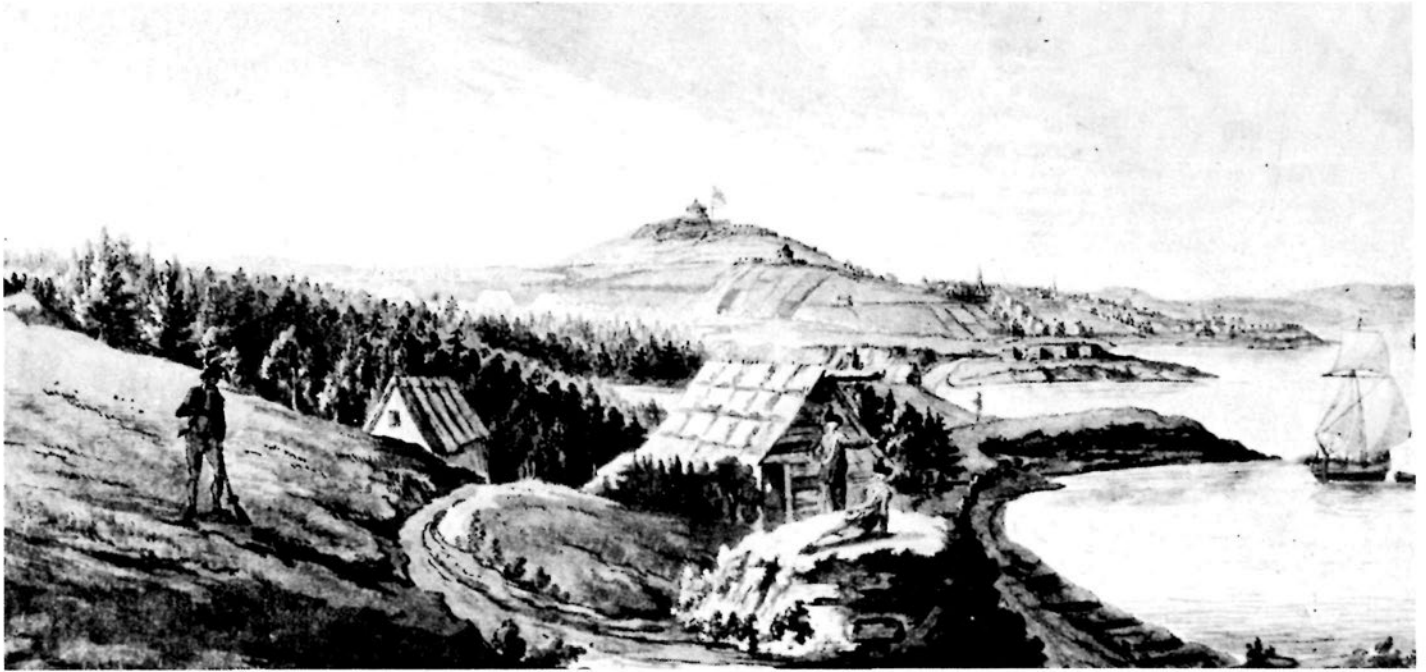
. . . Lieut. Landmann will be sent up in the course of a few days for the purpose of compleating the works ordered last year, to enclose the Post with a substantial picketing about Four hundred yards in circumference, to be doubled below the ribband, with Loopholes etc., and to erect four raised platforms for Guns to fire over the picketing.⁷

The Blockhouse and other Buildings, at the Post very much want Weatherboarding, outside, and Plastering within, as they admit the Wind rain and snow, through all parts of them, which will very much injure the Building's if not shortly done, besides, rendering it very cold and uncomfortable for the Troops, and there is not sufficient Quarters for the Officers in it, there being only three Rooms, and one of them, very small, to accommodate the whole, they are obliged to hire small Houses out of the Fort . . . the chimnies want repairing, the Blockhouse is Picketed in but not finished.⁸

The Blockhouse in the centre of the Fort is an excellent framed Building, but will soon be destroyed unless it is Weatherboarded to preserve it besides the Logs are so open, the Weather penetrates in every part of it, that the Troops suffer very much from the Cold. The side Walls of the upper Floor require to be Lathed and plastered in the inside, and the Rooms of the Officers Quarters to be Cieled. Above the upper plate of the Roof should be Beam filled to prevent the Rain and Snow beating in. The Shingles of the Roof are made of dry Cedar very dangerous in case of Fire, should be painted or covered with any cheap Composition . . . The upper part of this Building is 100 feet long 30 ft. wide 10 feet high contains 2 Rooms Soldiers Quarters for 60 men and 4 Rooms for Officer's Quarters occupied at present by the Commanding Officer. The lower part is 96 feet long 26 feet wide 11 feet high contains 1 Storeroom for Ordnance Stores 1 ditto Provision & Commissary Stores 1 ditto Stores Indian De-



- 35 The octagonal blockhouse, Halifax citadel, viewed from the south, 1780; this view also shows the blockhouse at Fort Massey in the middle foreground. (Public Archives of Nova Scotia.)



partment 1 ditto Regimental Stores, all in a very crowded state there not being sufficient room.⁹

I am of opinion that as the great Blockhouse is really a good and valuable building, no precautions ought to be omitted [sic] for its preservation and as from the smallness of the Fort the buildings are necessarily nearer each other than could be wished, the Blockhouse can never be in security from external fire, until it is roofed with sheet Iron.¹⁰

The Blockhouse covered with Sheet Iron and painted. The masons are now employed in the Magazine and the Carpenters in Weatherboarding the upper part of the Blockhouse.¹¹

The fort, which is one of the handsomest of the kind in North America, is situated at the southern extremity [of the Island], upon a peninsula about fifty feet above the level of the water, and connected to the island by a low isthmus of sand, about three hundred yards in breadth.¹²

Gananoque Blockhouse, 1813

This is a good Post with a Company of Militia stationed under the Command of Col. Horne they are Building a Block House on a strong point of ground near the River; the lower Story is nearly raised, and the whole will be completed in about six Weeks.¹

Gananoqui; The Blockhouse is placed in a strong situation above the River & the Road, and surrounded by a parapet of logs, and picketting, at this place are mounted, 2-12 pdr. carriages, 2-4 and 1-3 pounders. The site is too high and distant from the water to have a good command to the opposite Island.²

A wooden block-house was constructed for the protection of the mouth of this River during the war, but having been constructed on private property has been given up to the owner of the ground, Sir William Johnson.³

Grassy Island Blockhouse, Canso, Nova Scotia

Canso – the last where your Company's are quarter'd, and is near Cape Breton, has no other Defence [sic] than a Blockhouse built of timber by the contribution of the Fishermen who resort there and a few Inhabitants settled in the Place – to the repairs of which the officers have often been obliged to Contribute.¹

Halifax, Citadel Blockhouse, 1776

Citadel Hill Redoubt. All the guns mounted, the – 2d. floor of the – Block House framed, the – Post Defensible and will Be finished in one month.¹

The Redoubt enclosing the Blockhouse has a Parapet in Glacis, mounts Fourteen 24 Pounders in Embrasure; viz^t three towards the entrance of the Harbour, three directly across the Harbour, five play in front of the Naval Yard lines distant about 1200 Yards and three towards the Country, so that this Work has full Command every way, and is itself perfectly protected by the Blockhouse within it which is an Octagon of three Stories for 200 men & mounts Eight 6 Pounders on the 2^d floor.²

At the back of the town about 880 yards distance from the shore there is a very commanding height which is called the Citadel Hill, offering a very advantageous situation for a fortress. This height is at present occupied by an irregular field work composed principally of fascines, built and enlarged at different times, but mostly during the late war, and is at present in ruins, having nothing substantial in it excepting a large octagonal blockhouse, which will contain about 100 men.³

The following advertisement appeared in the "Royal Gazette": Information for Masters of Vessels. The Blockhouse on Citadel Hill, which was a conspicuous object, is removed, having been in a ruinous condition. The flag and signal staff remain [1789].⁴

Halifax, Fort Coote Blockhouse, 1776

Advanced Blockhouse or Pedley's Hill. ready to raise.¹

At the North West extremity of the Naval Yard, on a projecting Point, there is another Blockhouse with a Bank thrown up round it, called Fort Coote, on which there are three 18 Pounders, a situation where a good Battery would contribute somewhat to defend the Yard from an Enemy afloat.²

Halifax, Fort Needham (Advanced) Blockhouse, 1808

An Irregular pentagonal Redoubt of four Guns (with a Barrack proposed for sixty Men in its center has been raised over the ruins of a former one at Needham, lying little more than a Mile North of the Citadel, and about eight feet below it. . . . [he proposes a stone tower for Fort Needham] The General was pleased to express his approbation and regretted that the season of the Year prevented our commencing upon it [the stone tower], but in lieu thereof he has sanctioned my substituting a

musquet-proof Blockhouse which is nearly finished situated 400 feet North of the Redoubt, which commands a great part of that irregular ground encompassing the Height.¹

A Block House has been constructed in advance to Fort Needham to secure the Battery below and oppose an Enemy in his progress towards the edge of the Basin. On the Blockhouse the following Ordnance are mounted Carronades – 12 pounders 2 English.²

The Blockhouse . . . which has long been rotten and totally un-serviceable, has recently been blown down, and that the materials of which it was composed were found as perfectly decayed as to be of no use whatsoever. . . . this has, for many years, only been a nominal Blockhouse, the greater part of it having fallen in.³

Halifax, Georges Island Blockhouse, 1795

Estimate for Erecting a Star Fort on George Island for 300 Men, with a Blockhouse in the Center, for an Officer and 40 men, and a Cellar under for Stores. . . .

[The Blockhouse:]

95 logs for Blockhouse, 12 by 9 Inches each 40 feet long . . .

4000 Feet 2 Inch plank . . .

Lime and Labour for 2 Stacks of Chimnies . . .

3 Outside Doors 4 inch thick . . .

4 inside d°. . .

10 Ports Sashes and Glass . . .

Tar and Paper for Roof . . .

Labour Lime and Sand for Cellar Walls . . .

120 Nails for Roof and Floor.¹

The work there [on Georges Island] is also of a temporary nature. It is placed on the top of the highest ground, where there is not enough Table Ground for it, and has many of the faults which the Work at Citadel Hill has, namely the want of a counterscarp, and its situation and construction leaving great extent of dead ground. –

In the centre of the work which is adapted for 300 men, there is a Blockhouse only 40 feet square, which it is hardly necessary to remark is by no means sufficient for the several accommodations required for the number. It is Proposed to erect a Tower in place.²

Halifax, McAlpine's Blockhouse, 1808

[There] is one of a pentagonal form (shewn in the Sketch), nearly completed situated upon a Hill known as MacAlpans, disposed, so as to augment the difficulty of an enemy in their attempt to bring cannon along that part of the Windsor road.¹

The situations most eligible to form a concentrated fire on the low marshy ground between the Basin and North West Arm, appear to be the Hill above McAlpine's on which there at present stands a Blockhouse.²

McAlpine's – On this hill at the further extremity of the Isthmus near Bedford Basin is a Blockhouse was erected by Order of Major General Hunter Commanding in the Spring 1808. There is intended for this Blockhouse the under-mentioned Ordnance Carronades 12 pounders 2 English.³

Halifax, Naval Yard Blockhouses, 1775

List of Cannon & Stores wanted for the Defence & Protection of His Majesty's Naval Yard at Halifax.

Cannon with carriages complete:

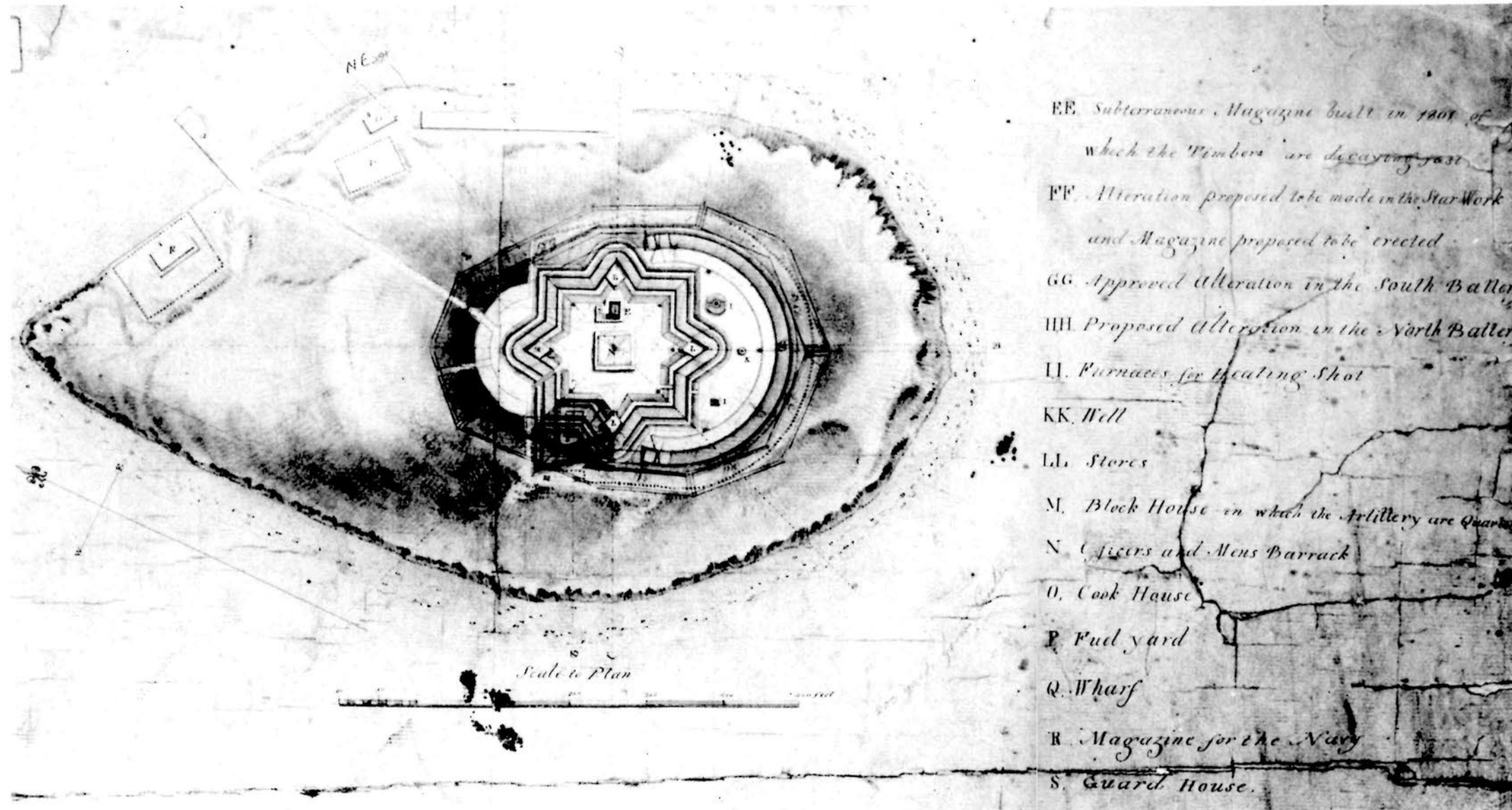
For the proposed Lines [twelve 9-pounders].

For the Blockhouse [forty 4-pounders].¹

Naval Yards Lines. The three Bastions entirely finished the curtains and Branches to Enclose – the Naval Yard, finish'd, also a Double Stockade, musquet-proof, with – loopholes from the – angle of the – curtains constructed to scour the – Ditch of the flanks: The Blockhouses which are for guard Rooms to the – Bastions and as Secondary Defences of the Lines ready to raise.

The two Blockhouses at the Naval Yard Wall finished.²

The Lines for the Protection of the Naval Yard Consist of three Bastions, forming nearly a Crown Work, the Branches of which are broken to give a flank to the Faces of the right & left Bastions respectively, and terminate on the Extremities of the Naval Yard Wall, from whence they are flanked by a Blockhouse at each Angle, these Blockhouses mount Four 4 Pounders and contain Sixty Men each, the Lines have a Parapet of Six feet thick with a Ditch & Berm well fraised and a Gun in Each flank to Scour the Lines of Defence. In the Center Bastion is a Blockhouse of the same sort as those in the Naval Yard Wall.³



In one of these Bastions there is a Blockhouse equally useless . . . and in the Rear of the Naval Yard, against a Stone Wall that encloses it, are two other small Blockhouses.⁴

Halifax, Naval Yard, Maugher's Blockhouse, 1762

This morning I have sent an Engineer to mark out and begin a Small Intrenchment on ye Top of rising ground whereon there is a little Blockhouse which is contiguous to the Dockyard for some security that way.¹

Resolved that Mr. Mauger's Blockhouse be occupied by a Searjeant Corporal and twelve of the Newfoundland volunteers and that a small entrenchment be thrown up by them upon a rising ground behind the Blockhouse.²

Halifax, Peninsular Blockhouses, 1750

That your memorialist has delivered to the Government by Orders of Richard Bulkely Esqr. Eight Hund^d and Sixteen Bushels of Charr Coals in Different Times from Sept: 1751 to July 1752, at the Peninsular Block House to Capt. Strasburger . . . for the use of the Smiths at said Block House & for Fireing for the Garrison of Rangers, and the Inhabitants then there, in which Time they had no chimneys neither in the Blockhouse nor Dwelling Houses.¹

South Peninsular Blockhouse: This Blockhouse lodges an Officer and 25 men, it stands quite naked, without Ditch or palisades and wants some further Improvements.²

Halifax, York Redoubt Blockhouse, 1794

Major General Ogilvie caused a Battery to be formed of two twenty four pounders mounted on platforms, secured by a Stockade pierced for Musquetry. The situation appearing to me the very best possible for a Battery to annoy Shipping on their first entrance into the Harbour; on the late alarm I caused the Battery to be augmented to Six twenty four pounders and two Sixes, adding at the same time a double Block House in the salient angle of the Stockaded Work, looking towards the Country, in the upper Story of which there are two twelve pound Carrinades [sic] mounted on Carriages, particularly calculated for the Service.¹

The Redoubt at Point Sandwich, the first on the Western shore at the entrance of the harbour, is in the completest order possible for every purpose of defence. The Battery mounts eight twenty four pounders towards the harbour, exclusive of Carro-

nades and small guns in the Blockhouse, to prevent an assault from the Land side, The Magazine is entirely finished also.²

Kingston, Murney's Point Blockhouse, 1813

Murney's Redoubt. A Roof put on the small Blockhouse but cannot be covered in or shingled for want of board.¹

I request you will acquaint his Excellency the Commander of the Forces that my endeavours to effect an equitable arrangement with the persons holding the property on which Murney's Point Battery and Blockhouse, as likewise Blockhouse No. 3 and the Line Barracks are constructed, have hitherto proved unsuccessful.²

Kingston, No. 1 Blockhouse, 1813

No. 1 nor No. 2 Block Houses not being yet ready – [to receive the companies as proposed].¹

The Births in the lower part finished; the upper part fitted up with Posts and [illegible] for Hammocks.²

Kingston, No. 2 Blockhouse, 1813

Blockhouse No. 2. Laying the 2nd Floor to mount Guns immediately; going on with the frame work.¹

The rubbish occasioned by Building the Block House No. 2, has never been removed from the School Lot, and that the Ground in consequence of quarrying stone for the foundation of that work, is left so rough as scarcely to be passable.²

This Blockhouse has been for some years occupied by the Female Benevolent Society as a Hospital permission for which it is understood was obtained from the Governor, but being built by government during the war and standing on a Small triangular spot at the junction of two streets it is supposed to be Government Property – the other Blockhouses built on Private property during the War were given up to the Proprietor with the exception of No. 5 Blockhouse erected on the Clergy Reserve.³

No. 2 Blockhouse: a small triangular space bounded by Grass and School streets and by Murney's lot, on which is a Blockhouse house similar to No. 5. The space contains about 1/10 of an acre.⁴

Kingston, No. 3 Blockhouse, 1813

The Masonry of the Blockhouse [No. 3] raised three feet above the level of the Terre plein; the first row of Beams laid.¹

With regard to Blockhouse No – 3 – Mr. Murney and Mr. Earl both Claim a portion of the ground on which it stands, tho' neither admits the other's validity; – this circumstance therefore precludes the possibility of coming to any agreement on the part of the Public.²

Kingston, No. 5 Blockhouse, 1813

Blockhouse No. 5 – A Log Building on a Stone base 30 x 30 2 stories high and shingled roof capable of containing 45 men in Iron bedsteads. In good repair. . . . This Blockhouse is not on ordnance Land being situated near the S. W. end of the Clergy Reserve.¹

Kingston, Point Frederick Blockhouses, 1813

Also to erect another Block House on Point Frederick which will effectually protect the Dock Yard.¹

The Blockhouse is roofed and shingled, all the Births and Officers Quarters done, the frames for windows and loopholes are now making, so that the Carpenters work is nearly finished; the weather proving unfavorable for Mason's work the foundation wall and the Chimney are not began [sic], however I shall now commence on them as the Bay from whence the Sand is procured is now open. This Blockhouse will hold three or four officers and one hundred and forty men. Ninety six Privates and 1 or 2 Officers in the upper and forty four Men and 1 or 2 Officers in the lower.²

Blockhouse Barrack – A squared Log Building 48 x 48 with a shingled roof and Standing on a Stone base work – It is two stories high and capable of accommodating 80 men in Iron Bedsteads.³

Kingston, Point Henry Blockhouse, 1813

I have directed the Block House on Point Henry to be raised and improved.¹

Kingston Mills Blockhouse, 1831

I herewith have the honor to forward to you the accounts sent into me by Mr. Burrows the Clerk of the works at Kingston Mills – Lieut. Coll. [sic] Bonnycastle, the Command. Engineer in Upper Canda, approved of the alterations & the fitting up the Block

House for some Militia in the Winter at the time Kingston was threatened by the Brigands & Rebels in this neighbourhood.¹

Kingston, Snake Island Blockhouse, 1813

I beg leave to inform you the Block House at Snake Island is so much out of repair as to be uninhabitable during the Winter Season – To put it in a State of thorough Repair it will require Carpenter for Two Days, Two Bushels of lime – Twenty Panes of Glass, and Putty – ¹

The Repairs to the Block House on Snake Island to be performed immediately.²

I also think a Tower and heavier battery ought to be substituted as soon as possible for the present Blockhouse & Single Gun battery on Snake Island which overlooks the channels for large Ships.³

Snake Island a low rocky Islet containing 1-6/10ths Acres on which there is a Blockhouse in ruins. It is about Seven miles from Kingston to the S. W., and in the middle of the opening of Lake Ontario.⁴

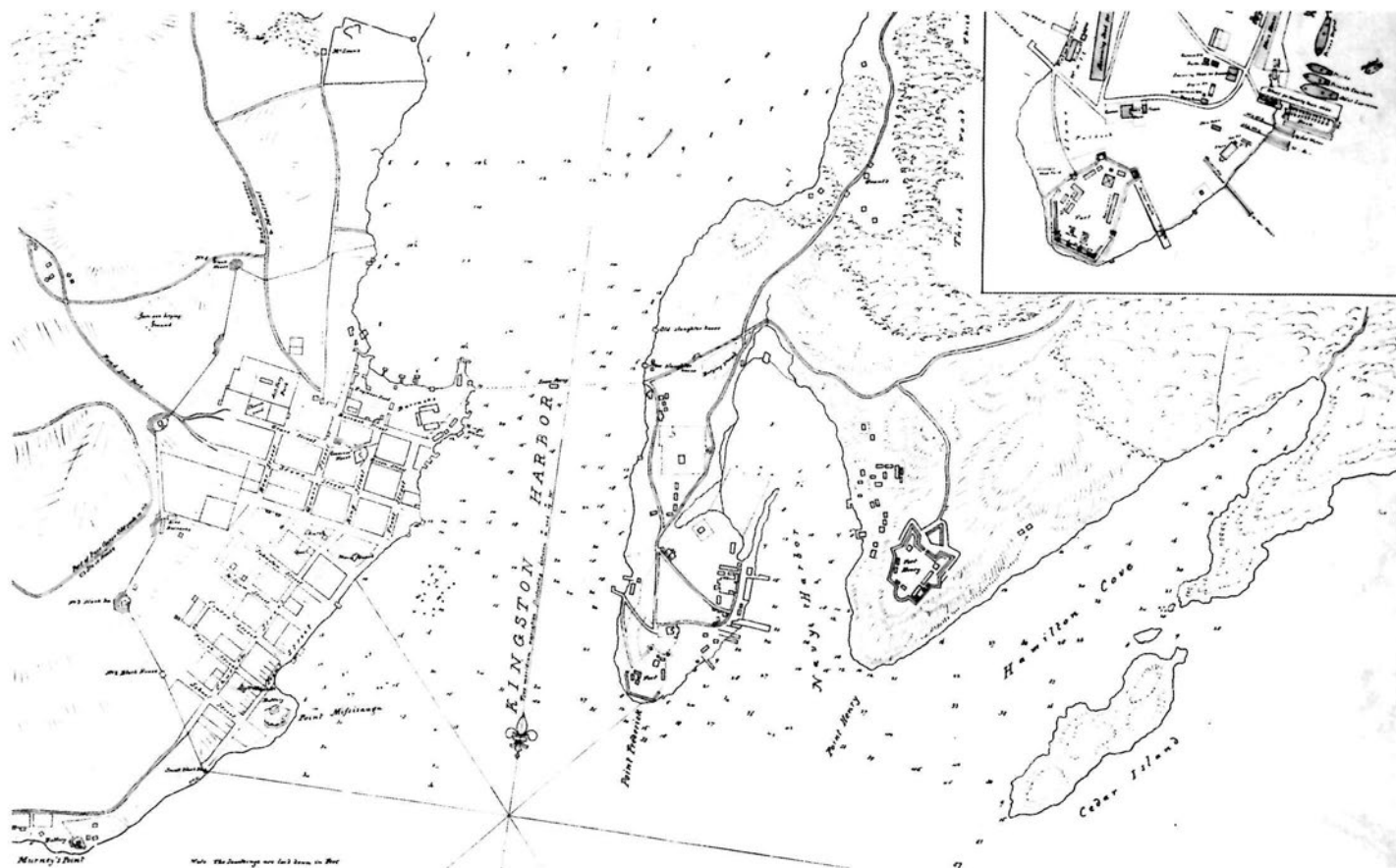
Labrador, Fort York Blockhouse, 1767

Captain Shuldhham Governor of Newfoundland, having in his letter to me of the 17th Instant represented that the Blockhouse called York-Fort in Chateaux bay on the Coast of Labrador, which is garrisoned by 20 Seamen & Marines belonging to His Majesty's Ships employed on the Newfoundland Station, has hitherto been supplied by the Storekeeper of the Ordnance at Newfoundland.¹

The King having signified His Majesty's Pleasure that the Garrison of Seamen and Marines now doing duty at the Blockhouse called York Fort established on the Coast of Labrador should be withdrawn. . . . in case you shall be of opinion that the Continuance of an Establishment of this kind at York Harbour may be of public Advantage, you do upon the present Garrison being withdrawn place in the said Fort a Non-Commission Officer and a few private Men of the Detachment now doing duty on the Island of Newfoundland.²

I have thought proper, My Lord, to cause the people who composed the Garrison of the afore mentioned Blockhouse to be withdrawn, the small species of Ordnance stores which remained in it to be brought to St. John's, and. . . . the cannon

37 Plan of Kingston by Lt. Renny, RE, 1816, showing locations of the six blockhouses and palisades built to defend the town. (Richard Preston, *Kingston before the War of 1812* [Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1959], p. 226.)



with their Carriages, together with the Building, to be secured in the best Manner possible during the ensuing Winter.³

LaColle Bridge Blockhouse, 1814

Building a New Chimney & repairing Foundation of the Blockhouse.¹

The present defences at LaColle Mill might be considerably strengthened by the adoption of the following measures. By removing the two small carronades in the Fort, looking to the front, and placing two long 18 pdrs. on traversing platforms. One to prevent an approach by the road from Brisbane's and scanning the ground to the right of the mill; the other to see the whole of the ground on its left, and also to aid in the defence of the ground communicating with the Battery at the mouth of the River.²

The roofing of the Blockhouse barrack at LaColle Bridge, waits for planks from LaCadie.³

LaColle Mill Blockhouse, 1781

At La Cole we have built a new Blockhouse to protect the Saw Mill, and to lodge the several Workmen employed there.¹

Lawrencetown Blockhouse, 1754

The spot where the Town is to be is so situated as to be defended with a very inconsiderable Force it being on a Peninsula the neck of which the Proprietors have already Picketed in at their own Expence, . . . As the place had been formerly a great Rendezvous for Indians I sent two Hundred Troops with some Rangers for their protection under the Command of Captain Stone of Lascelle's Regiment. . . . The Troops marched there by Land from Dartmouth and on their March cut a Road. . . . the Blockhouse they have erected within the Picketing, which Blockhouse Your Lordships will perceive by the minutes of Council we did agree to give them for their Encouragement.¹

His Majesty's Council having taken the affairs of Lawrence Town into Consideration, have come to the Resolution of withdrawing from thence the few Inhabitants that remained. . . . This has accordingly been done, and the troops and Blockhouse brought away.²

Liverpool Blockhouse, 1813

There is a Blockhouse and a Battery barbette at this place on which are mounted 3 iron twelve pounders, and 2 brass 3 pounders. There is no magazine of any description here.¹

On a point at the Eastern entrance to the town is the Battery, with a two-storey blockhouse in its gorge. Blockhouse and barbette Battery not kept up.²

On the Royal Engineers Returns the following places are stated to belong to the Government vizt. Block House and Battery Point; Black Point; and Wreck Point, one at each place; but on searching the several records of the County etc. I find that to only the first named "Block House on Battery Point" have they any title. . . . The Block House is on private property and I would recommend its being Sold – The foundation is falling and the logs of which it is built are fast decaying, if allowed to remain much longer it will be totally worthless.³

Louisbourg, Citadel Blockhouse, 1761

Mn. Geo. Bastide writes of the 3d. of February that the weather has been remarkably moderate and fair and hoped if it continued, to set up [the blockhouse] by the end of the month but mentions nothing of setting up pallisades.¹

I find by the letters I have received from Mn. Bastide at Louisbourg dated the 2d. Inst. the Blockhouse was finished and a small guard kept in it, but that the Intention of a palisade Fence was Lay'd aside.²

Lunenburg Blockhouses, 1756

Pay of 30 German settlers employ'd as Soldiers at the new Blockhouses on the back of the Township of Lunenburg and to clear a Road of Communication from La Have River to the head of Mahone Bay on a Line with said Blockhouses – at 6¢ per day £273-15-0.¹

Lunenburg, Jesser's Point Blockhouse, 1813

There are two Blockhouses here [Lunenburg] . . . one upon a point of land running out into the water some distance lower down the harbour. There is a Battery in front of each blockhouse.¹

Two Blockhouses of two stories each with batteries in front, not kept up.²

Battery on Jesser's Point is situated about 1-1/8 Mile from the town of Lunenburg. One acre of land was reserved at this Point in a Grant of land to Dutlief Christopher Jesser dated 12 June 1773 and is the only land which actually belongs to Government at Lunenburg. Upon it, built on a Stone foundation, is a Block House in a dilapidated state, which might be sold before becoming entirely worthless.³

Lunenburg, Peninsular Blockhouses, 1753

[Friday, 8 June 1753] Then fixed wⁱ Capt. Morris, ye Surveyor, the Situation of the Town, and also of ye. blockhouse for the defence of it; . . . Then fixed wt. ye. Captains to have 120 men on shore at 3 o'clock the next mornng. in order to carry up ye. blockhouses, . . . [pp. 9–10].

[Saturday, 9 June 1753] The Settlers carried up on ye. shoulders the timbers of one blockhouse, (the distance being near half a mile) by 10 in ye. morning, during w^c time ye Carpenters set up nearly ye. first story . . . after w^c ye. settlers were employed till night in opening a large avenue from ye. Blockhouse to ye. Waterside at ye. back of ye. hill, . . . [pp. 11–12].

[Monday, 11 June 1753] The carpenters continue to work on ye. blockhouses but have done very indifferent days work since ye first. [p. 23].

[Friday, 15 June 1753] About 8 o'clock sent on shore ye. guns wt. Ordnance stores. Was obliged to draw ye. Guns up to ye. blockhouses wt. soldiers, not being able to get more yⁿ 8 or 10 settlers. [p. 32]¹

We y^s day got out guns into ye Blockhouses, but are much at a loss for ye. new bolts & hooks w^c shd. have been sent wt. ye. gun tackles to work ye. guns. . . . We are in want of 4 pr. of iron hinges for ye trap doors of ye blockhouses, w^c were forgotten as were ye doors ymselves.²

I have prevailed on between three & 400 tago [*sic*] to work. They are employed in digging the trench and cutting ye. pickets . . . and upwards y^s evening, w^c. according to our calculatn. will be sufficient for ye line from water to water.³

As I suspected fm. ye. situatn. of one of ye. blockhouses & one a storehouse, yt. yre. was a necessity for underpentg. ym. I consulted wt. ye. Carpenters & oysr. thereon who all agree yt. wth. it they wd. be in great danger of fallg. I should yrefr. be glad to know in wt. manr. you wd. have yt. done, whether wt. brick wt. stone or wt. both as may be cheapest & speediest as

to a cellar under ye. Blockhouse, unless we go to a great expe., it cannot be worth makg.⁴

Yesterday came in ye. Biddeford Donnell, and ye. Meddford Nichols wt. provisions, part of ye. blockhouse for ye East end of ye. Town, and some other articles.⁵

Colonel Monckton has sent back most of the Troops [from Lunenburg], . . . In his Instructions I found it absolutely necessary to give him a Power of leaving as many Troops there (not exceeding Forty) as he should think sufficient to possess the Blockhouse the Militia had heretofore mounted Guard in.⁶

Lunenburg, Windmill Hill Blockhouse, 1812

Near the town, a Blockhouse and Battery mounting 3 Iron 12 pounders, 1 iron 9 pounder, and 2 brass 6 pounders.¹

There are two Blockhouses here . . . one placed upon a small eminence near the town . . . there is a battery in front of each.²

Two Blockhouses of two stories each, not kept up.³

Above the Western part of the Town of Lunenburg stands a Block House upon Windmill Hill – The boundaries of One Acre of land, in the center of which the Block House stands, . . . The Block House is used for the storage of two brass Field pieces and their stores which were supplied to the Militia some years since by the Board of Ordnance and the expence of keeping it in order is defrayed from the town or Provincial funds.²

Madawaska Blockhouse, 1841

A stout wooden bridge of one arch spanned the Madawasca over the Falls, and conducted to a square blockhouse on a rocky ridge, which overlooked the surrounding country.¹

The building, which has the advantage of attaining a good fire in any direction, is 30 ft. Square, inside dimensions. . . . Three stories . . . basement story of rubble masonry, 3 feet thick, which contains a Magazine & Artillery Stores and provisions for 100 men, the whole of which are [*sic*] perfectly ventilated by Air holes through the Masonry. The two upper Stories are composed of pine logs, 15 Ins. Square dovetailed together at the angles, and secured with Strong hardwood dowels. The first Story is Secured to the Masonry by 16 Strong Iron Scrub bolts, the end formed into a "t" & built into the wall, the Upper Story

is secured to the lower by Strong jagged bolts drawn through the logs at their intersections.

The roof of projecting Angles are composed of the same timber as the walls, and are boarded and covered with [illegible] tin.

The basement Story will be laid with 16 Cedar beams Squared to 12 ins. and the two upper Stories with 13 x 10 inch pine at 18 ins. from center to centre & securely framed to the sides of the building and the 3 floors laid with three inch pine plank grooved and tongued and secured with dowels. Four portholes are framed in the Upper Story and 8 horizontal loopholes and the lower Story with horizontal loopholes, the openings filled with 2 inch Pine glazed sashes and pine Stoppers hinged under the loopholes to reduce the opening where required.

The floors are also supported by 5 Strong posts secured in the rock, the centre one of which carries a brick chimney 2 ft. 6 ins. Square. The Middle Story will be fitted up with two tiers of standing berths for 40 Men in Single beds and an apartment for an Officer.

Shelves and pin racks will be fitted round the interior of the walls of both Stories and also the Magazine and Artillery Store. The whole of the pine Walls to be calked with hacklings of flax, the interior lined with 1 inch boards grooved and tongued and the exterior and interior limewashed throughout. The communication from one Story to another will be by 2 inch pine Step ladders through the floors as shewn on the plans, and the entrance to be by Means of a Moveable Stepladder with the upper Story and a Rope ladder to use when necessary –

The Masonry is made 3 ft 11 ins. at the bottom and 3 feet at top which is perhaps better. The loopholes are continuous with a blank in the centre of the sides where I have caused the berths to be placed in lower floor instead of round the chimney which would have been too close to Stovepipe and soothole. The upper Story of berths only. There will be room for berths also in lower floor in Case of need. 8 wooden berths are headed against the posts supporting floor; Making in all 24 berths.

The exterior communication has been made by a Stair which may be cut away if necessary about 2/3 of the height and a Short Moveable ladder at top. The rope ladder is on hand.²

4th Oct^{br} 1841 [Submits estimate] for the construction of a blockhouse at the Little falls of the Madawaska at its junction with the St. John's River, in the disputed territory: which has

been built by order of the Comdr. of the Forces; [2 plans, 2 sketches and detailed estimates].³

The Blockhouse is calculated to contain 50 men by putting 24 of them in berths and slinging hammocks for the remainder. Also there is Accommodation for one officer.⁴

Relative to the destruction by Fire, of the Blockhouse, Madawaska [by lightning, Aug. 1855].⁵

Oromocto Blockhouse, 1814

Oromocto Blockhouse: 22 miles below Fredericton right bank of the St. John River. Built to command the [illegible] and other roads branching out to St. Andrews, Grant Mills, and Magaquadic. The Blockhouse is out of repair.¹

Parrsboro Blockhouse, 1812

There is a Blockhouse here [Parrsboro] and the following Ordinance for the gun boat service: Guns, 3 brass 6 pounders, which with their carriages, slides, and ammunition are in good order and complete. This post has been supplied since the war with the United States of America.¹

Parsborough Blockhouse: on a Height of land to the town of Parsborough and near the Basin of Minas, which it overlooks, for the security of the Basin of Minas and the protection of the Town and Harbour of Parsborough. Present State, two strong Blockhouses of wood, not kept up.²

This property at Parsborough on the Basin of Minas, and near Partridge Island is no doubt private property. It appeared to have been surveyed by Oliver Igman on 26 September 1786, and sold by James S. Morse to James Ratchford on 9th October 1829 and described as the Lot No. 2 on which the Blockhouse stands.³

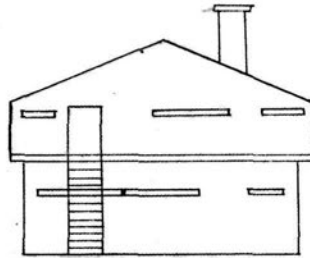
Penetanguishene Bay Blockhouse, 1814

Major Cockburn will be accompanied by fifty Expert Axe Men from the Canadian Fencibles & a Detach^l of Sappers & Miners in moving forward for the purpose of being employed by Captain Payne of the Engineers in the construction of a Block House at Penentanguishene Bay.¹

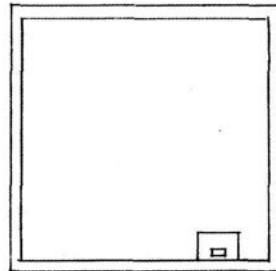
Block House

Kingston Oct^r 1823

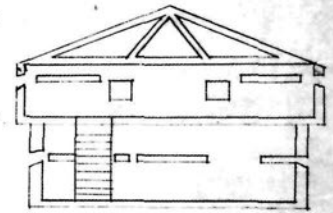
N^o 6.



Elevation



Ground Plan



Section.



Scale of 15 Feet to an Inch.

*No 6
Book No 1/22-23*

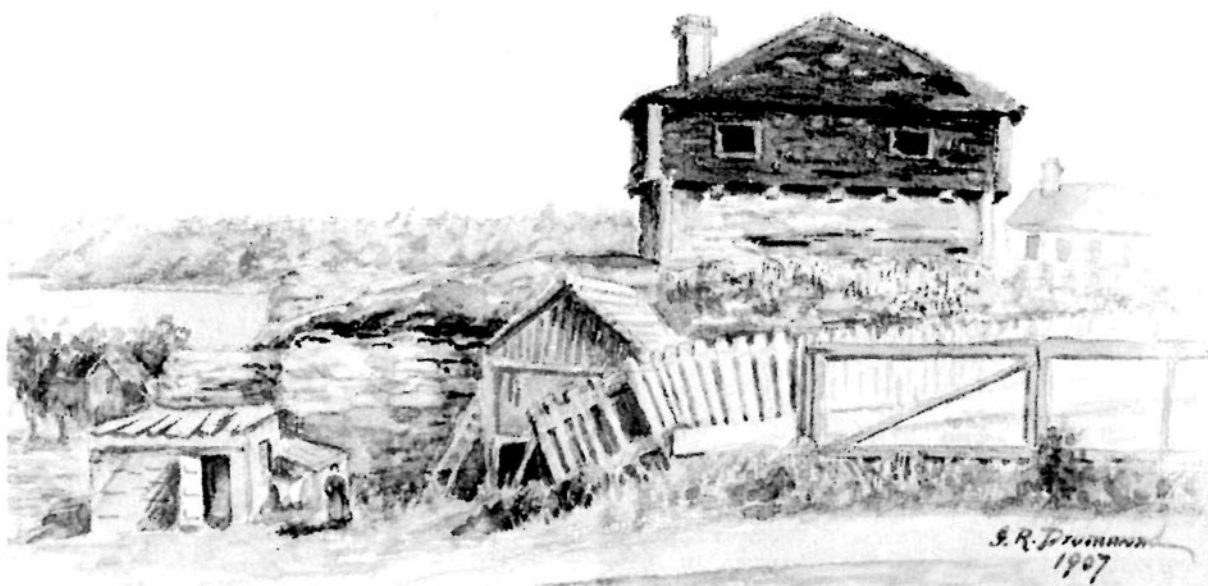
*Command^t F. Roy. Engineers office
Quebec - May 11. 1824 -
W. D. Dufferin
Canada*

*Tray 57b
Map 30w*

39 Old blockhouse at Kingston, from a watercolour by J.R. Drummond, 1907 (probably no. 5 blockhouse). (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

40 Point Frederick blockhouse, from a watercolour. (*J. Ross Robertson Collection, Metropolitan Toronto Central Library.*)

39



40



Placentia, Castle Hill Blockhouse, 1762

We are in great want of . . . Timber, & Plank to erect a Block house on an advantageous spot which perfectly secures the new Fort.¹

Whoever possesses this eminence commands both New and Old Forts. Here it is we are making our greatest Efforts for Defence, on its Summit [*sic*] in the Ruins of a little Square Fort with half Bastions stands a Block House lately Erected. This little Fort we are busy upon in Picqueting the Ramparts and Mounting Cannon on Wooden Platforms.²

[Request for materials to complete the works at Placentia] . . . 30th July 1762 [included are timbers for completing blockhouse].

Pine Timber 20 feet long 1 foot square pieces – 50 Ditto of the same scantling 24 feet long each piece – 4.³

On The top of a High Hill, stands Castle Graves, a small work Consisting of four Demy Bastions, on which are mounted Twelve Guns Vizt: Four Twelve Pounders, Four Nine Pounders, and Four Six Pounders. – The Ramparts of this Castle are faced round with a Stone Wall, on which there is placed an Earthen Parapet, and a Row of Palisades; the whole is surrounded with a narrow dry Ditch Bordered with Pickets. . . . The Blockhouse, the Guard Room and Magazines within This Fort are in good order and may be serviceable for many years.⁴

Prescott, Fort Wellington, First Blockhouse, 1813

Lieut. de Gaugreben . . . to erect . . . a Block House [at Prescott].¹

Fort Wellington, A great mass of earth badly put together; a work here may be an object as near the head of the Rapids and commencement of using small vessels, in other aspects, the site is not judicious as concerns the land and the breadth of the river is too great to prevent the passing of boats; . . . It will be necessary that the Parapet should be regulated to cover as much as possible the guns from the surrounding high ground, also a Parapet on the top of the Bombproof Blockhouse to bring a fire on the Parapet of the work; . . . The Blockhouse should not be crowded as at present unless in time of necessity.²

If an Entry was gained by assault, The interior Defences of this Work would probably disconcert a very Superior force if well maintained as the Blockhouse is on a very large Scale, Extremely well constructed & forms a most capacious & commodious Barrack both for officers & men.³

Fort Wellington is a Square earthen redoubt having a block-house of wood within it, capable of containing 196 men with their officers. There is a magazine built also of wood, but damp and unserviceable. Everything is in decay at this Post.⁴

Prescott, Fort Wellington, Second Blockhouse, 1838

Specifications for Building a Stone Blockhouse within Fort Wellington . . . 13th August 1838.

Excavations

The earth, Rubbish, gravel and old foundation to be dug and removed as may be required.

Masonry

The foundation of the Blockhouse is to be built of good solid rubble Masonry, each stone to be laid on its natural bed, bedded and jointed with mortar made of lime and sand in such proportions as shall be approved by the Commanding Engineer of the District.

The Walls all round above the foundation to be built of the best grey stone to be found in the neighbourhood, to be hammered and dressed, or rather picked in the front and laid in courses of from 8 to 12 inches as the stones can be procured the largest courses at the bottom, but not to be less than 12 inches or more & half the height in the bed: End joints to be squared back at least 9 inches, headers not to be less than 3 feet in the bed & not more than 8 to 10 feet apart, the remaining thickness of the walls to be good substantial rubble masonry well bound in with the courses and sufficiently straight to receive plaster on the inside, the inside walls to be good solid rubble masonry and straight on each side for the reception of plastering.

The whole of the stones to be laid on their natural bed, and the mortar mixed up to the satisfaction of the Commanding Engineer both as regards the proportions of the sand and lime and care in mixing, and to be grouted every second course.

The Corbels to be solid lime Stone or Granite 9 inches thick projecting as shewn in the plan, and their tails extending through the Walls as shewn by dotted lines, the covers of Cor-

bels to be of solid stone not less than 10 inches thick and 2 feet broad.

The Loopholes to be formed agreeably to plan with cut stone and good Arises, Moulds and working plans of which will be given in the progress of the works.

The Corners of the building to be rounded as shewn in the plan to correspond with the Courses of the other parts.

Brick Work

The Arch of Magazine to be turned with two thickness of Brick; of good quality and unexceptional [*sic*] workmanship, the Contractor to find Centering.

If it should be found necessary to line any part, or the whole of the interior of the building with Bricks, they must be carefully bedded and jointed and laid Flemish bonds.

The interior of the air flues will be formed of Bricks according to the plan.

Plastering

The interior side walls when required, will be plastered with two coats, Hard finished, the mortar to be well mixed up and a sufficient quantity of hair introduced, ceilings where required to be plastered, will be two coat work on split laths, mortar carefully mixed and haired with not less than one pound of clean washed hair to a Bushel of Lime.

Carpentry

Cellar floor – the whole of the flooring beams to be of white cedar flattened on one side, the small end not less than 8 inches, when flattened and well supported by dwarf wall when required. The flooring to be 2 inch pine plank tongued and grooved and well nailed.

1st Floor – The whole of the flooring beams in the first floor to be 3-1/2 inches thick x 12 inches deep of pine. The flooring to be 2 inch pine plank, tongue and grooved and blind-nailed, in Magazine Room: planks not more than 9 inches broad, and laid broken joint, sufficiently nailed with wrought nails.

Stairs to be Oak tread 1-1/2 inch thick and constructed as shewn in the plan, with oak hand rail, ballasters and Newel posts.

The doors of Store rooms &c to be 2 inches thick, and flush and bead, hung on oak frames, with strong strap or T hinges, and ten inch Iron rimmed dead Locks The magazine door will be made and mounted by the Royal Engineer Department.

The outside doors to be four inches thick of Oak plank and loop holed, hung with strong hinges and double Locks.

2nd Floor – Flooring beams to be 3-1/2 inches thick by twelve inches deep of pine, and laid one foot apart, the flooring plank, pine 2 inches thick, tongued and grooved not more than 8 inches wide, and cedar seasoned stuff free of sap and laid broken joint, small frames and sashes to be put into each of the loopholes, and well fastened with iron hold fasts – stairs similar to those on the first floor.

Upper Floor – Flooring beams to be 3-1/2 inches thick and 13 inches deep and laid one foot apart, Flooring the same as in the 2nd floor.

The Windows to be in the English or French style as the Commanding R. Engineer sees proper and 2 inches thick glaized, with English Glass and well primed previous to glazing, and finished complete with strong fastenings. Doors flushed and bead 2 inches thick, frames Oak, hung with Strong Strap or T hinges, 10 inch iron rimmed dead Locks and strong latches and catches.

Roof. Framed Roof. One principle Rafter in the Centre, with tie beam, King post &c well strapped with Iron – in the usual manner, principal Rafter, – 8 x 9 –, King post 12 x 12 – Struts on braces 6 x 6 – small Rafter 6 at one end 4 at the other and 4 inches thick, covered with 1 inch pine boards reduced to an equal width, with straight edges and good 18 inch shingles laid 4-1/2 inches to the weather, or with 1-1/2 pine grooved [illegible] & covered with tin if reqd. Wall plates 6 x 12 inches.

The whole of the Space between the Tie beams and roof to be filled in Solid with Cedar poles of at least 9 inches diameter, and crossing each other alternately, for the purpose of making the Building splinter roof.

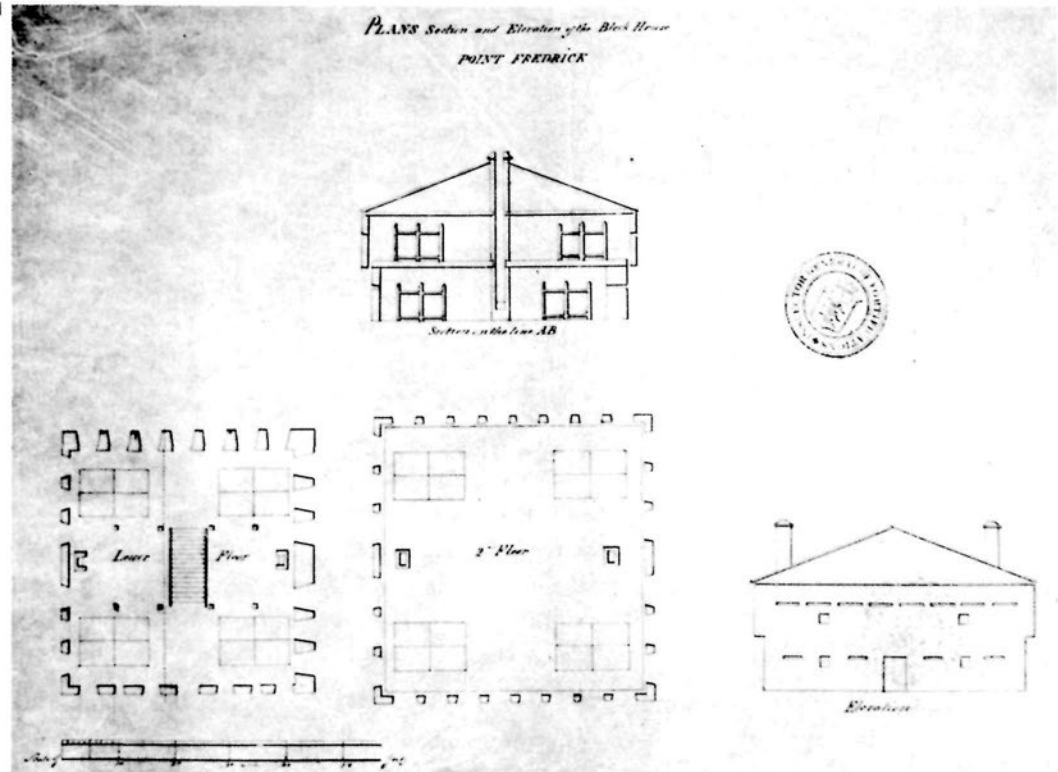
Painting

The whole of the Sashes, Sash Frames, Doors, door frames, both in the interior and exterior of the building to be painted 3 coats with the best white lead and linseed oil.

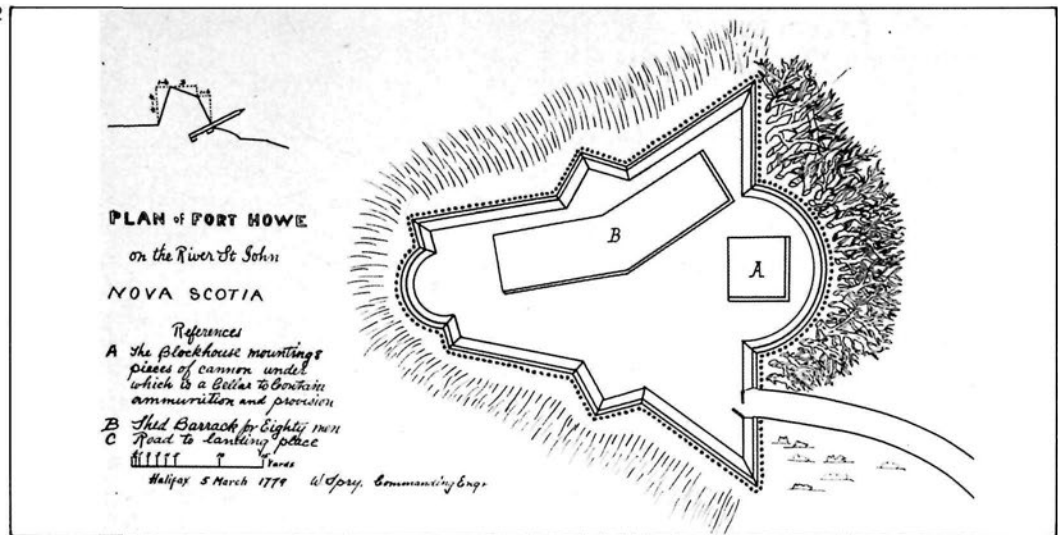
The passage over Corbels to be enclosed all round the building, with 3 inch Oak framework loopholed and well bound in the angles by being let into 6 inch Oak uprights.

All work to be executed in the most substantial and Workmanlike manner, with the best materials, and which be subject to the approval, alteration or rejection of the Senior Royal Engineer or any person deputed by him at any time during its progress or after completion and in any case of any workmen or materials being objected to by the same for any reason whatever, the Contractor hereby binds himself to discharge immediately such Workmen, and remove and replace such material for what will be considered good and unobjectable.

41

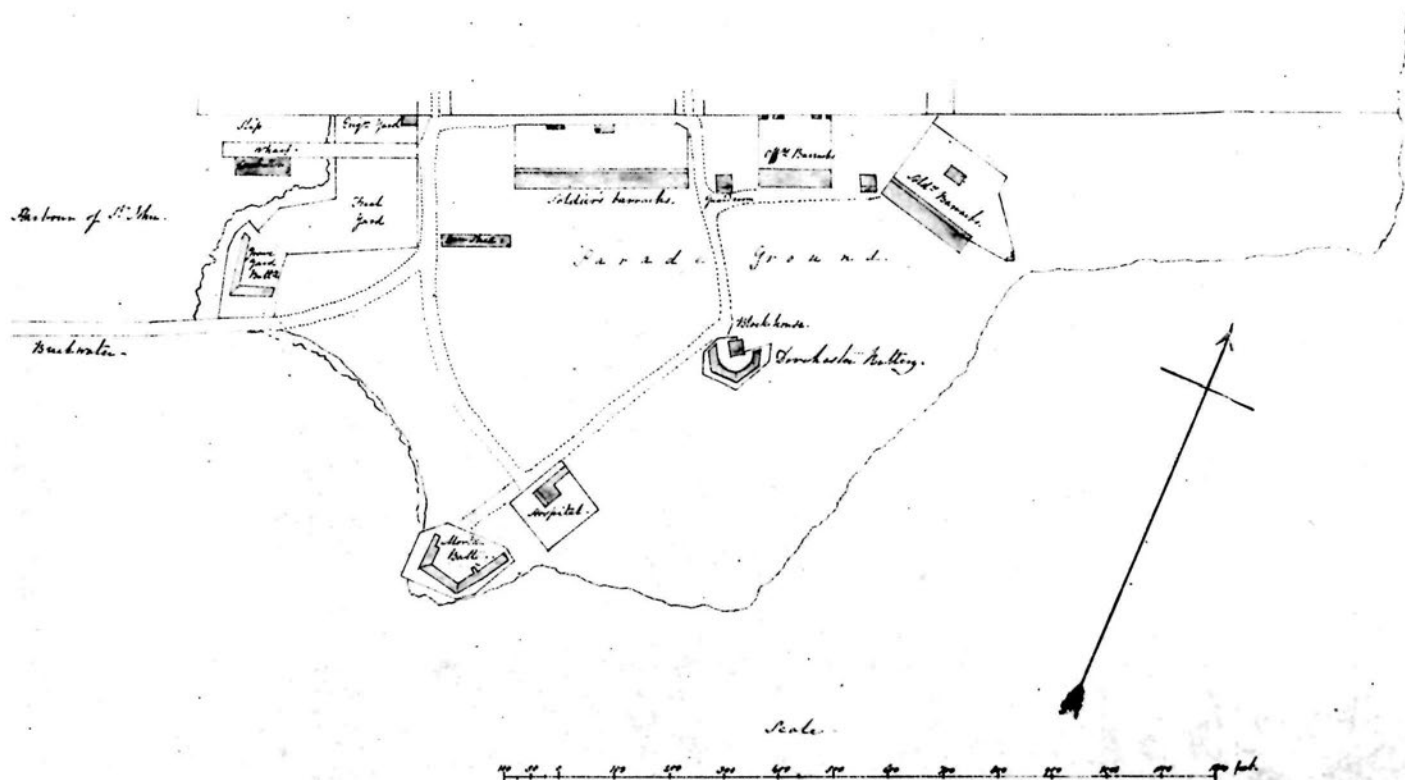


42



(Plan No 1)
New Brunswick

Sketch of the Military Station at Lower Cove St. John N.B.
showing the Barracks, Batteries, &c. on it.



The Contractors shall conform minutely to all instructions in Writing and shall not execute any work without authority in writing. Any extra expense incurred beyond the prices specified in the Contract, owing to the neglect or omission of the Contractor is to be deducted from any sum that is or may be due, or he may be called upon to pay such extra expences to such person as may be appointed to receive the same.

The Contractor shall perform such measured work as may be required within such time as shall be allotted, by Senior Royal Engineers, and if the Contractor fails to complete the first or any subsequent proportion within the time stipulated, that officer shall be at liberty to desire the Contractor to discontinue the work and employ other persons to complete the remaining proportions – any extra expence to be defrayed by the Contractor or if the progress is not deemed sufficient he may hire as many Workmen in addition as he may think necessary at the Contractor's Cost, also the same of materials if not provided in sufficient quantity or of the required quality All materials to be packed and laid down in convenient places, so as not to interfere with any other work that may be required to be performed. No work to be underlet or let by Task work without permission in writing. No work or foundations shall be covered or laid without permission in default thereof it shall be uncovered and examined and made good at the Contractor's expense – who shall be responsible for all Settlements, defects, etc. in the Superstructure. If the Walls or other parts are discovered not to be upright or level any extra work required in consequence shall be at the cost of the Contractor.

No allowance will be made for hammering Walls, Bed and joints.

Such quantities of Lime and grating shall be used in the masonry as may be required by the Superintending Officer.

The backs of all Arches shall be smooth and the flues of Chimnies parquetted, fair and smooth and bored and left clean. The Engineers Department, to be at Liberty without vitiating the Contract to employ Men or supply Materials where thought expedient.

The Contractor to send in his bill when required and to supply without extra charge, the requisite number of persons to assist in the measurements of his Work, also to remove any material or rubbish without delay, that may result from the execution of works performed by him. Prescott, 13th August 1838.¹

Prison Island (Coteau-du-Lac) Blockhouse, 1780

We found the Coteau Island extremely well arranged for the accommodation, and security of Prisoners of War, and I think your Excellency will not hear of any making their Escape from thence: the buildings as they now stand have Births for 216 Men, with a separate Room for an Hospital, and another for the Surgeon's Mate, each room has a Fire Place, and contains only 12 Men, . . . these Buildings are commanded by a Blockhouse, and Guard House, . . . I judge the distance from the Coteau to the Island to be about 500 yards.¹

Prison Island (Coteau-du-Lac), Second Blockhouse, 1814

It will be further necessary to occupy the upper end of Prison Island immediately opposite the Coteau with a Block House to contain 40 Men, and a small battery in front for two [illegible] Pdrs. to command the Channel. The Present Blockhouses, and buildings on this point, are totally decayed and unserviceable.¹

Quebec Blockhouses, 1778

From hence [Hotel Dieu Battery] to Montcalms Wall a Line of Palissades covered with Boards with loop Holes for musquetry, and a small square Redout [sic] in the middle, in which there is a Block House. In this Redout are one 8 & one 7 pounder mounted to scour the Brow to the Right and left. . . . From the North Point of the St. Lawrence Polygon a Line of Palissades goes in a Zig-Zag manner to the Brow of the Cliff, within which stands a Block-house situated too high to fire upon people passing below. . . . There is a Blockhouse before La Glacerie Bastion, another below St. Louis's Gate to keep an Enemy at a Distance. They answer well enough to prevent a surprize.¹

Quebec, Cape Diamond Blockhouses, 1797

Estimate of the expence. . . . To Mining & sinking two Pits with Drains for Necissaries to the Blockhouses on Cape Diamond – Repairs to the Roof, Floor and Windows of No. 3 Blockhouse – and to repair, fit up and secure No. 1 Blockhouse for the reception of the Ordnance Stores.¹

[Estimate] To repair the Roof & stairs of No. 1 Blockhouse at [Quebec, approved].²

[Estimate approved:] To repair & fit up the lower Rooms of No. 3 Blockhouse on Cape Diamond as Quarters for Troops; making & fixing stove pipes for it.³

We have examined the state of the old Wood Block Houses contiguous to the Powder Magazine on Cape Diamond. We beg leave to report to you they are in so ruinous and dangerous a state that it is indispensably necessary to take immediate steps that they may be removed as soon as possible as any accident by Fire would most probably cause the destruction of the Magazine and Store House adjoining them.⁴

Quebec, Peninsular Blockhouses, 1759-60

As intelligence had been brought in, that the Enemy had some thoughts of Stirring about Christmas, in order this winter to regain the honor & advantages they had lost last Summer, to disappoint their designs, as there were no Outworks, I resolv'd to Cover the Fortification of the Town with a Chain of Blockhouses which were according begun upon this day. . . . this measure has put us a L'abre d'un Coup de Main.¹

The disorder spread from the left to the Right & the whole Retreat'd, under the Musquetry of our Blockhouses, abandoning their Cannon to the Enemy.²

The damage done to the Blockhouses by the Enemys Cannon, Quite repaired.³

Montresor tells me you seemed surprised at the Precautions I had taken in building Blockhouses in the Winter, but you will not be so, when you hear the designs which were formed, and partly attempted against me in the winter, and when you see the place.⁴

This Intelligence was brought by Lieut. Montresor. . . . that Brig Murray had taken post at St. Foix & Lorrette, Whereby his Wood Cutters were perfectly secure as were also his Garrison from a Line of Blockhouses he had Caused to be erected on the outside of his Works. . . . with the Chain of Blockhouses, Quebec is now much more respectable than ever it was.⁵

Quebec, Point Lévy Blockhouses, 1760

Resolv'd to erect two blockhouses, in Order to Command the High road [at Point Levi] & landing Places, one of them to be a Large one, & two Pieces of Cannon to be put in it.¹

Begun also to send over the Timber, for the Two Blockhouses at Point Levi.²

Begun to put up the Blockhouse at Point Levi.³

The large Blockhouse at Point Levi being finish'd, a guard was this day put into it, and Two Guns Mounted therein.⁴

Began a Blockhouse at Point Levi, to cover the Landing of any Troops I should find necessary to throw over, to Support that Post, or secure their Retreat.⁵

Finish'd the Blockhouse begun the 13th.⁶

Begun another small Blockhouse at Point Levi.⁷

The two small Blockhouses at Point Levi being now finish'd put guards into them.⁸

I could not think of keeping Post at Point Levi any longer, and orderr'd [sic] the Officer Commanding there, to burn the Blockhouses, Spike the guns destroy the Provision's, and come off with the first tide, w^{ch} was effect'd.⁹

Quebec, Ste Foy Blockhouse, 1760

As I received information the Enemy had reinforc'd some of their advanced Posts, sent a Subaltern & 30 Men to St. Foix, Blew up a Mill in the front of the Town in Order to Erect a Blockhouse on the Spot.¹

Queenston Blockhouse, 1814

Queenston: On the mountain above it a Redoubt has been built with a Blockhouse therein for 100 men, another on the opposite side of the Road could much strengthen the Position and has been recommended to Lt. Gen'l Drummond.¹

Estimate of the expence required for repairing the Blockhouse and Picketing Queenstown Mountain . . . £64¹7³

Materials:

Six Hundred feet of Scantling 6 x 4 for Rafters . . . Two Thousand five Hundred feet of Inch Boards for Roofing Twenty Thousand Shingles – Two Hundred feet of Ribbon for Picketing . . . Two Hundred and fifty Pickets not less than 6" diameter Three Hundred four Inch Spikes. Two Hundred Pounds of Shingle Nails.²

The Blockhouse Redoubt is unfinished.³

Queenstown: This Post is about Six Miles from Fort George consists of a Square Redoubt & Blockhouse in the Centre with an advanced Battery – here are likewise very temporary Bar-

racks for the Officers & Men of the Royal Artillery ill adapted to the Nature of their duties, especially as the Field Ordnance are lodged at Fort George – the ground is high & partially commands the Anchorage & Landing place also the roads of communication on either Side as well as into the interior.⁴

At Queenstown there is a wooden blockhouse and some earth works, thrown up during the war. A range of temporary wooden barracks was also constructed here, but which are now perfectly useless.⁵

Rideau Canal Blockhouses, 1831

[Merrickville, Kingston Mills, The Narrows, The Isthmus, and Burritts Rapids. For history and structural details of these blockhouses, see R. Lavery, "Report on the Narrows Blockhouse." Manuscript on file, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1967; and Canada. Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, "Historical Assets of the Rideau Waterway." Manuscript on file, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1967.]

River Raisin Blockhouse, 1813

River Raisin: At the mouth of this River there is a small Blockhouse at present without Artillery, there should be 2 – 12 Pdr. Carronades in it. It commands the road and bridge, to make a defensive Post of it works in addition would be necessary, but with a view to strengthen the communication it seems of minor importance to other Posts higher up the River.¹

There was a blockhouse, and a wooden building consisting of three rooms occupied by a detachment during the war, at the mouth of the River Raisin. The blockhouse has been burnt lately by accident.²

St. Andrews, East Battery and Blockhouse, 1813

East Block House and Battery. Is situated on a point of land at the Eastern extremity of the Town, in the Block House is mounted one 4 poundr. Iron gun on a Standing Wooden Carriage, it will contain 30 men, in front of it is a Breast work to which it is connected by a line of Palisades, inside of the work is a platform on which are mounted 3 eighteen pounder Iron guns mounted on traversing platforms to fire en Barbette. Outside the work are two nine pounders on standing Wooden Carriages, . . . The Block House and Breast Work are in want of repairs.¹

East Battery; occupied by a Battery & Blockhouse [2 acres].²

St. Andrews, Fort Tipperary Blockhouse, 1808

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter informing me of your arrival in this province and I have now to desire you to prepare to set out for Saint Andrews as it is proposed to erect a small work in that neighbourhood for the defence of the frontier.¹

Fort Tipperary is a Star Work situated upon a hill about 700 Yards from the Town, which it commands as well as the Harbor and part of the adjacent Country. It contains three 18 poundrs. and Six 12-poundrs. Iron Guns on Standing wooden garrison Carriages, to fire through Embrasures: it is yet unfinished, but when complete will admit several more guns; here is also a block House which will contain 70 Men, a Bomb-Proof Magazine is constructing, its completion is much to be desired, as the ammunition etc. is far from being in a [illegible] of perfect Security, being deposited in the [illegible] of the guard room within the Fort.²

There is a good wooden blockhouse, calculated for 200 men at St. Andrews. This work was meant as a keep to a large Redoubt, but which was never finished. A stone bomb proof magazine was constructed for the proposed work. It is in good order.³

Fort Tipperary: on a hill in rear of the town of St. Andrew's and close to the Barracks. This Blockhouse was to have been enclosed by an earthen redoubt, but was discontinued at the peace with the United States.⁴

Tomkin's Hill occupied by a Blockhouse Barrack, Artillery & Comm't Storehouses, Magazine, Fuel Yard etc. [9 acres freehold].⁵

St. Andrews, Joes Point Blockhouse, 1813

Joe's Point Block House. This work is about one mile from St. Andrews, at the mouth of the River [illegible] opposite the American Post at Robbinstown it will contain about 30 men, and has one 4 pounder in the second story, mounted upon a standing wooden carriage, in front of it was planted a 24 pounder gun upon a standing wood carriage capable of Firing upon the American shore, it has lately been dismantled.¹

About a mile from St. Andrews at the mouth of the River Schoodiac and opposite Robbins Town in the United States 1-24 pounder dismounted. For the defence of the passage and ferry across the river St. Croix. The Blockhouse is in tolerable repair.²

Joe's Point; occupied by a Blockhouse & Battery [1 acre freehold].³

St. Andrews, West Blockhouse, 1813

West Block House and Battery. Is situated at the opposite extremity of the Town, for the protection of the western entrance of the Harbor it is constructed on the same principals as the former [east battery and blockhouse] contains the same number and nature of Ordnance and wants similar repair. The two Blockhouses are about a mile apart.¹

There are three batteries, one for four 24 pounders, and two others for 3 each, supported severally by wooden blockhouses. The blockhouses are out of order, and the guns withdrawn from the batteries.²

West Battery: occupied by a Blockhouse, Battery, & Storehouse [2 acres freehold].³

Saint John, Blockhouse near Fort Howe, 1778

I have enclosed an Estimate of the expence of rebuilding the Chimney of the Block-House near Fort Howe which was destroyed by the effect of a heavy Gale of Wind on the 18th Ult. and on account of its being occupied as Barracks. The General judged it indispensably necessary to be immediately replaced which has accordingly been done by our Department.¹

In consequence of being obliged to raise the East & West Parapet of the Work enclosing the Blockhouse adjoining Fort Howe ten feet, I have calculated the Brestplate [sic] to be made with facines owing to the impossibility of giving sufficient firmness to the epaulement of that height formed by the Barrels.²

Saint John, Dorchester Blockhouse, 1793

I will thank you to send me the Lieut. Generals commands respecting the enclosed Estimate for the repair of the roof of Dorchester Block House.¹

We have not yet attempted The Roofing of the Block-house at the Lower Cove and I think it most expedient to defer it till the Spring.²

Dorchester Battery. Is a small Earthwork and Blockhouse situated upon the South Extremity of the Peninsula of Saint John containing two 18 pounders and one 8 Inch howitzer.³

Dorchester Blockhouse and Battery: Southermost point of the peninsula; to defend the entrance to the harbour, and act in concert with the Mortar Battery in defending the beach; Parapet of sodwork enclosed with pickets.⁴

Saint John, Fort Drummond Blockhouse, 1812

The new Block House on Carleton side, is well situated to command the Road leading to Musquash, by which an Enemy must March, in the event of a landing either at Musquash or Maquagonish Bay.¹

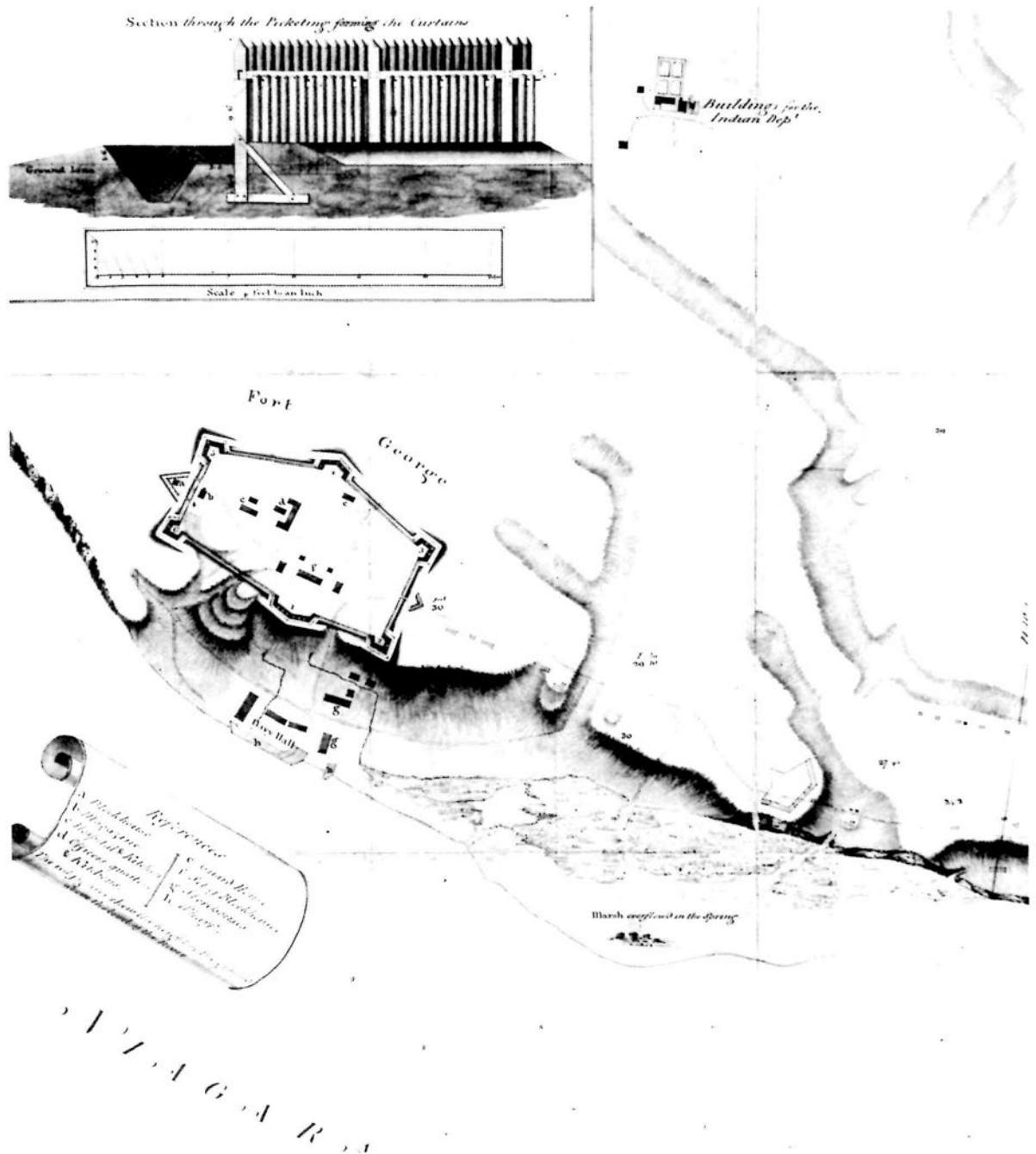
The men who engaged to build Drummond Blockhouse have most positively asserted that they are not to bound to make a porch to that building as they conceive the one at Dorchester Blockhouse (by which they have been governed) is by no means part it – for myself I am of opinion they have an undoubted right to complete the porch, as they are invariable attached to all Blockhouses occupied as Barracks, nor can they be said to be properly habitable without.²

To James Seely and Joseph Clark builders for erecting a Blockhouse 20 ft. Square upon the height above Carlton, for the defence of the Western side of the Harbour of St. John New Brunswick as per accompanying contract approved by Mjr. G. Smith.

In building & completing a Blockhouse 20 feet square – £300-0-0.³

We beg leave to make a tender of our services to your honor to build and complete . . . a Blockhouse in every respect similar to the one built in Dorchester Battery at St. John for the sum of Three hundred pounds.⁴

Drummond Block House and the adjoining well are finished. May I be authorized to purchase a stove and fix it up.⁵



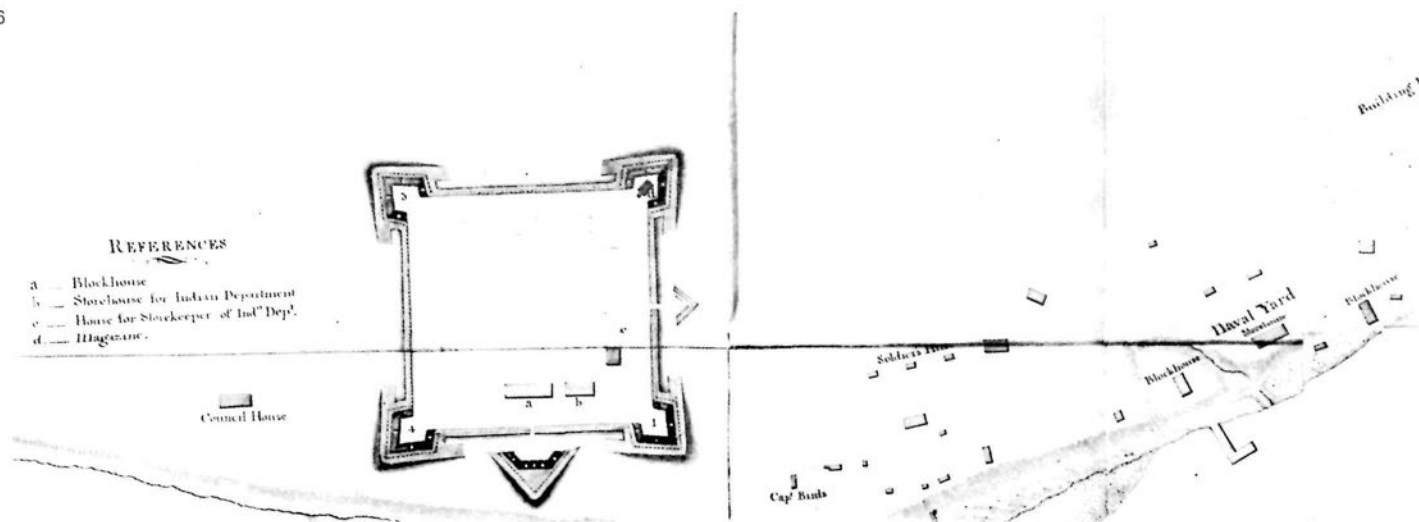
45 The three reconstructed blockhouses at Fort George. (Photo by author.)

46 Sketch of the post at Amherstburg in 1800, by Gother Mann, showing the original large blockhouse within the fort ("a") and the two blockhouses at the naval yard. (Public Archives of Canada.)

45



46



Fort Drummond Block House Is about 1400 yards in front of Fort Frederic – situated upon very commanding heights which if enclosed (as proposed) with few works would present a very formidable obstacle to the enemy, upon this work are mounted 1-Six Pounder and 1-four Pounder which are Serviceable the Carriages are of wood and Serviceable – their [sic] is 100 Rounds of Ammn. prepared for each of these Guns which is deposited at Fort Frederic, there being no place for them at the Block House.⁶

Saint John, Fort Frederick Blockhouse, 1812

I should wish to be furnished with the under written Plans and report from you, with as little delay as possible.

1st. – A Plan of Fort Frederick, as it now stands, specifying what buildings there may be on any part of the Parapet; which ought to be immediately taken down. A plan and Estimate of a Blockhouse of one Story, for the centre of Fort Frederick for the additional strength of the work and to contain a detachment of thirty men.¹

Estimate of the Expenses of a proposed Blockhouse with a room for an officer adjoining to be built in Fort Frederick one story high and to contain 30 men.

Military Carpenters Work	£25-0-0
Labourers d ^o	£ 8-0-0
	<u>£33-0-0</u>

Materials

Twenty six Tons of timber . . .
 One Thousand feet of 2 Inch Plank . . .
 Thirty Pounds of Spikes . . .
 Two Pairs of Hooks & Hinges . . .
 One lock and Key . . .
 One Barrel of Tar . . .
 Five Thousand Shingles . . .
 One Hundred and eighty Pounds of Shingle nails . . .
 One Ream of Paper . . .
 One Thousand feet of Boards . . .
 Twenty five Pounds of large nails . . .
 [Total £103-1-9]²

Commence on the Blockhouse at Fort Frederick.³

I have sent you a plan and Estimate of a Block House of one story high proposed to be erected in Fort Frederick for your consideration, and which with regular Assistance may be completed in a Fortnight.⁴

Fort Frederick. Is situated on Carleton Point on the Western side of the Harbor opposite of City it mounts 2 twelve pounders on Standing Wooden Carriages to fire through Embrazures this work is of a Square figure, within it are quarters for a Subaltern and twenty men, and a small magazine built under the parapet to contain all the ammunition for the guns mounted on this side of the Harbor.⁵

Saint John, Fort Howe Blockhouse, 1777

Lieutenant Governor Arbuthnot & I, formed a plan for taking Post at the entrance of Saint-John's River. I ordered from this place a framed Blockhouse ready to erect, and sent four Six Pounders, with a proportion of Stores.¹

There is only one small irregular field work at St. John's Harbour, not far from the mouth of the river, . . . This little work was erected in the course of the late war, in preference to repairing a small square fort [Fort Frederick] thrown up during the former war, . . . the ridge upon which the new fort stands was offered by them, and a work in which there are eight pieces of cannon, barracks for 100 men, and a small block house, were accordingly erected, together with a larger blockhouse at the other end of the ridge. The blockhouses remain but the work which was composed of fascines and sods, is falling down, and the ridge upon which it stands is too narrow to admit of any useful works being constructed upon it.²

I send you the Estimate for . . . repairs to the Palisades which surround the Fort, and a new Porch to the Block House, as the Men of the 29th Reg't. suffer very much for want of a necessary. Brig^d General Hunter has given orders for one to be erected immediately.³

Saint John, Johnston's Blockhouse, 1811

Johnston's Battery is a work constructed at the back of the Town, on a height, in Continuation of a Chain of Batteries for the Protection of the Harbour – an unfinished Block House Stands thereon – the expence of which has been defrayed from the extraordinaries of the Army – four platforms have been ordered by the Honble. Board of Ordnance, Two of which have been laid here capable of Mounting Two Pieces of Ordnance

each – without any breast works or picketting surrounding them.¹

I have to desire you will with as little delay as possible transmit to me an Estimate for putting Johnson's Block House in sufficient repair to be occupied as a Barrack and specifying therein the number of men it will contain, as also a plan shewing the mode you intend for introducing the Chimneys, you must not omit the expense of a Picket fence inclosing the whole Building at about 40 feet distance from the Blockhouse.²

Your own Estimates of the Block House must be made over again in order that you may include the necessary out houses and well, which will be indispensable upon that building being occupied as a Barrack.³

I am not so satisfied that the four guns, 4 pdr. only which are mounted upon Dorchester and Johnson Blockhouse and which afford the only protection to the Cove and the Back of the Town are of themselves a sufficient defence, the intermediate space upwards of a mile & intersected with such broken ground as to promise a favorable approach to the enemy. Johnson Block House I conceive to be a most important situation having immediately under its command the principal roads and heights in the neighbourhood, lying either the range of cannon shot, and from this importance I am led to recommend its being inclosed with a strong breastwork [*sic*] not only to secure its safety from fire but to make it a rallying point for the troops in the event of their being pressed by superior numbers.⁴

To Messrs. Hutcheson and Hemagar, for the undermentioned work performed to Johnson Block House, situated on the heights in the rear of the City St. John New Brunswick. . . .

For Laying new floors, making and hanging the door, port shutters, raising a new Chimney and shingling the outside of the whole building. – £100-0-0.⁵

The erection of the Chimney in Johnston's Blockhouse has been unavoidably delayed for the want of bricks.⁶

Johnson's Battery and Block House, is a Small work constructed in rear of the City it consists of 2-9 Pounders, with 2-4 Prs. in the Block House, all of which have 100 rounds of ammn. each with side arms, and Small Stores, complete this Work covers the main road leading into the Town, and also connects the chain of Batteries for the Defence of the Harbor.⁷

Johnston's Battery and Blockhouse: On the Eastern side of the town, on a height in continuation of a chain of batteries; for the protection of the Eastern side of the city, and to command the Inset [*sic*] of the sea on that side named Courtney Lake.⁸

Johnston's Blockhouse: Freehold occupied by the Blockhouse only and including half of King's Street.⁹

Ground vested in the Crown by Act of General Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick 3rd March 1813 whereon Johnson's Blockhouse stands [one acre freehold].¹⁰

Saint John, Partridge Island Blockhouse, 1812

Your are to proceed immediately upon making the two lower floors of the Lighthouse on Partridge Island musquetry proof and placing births therein for 60 men also building an officers quarters for a Captain & 2 Subalterns with a Cook House for the men. Also to inclose the level ground on which the Light House stands, (about 200 feet by 100) with a parapet 5 feet 6 In. high complying with the shape pointed out, as nearly as the ground will admit, it is proposed to place Six 24 pounders on Traversing Platforms in this work as shewn in the sketch.¹

The Block House comprising the Officers Quarters and Cooking house for the men, I have placed in the center of the other half of the Curve which will tend to support the Light House in any attack that might be made upon it within the Work.²

On Partridge Island at the mouth of the harbour there is a battery for seven 24 pounders, supported by a wooden blockhouse capable of holding 60 men, but out of order. This Island we think ought to be occupied in a more permanent manner by a strong tower surrounded by heavier battery.³

A circular work with a Blockhouse in the interior.⁴

Partridge Island at the Mouth of the Harbor: Battery, Magazine, and Blockhouse Barrack thereon. . . . The Island granted by Charter to the City Corporation within right of entry to the Crown.⁵

Signal Hill Blockhouse, 1795

[For the history of this area and a thorough structural report see A.J.H. Richardson, "History of the Signal Hill Area St. John's, Nfld." Manuscript on file, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1962; and George Ingram, "A

Structural History of the Fortifications and Military Buildings at Signal Hill, Nfld." Manuscript on file, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1964.]

Sorel Blockhouses, 1781

Two Blockhouses, each may Contain 30 Men.¹

Directions being given to Captain Humfrey, to fix up the Blockhouse and house adjoining, as Quarters for a Company in addition to the present Barrack at this Post, . . . you will furnish upon Captain Humfries requisition, with all practicable expedition, the necessary Materials for the same, which will consist chiefly of 1 1/2 and 2 Inch Pine Plank, and some small Pine Scantling.²

Sydney Mines Blockhouse, 1759

I have had a Number of Miners Employed thro' the winter at the Colliery, which is about ten Leagues Distance from Hence: In the Autumn I had a Blockhouse Built and have keep'd [sic] an Officer and party of Fifty Men there to Serve not only as a Safe Guard against the Indians . . . but also as Labourers.¹

Sydney Mines, First Blockhouse

I have made the most diligent enquiry of persons who have been on the Spot and employed in working them [the coal mines], and find that there is a Blockhouse, Barracks, and Storehouses for lodging the Workmen, Tools, and Provisions.¹

The only place on the Island [Cape Breton] in any respect defensible, is a small Blockhouse at the mines, capable of containing fifty men, and on which there are four four pounders (but ought to be nines). There are the ruins of two or three batteries, which have been ill-constructed or ill-placed.²

I arrived [at Spanish River] on the 14th Day of May [1778] and continued there doing everything in my power for the good of His Majesty's Service by digging and preparing Coals to load Transports which were continually sent to take them away, also fortifying a Post which was absolutely necessary for the protection of the people employed in the Mines and to save the Coals prepared for Exportation from being burned by the Rebels in case of an attack.³

Sydney Mines, Second Blockhouse, 1795

I have given orders to the Commanding Engineer, Captain Stratton, to carry into execution the immediate erection of Blockhouses in the two Islands [Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island] as pointed out to him by Major General Sir William Green, in his letter of the 28th March.¹

The Blockhouse; the Roof to be repaired, and the whole Building to be painted also the Platform on the lower Floor to be taken up and relaid. The Picketing Round the building to be repaired. – There are four, Iron 4 Pounders mounted on Garrison carriages with Wooden Trucks within the Blockhouse all serviceable, but wants painting. The Battery to be repaired – There are mounted on this battery, Four 12 pounders, on Traversing and Garrison carriages.²

In the rear of the battery is a Blockhouse with the following Ordnance mounted thereon: Ordnance Guns, Iron – 4 English 12 pounders. The carriages and traversing platforms are serviceable. A sufficient proportion of ammunition in readiness for each piece, the station being out of the probable line of attack (except for a Privateer) it is not necessary to keep a large proportion of ammunition there.

An N.C.O. of the Royal Artillery and six Gunners are stationed there in charge of the Ordnance and Stores.³

Coal Mine Battery at Sydney is situated on the Spanish River three Miles below the Bar and about nine from the Town of Sydney. It is a Barbette Work and mounts the following Artillery viz Guns Iron 12 Pounders 4 English. . . . In the rear of the Battery is a Block House with the following Ordnance mounted thereon Guns Iron 4 Pounders 4 English Which with their Carriages are in a good State and a sufficient proportion of ammunition ready for each piece.⁴

On the north side of the Spanish river, 3 miles below the bar, and 9 miles from the town of Sydney. For the defence of the Harbour and the protection of the mining establishment. State: The Blockhouse out of repair, the Battery in Ruins.⁵

Turkey Point Blockhouse, 1814

Lieutenant Wilson with a few of those men, to Turkey Point, for the purpose of erecting cover for the Wing of the 37th Reg't. at present there. Capt. Payne has recommended this cover to consist of Four Block Houses, connected by a strong stockade;

as being easiest erected, both as cover and defence, at this season of the year.¹

When Lieut. Gaugreben of the Engineers was here he commenced a Log Redoubt, which Capt. Payne intends finishing immediately as it will answer as a Defence in case of attack and at the same time make an exceeding good Barrack for Three or Four hundred men he hopes to have it finished in three weeks when I trust more troops will be sent to assist him in his works.²

Winter Cantonment [of troops] at Turkey point and Long Point for the purpose of being employed . . . in the construction of Blockhouses on the Site intended for a Dock Yard.³

I left 5 sappers & miners with Lt. Willson at Turkey Point, by Lt. Gen'l Drummond's advice...The high ground at Turkey Point presents a fine feature for a work; and I had laid down on paper a Fort, with the intention of commencing it in the spring; and for the present had commenced a Block House, lined with earth, having a ditch palisaded, and a covered way; and which could contain about 400 Men.⁴

Turkey Point: A Blockhouse is in forwardness here which it was proposed to cover by a glacis etc, but as the Plan seemed to look only to defense, without combining convenient accommodation for the Troops, and the necessary appendages to such a Post, I have with the approbation of Lt. General Drummond directed it to be altered to answer these purposes.⁵

Turkey Point: There is a fine Blockhouse for about 300 men in considerable progress, which I beg much to recommend should at least be covered with a slight roof to preserve it as much as possible: it would be a great barrier against the incursion of an Enemy who attempted to land near it, & inspire confidence amongst the inhabitants in that neighbourhood, but I do not apprehend it would immediately protect the naval Establishment that I understand was once proposed near this place.⁶

A blockhouse and some wooden buildings were constructed here many years ago, now perfectly in ruins.⁷

Weishuns Point Blockhouse, 1814

A Redoubt has been thrown up and a Blockhouse built within it for 100 men – they are neither as yet complete.¹

Worden's Blockhouse and Battery, 1813

Worden's Battery and Block House. This is a small work erected on the bank of the River Saint John, at a narrow passage about 30 miles above the City, the Battery mounts three 10 pounders on standing wooden Carriages to fire over the parapet. The Blockhouse is upon a height 150 yards in the rear of the Battery, and is constructed so as to contain two four pounders in the second story, the guns of the Battery have lately been dismounted and the carriages put into the Block House.¹

Worden's Battery and Blockhouse is erected on a narrow passage of the River St. John's, about 30 miles above the city, the guns in this battery have been dismounted. The carriages have been put into the Blockhouse which is situated about 150 yards in the rear of the battery on a commanding height.²

Built to defend the passage from the right to the left bank of the St. John River, and to command the roads along the left bank from Fredericton to St. John. Blockhouse out of repair. Battery not kept up.³

Yamaska Blockhouse (Lower), 1778

I likewise visited the new Post on the River Yamaska, and found the Guard very attentive, this Post is at the highest Settlement, and very near the great road leading from St. Charles; they have an advanced Guard of four men at the first Fork, which is about Six Leagues above the Post.¹

A party of 14 Men will be quite sufficient for the Summer, but that such a Party is very necessary, because the Indians have been accustomed to go from this River into Mississque Bay at most Seasons, and the Post is very near the Cart road leading from St. Charles: besides there are from 50 to 70 Inhabitants, who are all exceedingly well armed, and certainly were by no means Friends to Government, as well as very disobedient to the Captain of Militia.²

On the 15th we proceeded to the lower Blockhouse, which is nearly in the same state of defence as last year, tho' the Officers Apartments were newly fitted up last Fall.³

Yamaska Blockhouse (Upper), 1781

No Endeavours of mine shall be wanting to fulfill your Intentions in cutting Timber, for a New Blockhouse on the [Yamaska] river.¹

From the Situation of the New Blockhouse at Yamaska, I wish to preserve it a frontier Post, therefore permanent, which you will consider in the construction of it.²

I have visited the situation proposed for the Block House just below the Rapids of the River Yamaska; its distance from the present One, is about 7 Leagues on the Ice. . . . The Situation proposed is very advantageous, being on the West Shore, at the foot of the Rapids, on a rising Ground, which is about 30 Feet above the level of the Ice, and higher than any part of the adjacent Country: just under it, lies a small Island, called Isle a L'Aille. . . . they are squaring some excellent Timber for the Blockhouse, and will continue to do so, and to clear the Wood for the distance of 250 yards from the Post, until the Season permits them to dig the Cellar, (which I propose shall be Proof against small Shells,) and to proceed with the other Works, necessary for forming the whole into a permanent advanced Post.³

We walked to the upper Blockhouse, which is at least 21 miles, — . . . the Work is exceedingly well finished, and by having a Bomb Proof Cellar, and being surrounded with a Picketing and glacis, may be considered as a Post of considerable Defence. . . . The Woods round the new Blockhouse are cut down for about 200 yards, and the Island before it, is almost cleared.⁴

Yarmouth Blockhouse, 1812

There is a Battery and Blockhouse at this place [Yarmouth].

There are mounted the following ordnance Guns

- 12 pounders – 2 iron
- 4 pounders – 1 iron
- 3 pounders – 2 Brass¹

On the southwest point of Bunkers peninsula, in the rear of the battery stands a Blockhouse. Purpose: for the defence of the town and harbour, and to protect the coasting trade. There is a two storey Blockhouse surrounded by a parapet with a 4-gun battery in front, also a wooden magazine and guardhouse, not kept up.²

On Bunker's Peninsula there can be traced the site of a Block House and a four Gun Battery. 3 Iron Guns, and 2 Iron carriages quite unserviceable are still on the ground.³

York, Coast Battery and Blockhouse, 1814

In advance of this Work [2nd Fort York] there is an old Blockhouse on the main road leading to Burlington bordering on the Lake about half a mile distant, also a Battery about the same distance on the coast, inclosed & defended at the Gorge by a small blockhouse.¹

The blockhouse in the rear of the battery in advance of the fort [400 yards], as also the battery itself, are very much out of repair.²

York, First Town Blockhouse, 1798

A Block or Defencible Guard House in the Town of York. This House was built as a Guard House for the Militia of York, should the Indian War with which we were threatened in the Winter of 1798, have required their being embodied.¹

The Kitchens at the Block House in Town have been long finished, but . . . I have not yet been able to obey the Generals directions, to send a Party to occupy them.²

I beg leave to suggest, for the information of His Honor the General, — that one of the Companies now going into the Garrison of York, should be sent to the Blockhouse on the East end of the Town, in order to cover the same; and to prevent surprize from a landing on the peninsula, should it be attempted, for before a detachment could March from the Garrison to defend either of the passes of the River Don, the Town might burnt, [sic] as the Company therein, have few or nor Arms of defence, & therefore could not make resistance, and I must beg leave to observe it would be then too late [to] Arm, or rather before the Company could receive Arms and Ammunition, the attempt might be effected.³

York, Fort York (First) Blockhouse, 1797

I shall in consequence move the Council for their concurrence to my erecting a Blockhouse for the Accommodation of part of the Queen's Rangers, and to be an occasional shelter to the Inhabitants, should any sudden Irruption of Indians break in upon them, and I shall be obliged to your Excellency if you permit the Engineer Lieut. Pilkington to give directions for laying out the ground here to the best advantage for answering that end, and to draw out an Estimate of the probable Expence.¹

Before my receipt of your Excellency's Letter of the 21st: I had requested the favor of Lieut. Pilkington of the Royal Engineers to go over to York; and after viewing the ground occupied by the Queen's Rangers, to recommend such a disposition of it as may supply the Regiment with comfortable winter Quarters at the least possible expence to the public. I gave him leave at the same time to make use of the frame of a Blockhouse, which had been prepared there under General Simcoes Orders, but never raised. Upon Mr. Pilkington's return the day before yesterday he showed me the Plan he had formed with the assistance of the Blockhouse for providing a Barrack for Seventy Men, which with a little repair to the Huts within the Stockade of last Winter will amply accomodate the whole Regiment.²

Garrison of York, A large Block House Barrack occupied by the Kings Troops.³

A spot called the garrison, stands on a bank of the main land opposite to the point [Gibraltar], and consists only of a wooden block-house, and some small cottages of the same materials, little superior to temporary huts.⁴

Abstract of Expense incurred for Materials furnished for the building of a Blockhouse . . . at York, between the 10th of September and 24th of December, 1797. . . .

1. For Four Tois of Stone furnished for building a foundation to the Blockhouse – £16.
2. For nineteen thousand bricks delivered for building a Chimney the new Blockhouse and for repair of Barrack chimneys at York – £24-7-6.
3. For Boards and Plank furnished for erecting a Blockhouse and Repair of Barracks – £62-15-9.
4. For squared timber furnished for a Blockhouse erected as a Barrack for the accommodation of the Troops at York. To four hundred feet running of Pine Timber 12 by 14 inches . . . £3-10-0.
5. For Fatigue men employed in the Transport of Materials for erecting a Blockhouse – £9-14-3.
6. For Materials furnished for a blockhouse . . . 7000 shingles . . . £13-2-6; 60 Barrels of Lime . . . £29-0-0.⁵

York, Gibraltar Point Blockhouses, 1798

To the Corps of Queen's Rangers [illegible] for Fatigue men and Artificers employed in . . . filling up with Earth and Banking round the Blockhouse – Storehouses on Gibraltar Point, at York, between 1st January and 30 June 1800 . . . £3-1-7-1/2.¹

Gibraltar Point. Two Block House, [sic] Store Houses, – and a Guard-House. These two Houses are built of square Logs and Weather-boarded, and have Loop-holes in the second Story; they were erected for the purpose of containing the Government Stores shipped at London in 1792 on the Scipio, and are now employed for that Service. The Guard House was built for the accomodation of the Guard necessarily required for the protection of the Guard Stores.²

A long and narrow peninsula, distinguished by the appellation of Gibraltar Point, forms, and embraces this harbour, securing it from the storms of the lake, and rendering it the safest of any, around the coasts of that sea of fresh waters. Stores and block-houses are constructed near the extremity of this point.³

York, Second Blockhouse on Gibraltar Point, 1814

Blockhouse & Glacis at Gibraltar point completed.¹

York, Second Fort York Blockhouses, 1813

The Commanding Engineer has received my Orders to Erect two Capacious substantial Blockhouses at York in part of a Plan for the better occupation of that post.¹

I have directed Lt. Col. Battersby to detach 100 men to reoccupy York. I am glad to find your Excellency has decided to erect Block Houses there in order to render the place tenable.²

The Blockhouses on account of the badness of weather and the want of materials have been delayed however they are raised to the second floor and should the weather prove favorable I have every reason to believe that one of 60 feet by 40 feet and one of 40 feet square will be roofed and shingled by the 30th Instant.³

I am concerned to say that the defences of this place are still incomplete; neither of the two Block Houses already began being as yet roofed in, and as the site upon which they have been erected is much exposed to be battered from shipping. I have given directions, that the third be placed in a more retired position, and built of much more substantial materials, the timber of the other two being too slight to admit of guns except of small calibre being placed in them.⁴

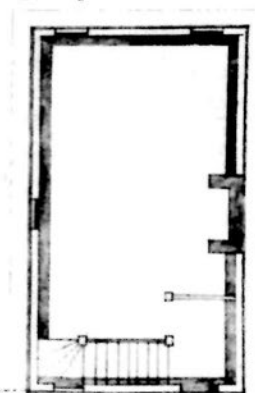
In consequence of a Draft of 50 men to join the Head Quarters of the 79th Regt from Europe and it being ascertained that a reduction in the accomodation of the other Buildings which were



*Both floors for Men only
the upper floor not to be divided*



*Ground Floor for Kitchen
lodging for Servants &c*



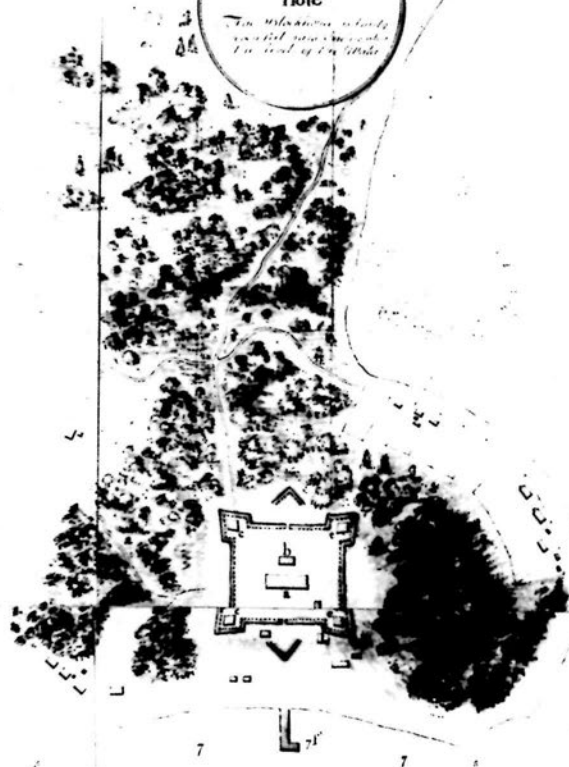
*Upper Floor
Rooms for Officers*



Plan
of the POST on the ISLAND of S^t JOSEPH in
LAKE HURON
Copied in the Engineers Drawing Room Quebec by J. B. Dubouche in 1860

Johnes Murray
Col. Command. S. G. Eng^t

a. — Blockhouse
b. — Blockhouse & Kitchen
c. — Platform for guns
Note
The distance which
would now be made
in that of the island



Scale 200 feet to an inch

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 feet

found too crowded must eventually be made, *a sum was therefore inserted in the annual estimates for 1833* to repair and put Block House No. 1 into thorough order so as to render it fit to contain the overplus. . . . Major General Sir John Colborne was pleased to order that this Block House should be immediately fitted up as a Barrack which has been done with the exception of Shingling the Roof.⁵

Workmanship and Materials – In lowering the floor of the 1st Story, & raising Ceiling Joists in Upper Story to give Sufft. head room, taking up and relaying the floors in the Lower & Upper Rooms, repairing the Chimneys, Loopholes And Windows in Upper Story, altering the Communications to Upper and lower rooms by Cutting out and Completing a Door in the lower Story, forming an interior Porch and Stair Case to communicate with the Upper Story, taking down old Step Ladders & closing up the former entrances, also Whitewashing the Interior, and performing temporary repairs to the Roof.⁶

Block House No. 1 is the next complained of, and altho' not being wanted as a Barrack, was for some time used by the Barrack master as a Store, it was never condemned, and when the cholera broke out in 1832, the medical officer having recommended that the number of men in each Barrack should be reduced, it was repaired and fitted up at an expense of £140 to afford the additional accommodation then required, in doing which, the floor of the lower Room having a useless cellar under it, was lowered to render the room more lofty and comfortable, and the Joists and Boards which were perfectly sound were relaid and although not grooved and tongued the Boards were fresh joined and battened under the joints and is [*sic*] as close as any floor of the kind. . . . Both this Block House and also No. 2 appear to me to be very good Barracks and in a very good State; but the rooms being very large those in No. 1 being 38 feet square affording accommodation for 35 men in each, and one Room in No. 2 being 58 Feet by 38 Feet allotted for 60 men, they require a proportionate quantity of Fuel to warm them.⁷

There are also two wooden blockhouses within the fort, very much in decay.⁸

The work on the site of the late Government House is in an unfinished state; the ditch in front excavated and parapet about 8 feet high, there are Quarters within it for 11 officers, and 2 Blockhouses and splinter proof Barracks which will contain to-

gether 668 men – also 1-24 pr., 3-18, 1-9, & 2-6 Mounted and 2-24 pr. for carronades.⁹

York, Ravine Blockhouse, 1814

I approve, however, of your having directed the third Block House to be constructed upon a more retired position – & of more substantial materials.¹

Surrounding Ravine Blockhouse with a Palisade . . . also a glacis.²

Endnotes

Part I A Comparative Study

Origins

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- 2 Ibid., p. 105.
- 3 Ibid., p. 107.
- 4 Ibid., p. 108.
- 5 Ibid., p. 10.
- 6 Ibid., p. 12.

Seven Blockhouses: A Comparison of their Construction Details

- 1 Canada. Public Archives (hereafter cited as PAC), MG12, WO55, Vol. 1820, pp. 15–6.
- 2 The construction details of these seven blockhouses are documented in Part II of this report. See also the following manuscripts on file with National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Ottawa: George Ingram, "The West Blockhouse, St. Andrews: A Structural Report" (1965) and "A Structural History of Coteau-du-Lac" (1965); J.N. Emerson, H.E. Devereux and M.F. Ashworth, "A Study of Fort St. Joseph" (1966); David Lee, "Fort Wellington: A Structural Report" (1966), and R. Laverly, "Report on the Narrows Blockhouse" (1967).

The Conquest of Acadia: Stockaded Forts and Peninsular Blockhouses of Early Nova Scotia

- 1 Francis Parkman, *A Half-Century of Conflict* (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1899), Vol. 1, p. 198.
- 2 PAC, MG1, Nova Scotia A, Vol. 62, p. 209, Lawrence to Lords of Trade, 26 Dec. 1758.
- 3 Ibid., Vol. 34, p. 210, Cornwallis to Lords of Trade, 24 July 1749.
- 4 Ibid., Vol. 54, p. 225, Lawrence to Lords of Trade, 5 Dec. 1753.
- 5 Ibid., Vol. 35, p. 50, Cornwallis to Lords of Trade, 11 Sept. 1749.
- 6 Ibid., p. 106, Cornwallis to Bedford, 14 Oct. 1749.
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- 8 Ibid., Vol. 37, p. 11, Cornwallis, 1 May 1750.
- 9 Ibid., Vol. 36, p. 281, Cornwallis to Lords of Trade, 30 April 1750.
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- 14 Ibid., Vol. 42, pp. 191–5, Cornwallis to Lords of Trade, 24 June 1751.
- 15 Harry Piers, "The Old Peninsular Blockhouses and Road at Halifax, 1751; Their History, Description, and Location," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, Vol. 22 (1933), pp. 135 ff.
- 16 PAC, MG11, Nova Scotia A, Vol. 53, p. 110, Hopson to Lords of Trade, 26 May 1753.
- 17 PAC, MG21, E5, BM Add. MSS 19072, fol. 52–89, pp. 33–4.
- 18 Ibid., p. 47, Lawrence to Hopson, 18 June 1753.
- 19 PAC, MG11, Nova Scotia A, Vol. 55, p. 155, Lawrence to Lords of Trade, 14 June 1754.
- 20 Ibid., Vol. 61, pp. 183–4, Monckton to Lords of Trade, 13 Oct. 1757.

Blockhouses and Coastal Batteries in the War of 1812

- 1 James Hannay, *History of New Brunswick* (Saint John: J. A. Bowes, 1909), p. 319.
- 2 Nova Scotia. Public Archives (hereafter cited as PANS), Documents of Nova Scotia, Vol. 214, p. 293, Minutes of Council, 3 July 1812.
- 3 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 1456, p. 36, Lt. Col. Gibbons to Capt. McLaughlan, 23 March 1813.
- 4 Ibid., McLaughlan to Nicolls, 12 May 1813.
- 5 Ibid., Gibbons to McLaughlan, 23 March 1813.
- 6 Ibid., Report on the defences of St. Andrews, Capt. McLaughlan to Gustavus Nicolls, 12 May 1813.
- 7 PAC, MG12, WO44, Vol. 146, p. 176, "Report of the Forts, Batteries, and also the Field ordnance composing the Ordnance Establishment in New Brunswick" (hereafter cited as "Report of Forts, Batteries . . . in New Brunswick"), 1 Nov. 1815.
- 8 For a detailed history of these proceedings, see George Ingram, "The West Blockhouse, St. Andrews; A Structural Report." Manuscript on file, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1965.
- 9 Nova Scotia Legislature. House of Assembly, *Journal and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia* (Halifax: King's Printer, 1812), p. 7.
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- 11 PANS, RE52, Report on forts in Nova Scotia, Jan. 1813.
- 12 PAC, MG12, WO44, Vol. 1558, Pt. 6, p. 44, Ince's report on military lands, 1856. See also Part 2 of this report.
- 13 PANS, RE53, Report on forts, 1816.
- 14 Ibid., Report on forts, 1834.
- 15 On the basis of Lt. Pooley's map of Liverpool Harbour, 1820; see Fig. 20. The map is in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia.
- 16 PANS, RE52, Report on forts, Jan. 1814.
- 17 PANS, RE53, Report on forts, Jan. 1834.
- 18 PAC, MG12, WO55, Vol. 1558, Pt. 6, p. 81, Ince's report on military lands, 1856.
- 19 PANS, RE52, Report on forts, Jan. 1813.
- 20 Ibid., Jan. 1814.
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- 14 Ibid., p. 221, Haldimand to Germain, 24 Oct. 1779.
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- 16 PAC, RG8, C Series, Vol. 387, p. 5, Bruyeres to Prevost, 14 Jan. 1813.
- 17 Ibid., Vol. 38, pp. 141–2, Lt. Col. Hughes to Bruyeres.
- 18 Ibid., Vol. 377, p. 5, Bruyeres to Prevost, 16 Jan. 1813.
- 19 Ibid., Vol. 1203-1/2, p. 5, 24 Oct. 1813.
- 20 Ibid., Vol. 388, p. 250, Nicolls to Prevost, 31 Dec. 1814.
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by David Lee

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*La Gaspésie n'est pas un comté,
c'est une province.*

Rodolphe Lemieux

Abstract

In the period between the Conquest and Confederation, Gaspé was never truly a part of Quebec or Canada. Its rugged topography and remote location resulted in obvious government neglect and its dependence on a fishing economy produced a society quite different from that of the rest of the province. Moreover, it was settled by people of diverse origins who, because of poor communications, never created an integrated community feeling in the area; not only did they feel little identity with the people of the rest of the province, but they also felt little common identity with their fellow residents in Gaspé.

Submitted for publication 1975, by David Lee, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Ottawa.

Preface

For the purposes of this study, the term "Gaspé" will be considered to include all the land from Matane on the St. Lawrence River to the point where the Restigouche River enters Chaleur Bay. This is the habitat of the Gaspé codfish and this study will continue the examination of the history of the people whose lives depended on that fish.¹

The political division called the "Inferior District of Gaspé" did not extend as far up the St. Lawrence River as the codfish. The district originally included all the land between Cap Chat and the Restigouche River.² (Although the lieutenant governor of the district was sometimes given duties and authorities in the Magdalen Islands and on the Labrador coast, these will not be included in this study.) In 1852 a small portion of the shore of the St. Lawrence River, from Cap Chat to Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, was detached from the District of Gaspé and added to the District of Kamouraska.³ The western boundary of Gaspé, in effect the boundary between the provinces of Canada and New Brunswick, was finally fixed in 1857 when the government chose the Patapédia River (the middle of the three forks of the Restigouche River) rather than the Mistouche (Upsalquitch) or Matapédia rivers.⁴

References to the "government" in this study allude to the government headed by the British governor of the old Province of Quebec (1763–91), Lower Canada (1791–1841) and the United Province of Canada (1841–67), with their legislative councils and assemblies.

Introduction

The peculiar and remote situation of the County of Gaspé, assimilate it in some respects to a separate Colony from Lower Canada, being divided from the other populous parts of the Province by a Wilderness of Four hundred miles, without roads, or any other than Water Communication.

William Fruing

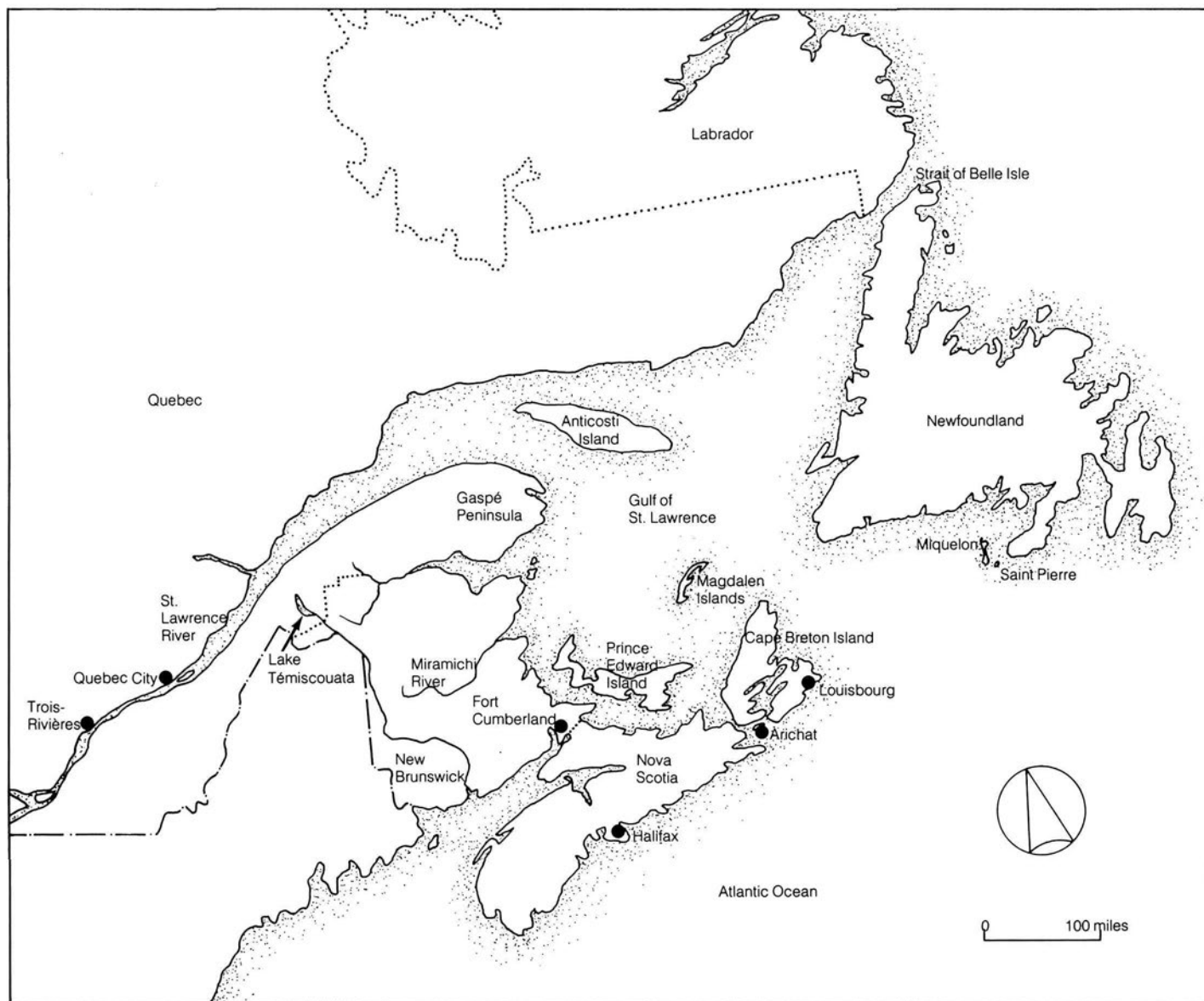
William Fruing, general manager of the Charles Robin and Company operations at Paspébiac, attributed the "peculiar" situation of the District of Gaspé to its poor communications with the "populous parts of the Province."¹ In 1828 an average voyage between Gaspé and the provincial capital, Quebec City, took a week. Marine communications naturally depended on the weather – the length of time for the trip varied from less than a week to more than two. From December to May all shipping ceased and the only contact Gaspé had with the outside world was by means of the occasional brave traveller going overland. It was a long time before communications improved and in the interim Gaspé remained "peculiar and remote," virtually a *terra incognita*.

Geography and Fisheries

Normally Gaspé was the first land encountered by Europeans travelling to Canada. Gaspé Bay offered a large, safe harbour which had attracted European ships as early as the 16th century. After long and stormy Atlantic voyages many ships headed for its refuge where they could anchor and rest, repair damage, get fresh water and fuel, and perhaps hide from enemies. With this amount of marine traffic, one would not think of Gaspé as separate and unknown in Canada, but few passengers ever disembarked at Gaspé Bay. After a few days' rest the ships continued on to the "populous parts of the Province," along the St. Lawrence River valley.

The cod fisheries of Gaspé were perhaps better known in Europe than in Canada. The fisheries attracted some European ships to the shores of Gaspé and eventually a few Europeans settled on these shores, but even these permanent residents really knew little more than the coastlines and their settlements were never beyond sight of the sea.

The reason for this ignorance of their own area was, of course, its topography. As Father Chrétien Le Clercq noted in 1691, "Gaspé is a country full of mountains, woods and rock."² Even the Indians seldom ventured far into the interior and no Europeans crossed the width of the peninsula until 1833. Miner-



als in the interior were unknown and unexploitable. The timber industry did not develop until the 19th century because the rivers were too wild and poor transportation also prevented the development of an extensive fur trade although occasionally the settlers travelled a few miles up the rivers to lay nets to catch the salmon which abounded there. Although some of the valleys contained fertile soil, agriculture always remained secondary to fishing.

The riches of the Gaspé cod fisheries had attracted Europeans since the 16th century. Cod are caught in areas of shallow water, known as "banks," extending from Labrador to Cape Cod; they range from five to ten pounds on the coastal or near-coastal banks and up to 100 pounds on the offshore banks. Cod feed principally on herring and capelin and in spring they follow these fish as they migrate from deep water to the banks where they spawn in summer. Rich in protein, cod has been a dietary staple in Europe for centuries.

Although the people of Gaspé were largely ignorant of the land, they knew well the sea and all the nearby cod-fishing banks. There were major offshore banks near Anticosti Island and Miscou Island as well as the famous Orphan Bank out in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. More important, though, were the coastal banks. The richest of these was along the shore between Cap des Rosiers and Cap d'Espoir; but cod could be found along the entire shoreline of Gaspé, from Cap Chat and Matane on the St. Lawrence River to the mouth of the Restigouche River in Chaleur Bay.

Cod dominated the lives of every Gaspé resident. Every summer day the fishermen, two or three men to a shallop, would go a mile or two offshore and fish until their shallops were full. They would then immediately return to land where the "shoremen" would split and eviscerate the fish, wash them and place them in salt. In the 'green' fishery the cod would remain in salt until it reached its market; in the "dry" fishery the cod remained in salt for only a few days before it was taken out to dry in the sun and wind. Some green cod was produced in Gaspé (especially late in autumn when the weather turned cold and wet), but Gaspé was more suited to the dry cod industry. Along the shores were many shingle beaches upon which the smaller Gaspé cod could be laid out to dry. At night and when it rained the fish were gathered together and sheltered from the wet. In later years it became more common to erect flakes of boughs on which the cod could be laid; air could circulate more freely and hasten the drying process. After a month or so of drying they were ready to be loaded on ships. If ships were not yet

available, the fish were piled in large mounds and protected from the rain by branches.

The French exploited the Gaspé cod fisheries for over 150 years and their value was one of the attractions which drew the English to their conquest of New France. Cod from Gaspé was an important dietary staple in France and a valuable source of foreign exchange when exported to other countries. The Gaspé fisheries contributed perhaps one-fifth of the dried cod produced by New France.³ The fisheries employed thousands of men and stimulated the ship-building industry; the French navy esteemed the fisheries because the experienced seamen they produced were invaluable in the event of war.

Gaspé to 1758

For a long time the French came to Gaspé to fish only in the summer, but by the 18th century a few small permanent fishing posts had been established along the coasts of the peninsula. By the time General James Wolfe came to ravage the coasts of Gaspé in 1758, there were 500 to 600 permanent residents in these settlements. An equal number of fishermen came to Gaspé from France (as well as a few from Quebec) to fish in the summer and then return home in the autumn.

French fishing settlements were normally established at the mouths of streams where fresh water was available as well as wood for fuel and the construction of houses, boats and flakes. Other considerations included sheltered harbours, good beaches exposed to reliable breezes, proximity to fishing grounds and the length of the fishing season. The waters off Percé held the richest fisheries and there were good beaches on the nearby mainland, but Percé had no harbour. Gaspé Bay had excellent harbours, but fewer cod and a shorter fishing season. Chaleur Bay did not have fishing grounds as prolific as those of Percé, but its *barachois* (lagoons enclosed by triangular sandbars formed by tidal action) provided splendid harbours and beaches. Fishing shallops and small schooners could sail through the narrow tickle (or *goulet*) and anchor safely in protected water; at high tide ocean-going vessels could anchor in the roadstead outside the *barachois*, and all the shore operations of the fishery could be performed on the sandbar. During the summer months throughout the 19th century, the fishermen lived in shacks on the beach; in autumn, when the frantic pace of the fishing operations declined, they retired to more substantial houses on higher ground where they were closer to the forest and its wood and game.⁴

In the French régime the fishing settlements of Gaspé developed with virtually no encouragement from government authorities in Quebec or Versailles. Although Gaspé was nominally under the jurisdiction of the governor of Québec, he exercised no real authority in this remote area. Percé in the summer was a wild scene: fishermen from France fought over the best sites on the beaches, and after a hard day's work on the fisheries there was much drinking, gambling and fighting. It was also a convenient place for smugglers and fugitives to contact ships sailing for Europe.

Several seigneuries were granted in Gaspé, but only the seigneurie of Grand Pabos was ever developed. When the Lefebvre de Bellefeuille family went to live there permanently, the French authorities were provided the opportunity to install a Gaspé resident with some local authority. Georges Lefebvre de Bellefeuille was created *sub-délégué de l'intendant* in 1737 though he had little effective power to enforce law and order in the area. In 1757 a ne'er-do-well, Pierre Revol, was appointed agent of the governor at Gaspé Bay, but he died the next year, three days before Wolfe and his men arrived at the bay. Many suggestions had been made to fortify Gaspé Bay, but defence was another matter the French government neglected in Gaspé. The settlements and economy of Gaspé developed on their own without any encouragement from – indeed in the ignorance of – the French government. The people developed a sense of independence and, in effect, Gaspé became virtually a colony in itself.

Gaspé after 1758

After Louisbourg fell in 1758, Wolfe visited Gaspé and devastated the French settlements at Mont-Louis, Gaspé Bay, Pabos and Grande-Rivière. His men destroyed over 15,000 quintals (hundredweight) of dried fish, more than 100 houses and over 150 boats. Some of the population had already fled to Quebec and most of the remainder was transported to France. A few families, especially from Pabos and Grande-Rivière, hid in the woods where, for the next few years, they lived off the land, hunting and fishing. In 1759 and 1760 a number of Acadians fled northward from the Miramichi and established a settlement at the mouth of the Restigouche River, near a Micmac village. Quebec fell to Wolfe in 1759, but the French king still hoped to save New France in 1760 by sending out a fleet of ships, men and provisions. The fleet went first to Chaleur Bay where they found the Acadian refugees. A British fleet followed them up the bay and defeated the French and their Acadian and Indian allies in July 1760. They also destroyed a large number of the tempo-

rary buildings the Acadians had erected at their settlement (called Nouvelle-Rochelle) as well as most of the Acadian sloops and schooners. The British fleet then returned to Louisbourg, leaving the French on the bay. In the fall the British sent a few ships back to the Restigouche, received the surrender of the French troops who had remained there, and sent them back to France.⁵

After the Conquest some of the original French residents of Gaspé returned to the sites of their former homes on Chaleur Bay. These people were skilled in catching and curing cod; it was probably from them that later arrivals learned the technique. Of the Acadian refugees, some moved to Quebec and some were subsequently transported to Nova Scotia, but many remained to settle permanently on Chaleur Bay. Soon after the Conquest the celebrated riches of the Gaspé fisheries began to attract English-speaking settlers to the area. A census of 1765, though not complete, reported a population of between 300 and 325 Europeans, about one-sixth of them English.⁶ In 1774 Charles Robin brought 81 Acadians to Gaspé from their exile in France.⁷ A census of 1777 reported more than 500 Europeans permanently residing in Gaspé.⁸ Over the years other groups, the Irish and the Channel Islanders, appeared and in 1784, 500 to 600 Loyalists arrived. By 1808 the population had risen to 3,200 people.⁹ After the Loyalists came there was little immigration but the population increased extraordinarily by natural growth. Table 1 shows the growth of the European population of Gaspé in the early 19th century.¹⁰ By 1852 the population had increased to 19,546 and by 1861, to 24,518 people.¹¹

Gaspé had been bypassed, neglected and ignored by the French authorities in the 17th and 18th centuries and had become virtually a separate colony unto itself. A similar attitude of neglect was displayed by the British government after it obtained the sovereignty of Gaspé. As William Fruing observed, Gaspé came to resemble "in some respects . . . a separate Colony from Lower Canada."¹²

Because of its rugged topography and remote location, Gaspé was never truly a part of Quebec or Canada in the period between the Conquest and Confederation. This study examines three aspects of this period in Gaspé history: (1) government neglect of Gaspé interests; (2) the predominance of the fishing industry in the area, and (3) the unintegrated and diverse population of Gaspé.

Table 1. "Comparative View of the Population of the District of Gaspé in the Years 1819, 1825, 1831, and 1842." (*Public Archives Canada, MG11, CO42, Vol. 504, p. 23.*)

SETTLEMENT OF	1819.	1825.	1831.	1842.	
Cape Chat - - - - -	18	26	37	50	} - - The population of these first four places is taken from an estimate by J. Le Boutillier, esq. In the census of 1825 and 1831, St. Anne's and Grand Etang are reckoned together.
St. Anne - - - - -	38	39	130	320	
Mont Louis - - - - -	-	-	-	20	
Riv ^e Madeleine - - - - -	-	-	-	15	
Grande and Petite Vallée	-	-	-	-	
Cloridorm - - - - -	-	-	-	-	}
Grand Etang - - - - -	-	-	-	-	
Fox River - - - - -	35	53	71	-	
Griffin Cove - - - - -	30	-	69	-	
Cape Rosiers - - - - -	18	48	40	-	
			-100	775	By returns furnished to the Commissioners of Inquiry.
Gaspé Head - - - - -	-	-	-	-	}
Indian Cove - - - - -	-	-	76	-	
St. George's Cove - - - - -	123	276	43	-	
Grand Grève - - - - -	-	-	50	-	
Cap De Beauséau and Little Gaspé	-	-	105	-	
Peninsula - - - - -	-	-	61	-	}
North West Branch	-	-	90	-	
Ance aux Cousins - - - - -	-	-	-	158	
South West Branch - - - - -	224	256	322	-	
Gaspé Basin - - - - -	-	-	-	418	
Sandy Beach - - - - -	-	-	-	-	}
New Haldimand - - - - -	31	61	43	-	
Douglasstown - - - - -	109	129	159	520	
Seal Cove, &c. - - - - -	-	-	37	-	
Point St. Peter - - - - -	52	44	199	-	
Mal Bay - - - - -	141	264	361	650	}
Corner of the Beach - - - - -	21	-	62	-	
Percé - - - - -	285	347	500	800	
Ance au Beaufils - - - - -	-	73	186	400	
Cape Cove - - - - -	108	-	234	250	
Cape Despoir - - - - -	-	-	-	-	}
Bonaventure Island - - - - -	43	93	172	220	
Little River - - - - -	-	250	145	-	
Grand River - - - - -	100	-	257	1,000	
Pavos - - - - -	35	152	53	-	
Newport - - - - -	95	-	140	-	}
Port Daniel, &c. - - - - -	281	279	-	750	
Hopetown - - - - -	-	334	-	540	
East Nouvelle - - - - -	-	-	-	-	
Cox - - - - -	434	607	2,353	1,670	
New Carlisle - - - - -	334	471	-	-	}
Paspébiac - - - - -	402	518	-	1,100	
Hamilton - - - - -	-	-	-	-	
Bonaventure - - - - -	-	-	-	-	
New Richmond - - - - -	283	446	-	950	
Black Cape - - - - -	-	-	-	-	}
Caspébiac - - - - -	357	475	-	1,000	
Maria - - - - -	427	576	-	720	
Carleton - - - - -	-	-	-	-	
Nouvelle River - - - - -	-	121	2,606	800	
Shoalbred Seignior - - - - -	-	-	-	-	}
Cross Point - - - - -	-	381	-	-	
Mission Point - - - - -	-	Indians.	-	-	
Flat Lands - - - - -	-	-	-	1,250	
Kempt Road - - - - -	100	-	-	including 400	
Matapédiach - - - - -	-	-	-	Indians.	
TOTALS - - -	4,024	6,498	8,502	14,176	

Part I Gaspé and the Government

Gaspé and the Government: Introduction

And considering the remote situation of the county of Gaspé . . . be it further enacted . . . that the said county of Gaspé shall be erected into an inferior district, to be called the inferior district of Gaspé.

Quebec (Province). Laws, Statutes, 1793

The adjective “inferior” was applied to the District of Gaspé in the sense that its courts did not have powers equal to those of other judicial districts in the Province of Lower Canada.¹ The expression was used in most legal documents and in popular speech for about 50 years after 1793. More importantly, however, the government regarded the District of Gaspé as inferior in many other respects. Compared to other districts, Gaspé had only a handful of government officials and they were invariably paid much less than their counterparts elsewhere.

Government Presence in Gaspé

Effective the first day of May 1775, Major Nicholas Cox was created "Lieutenant-Governor or Superintendant of Gaspée," immediately responsible to Governor General Sir Guy Carleton at Quebec. Cox was born in England in 1724 and had served in the 47th Regiment at the sieges of Louisbourg (1758) and Quebec (1759). He arrived at Quebec to take up his new duties in August 1775, just in time to become involved in another siege. In the summer and autumn of 1775, an American army supporting the independence of the thirteen colonies attacked the Province of Quebec and Cox returned to military service for the emergency. He served as an army instructor and later was appointed *état-major* to Carleton.¹ The Americans were not driven out of Quebec until the summer of 1776 and Cox was not able to visit Gaspé until the following summer.

In the summer of 1777 Carleton sent Cox to Gaspé to report on the economy of the area, the Indians and the attitude of the inhabitants toward the American Revolution.² In 1780 a house was begun at Percé to serve as his official residence; however, with the arrival of the Loyalists in 1784, it was decided that the lieutenant governor should reside among the Loyalists at New Carlisle, so the house at Percé was abandoned.³ The Government House at New Carlisle was never built and it appears that Cox never permanently lived in Gaspé. He visited Gaspé in 1777, 1778 and 1780, and accompanied the Loyalists in 1784. In 1786 he arranged a land agreement with the Indians and took oaths of allegiance from the Loyalists and Acadians of Chaleur Bay. He appears to have resided in Gaspé on a year-round basis only in 1784 and 1790–91. It seems that he did not visit again after 1791.⁴ Because of Cox's absence, the governor general was deprived of first-hand information concerning the needs and problems of Gaspé.

For the first few years of his term as lieutenant governor, Cox was responsible for an area whose extent was vague and undefined; more specific limits were not officially proclaimed until 1788. Then, in 1793, this political division became known as the "inferior district of Gaspé."⁵

Cox died on 8 January 1794 at Quebec. Later that month Francis LeMaistre, another veteran army officer, was named as Cox's replacement. LeMaistre was a Jerseyman who had served with the 98th Regiment in the West Indies and later with the Royal Fusiliers in Canada where he had been aide-de-camp and military secretary to Carleton (now Lord Dorchester). His last post had been as deputy adjutant general of the army in Canada.

Although he was himself a lieutenant governor, LeMaistre's commission put him under the authority of the lieutenant governor of Quebec as well as the governor. The post carried an annual stipend of £400, but LeMaistre received only £300, the remainder being used to provide a pension for Cox's widow. In 1796 he petitioned the governor, claiming that his salary was much too small to enable him to fulfill all his duties (which also included the superintendency of trade and fisheries in Labrador). LeMaistre visited Gaspé in 1795, perhaps the only occasion. When he died on 13 February 1805, R.S. Milnes, administrator of the province, said that it had been ill health which had prevented LeMaistre

for some years past . . . from going to Gaspé, where it was intended he should reside during a part, at least, of every year; and I am sorry to find that the Public Concerns in that distant District have suffered very essentially through the want of an acknowledged Agent on the part of Government residing there. LeMaistre's widow received a £50 annual pension until her death and his brother, William, for years afterward held the position of *grand voyer* of Gaspé roads.⁶

To succeed LeMaistre, Milnes recommended an old friend, Alexander Forbes, retired captain of the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards. Forbes was born about 1752. His commission as lieutenant governor is dated 18 February 1805, but it was probably retroactive for his appointment was not approved until August 1807. Forbes visited Gaspé in 1809 but probably never again; for many years he was not even resident in North America. By 1821 Louis-Joseph Papineau and his party in the assembly were beginning to complain about this "unnecessary charge upon the Public of this Province." In transmitting the assembly's resolution that the post be abolished, Governor General Dalhousie wrote to Britain that he needed "a Superior Officer residing there [Gaspé], as I have no means of reaching it." Eventually Dalhousie felt obliged to visit Gaspé personally in order to determine the needs and interests of the district. Meanwhile, Forbes remained in Britain, claiming that his health prevented him from visiting Gaspé. By 1826 the assembly was refusing to vote his annual salary of £300. The governor general managed to continue payment "from the private Funds of the Crown," apparently until Forbes's death, sometime in the 1830s.⁷

When the Province of Lower Canada was formed in 1791, a legislative assembly and a legislative council were created at Quebec. No resident of Gaspé ever appears to have sat on the legislative council of the province,⁸ where the real power lay, until the 1840s. The District of Gaspé (now also called a county) was given one seat in the assembly. Difficult communica-

tions with the district caused problems from the very beginning and at the turn of the century two concessions had to be made to meet the particular situation of Gaspé. On account of the vast expanse of the county, two polling sites were allowed instead of the normal one (but even then the great distances and poor communications disfranchised a large number of the electorate) and, because the district was so remote from Quebec, the period allowed for returning the election writs was extended from 50 to 100 days.⁹

Some of the men who were elected to represent the interests of Gaspé were not residents of the district, but merely people who had travelled there at one time or another (for example, William Vondenvelden, 1800 to 1804, and J.-T. Taschereau, 1819 to 1827). Over the years there were many complaints about corruption and illegal polling procedures¹⁰ and for the years 1827 to 1832 Gaspé had no voice at all in the assembly. Five times Robert Christie was elected to represent the county and five times he was refused his seat because he had previously gained the enmity of Papineau and his party when he had worked as a government official.

Knowing that the interests of Gaspé were not being represented to the government, two governors general made personal tours of the district. Lord Dalhousie visited Gaspé in 1826 and sent several recommendations to the secretary for the colonies in Britain. He suggested a road be built from Gaspé and New Brunswick to Quebec through the Matapédia valley. This suggestion was eventually implemented but his other ideas were less successful. He had also recommended more protection and aid for the fisheries and assisted immigration to Gaspé which he believed had vast expanses of rich, virgin soil.¹¹ Lord Aylmer visited Gaspé in 1831, but little resulted from his tour.

By this time, however, some of the problems were easing. In 1832 Christie gave up (Aylmer may have encouraged him) his battle for reelection so Gaspé County regained representation in the assembly. Furthermore, a redistribution of seats had occurred and in 1832 Gaspé County sent two members to Quebec. In addition, in 1830 the county had been split and Bonaventure County created; it also sent two members to Quebec. Thus, from 1832 to 1838 the Inferior District of Gaspé had four seats in the provincial assembly (from 1838 to 1841 the assembly was suspended). In the assembly of the United Province of Canada (1841–67) the two counties had one seat each.¹²

Given the poor representation of Gaspé in government councils, the governor occasionally solicited information on the district from an assortment of people. He got information, for example, from the only physician in the district, local judges and

customs officials, general sessions of the peace and surveyors working in Gaspé.¹³ In addition, he received a great deal of unsolicited correspondence from private individuals complaining about conditions in the district and offering suggestions and information. One of the matters most complained about was the judicial system.

Gaspé long suffered a law-and-order problem which was said to be the reason for its slow development. The lawlessness can be attributed to the remoteness of the district, but an additional reason was the large numbers of itinerant fishermen who came there in the summer: Channel Islanders, British and other Europeans as well as Québécois and Americans often clashed with each other as well as with the residents. The disorders, characteristic of Gaspé during the French régime, resumed almost immediately after the Conquest. As early as 1764 the problem of "such mixed & tumultuous Multitudes . . . gathered together . . . at Gaspey" was recognized by the government, but little was done to solve it.¹⁴

The arrival of the Loyalists in 1784 in an area where the judicial apparatus was minimal only worsened the situation. Many of the newcomers were unmarried, discharged soldiers who remained only a year or two. They were a particularly disorderly group; as Cox said, "some of the disbanded Soldiers are very bad men."¹⁵ There was little means of controlling them and, as the land commissioners noted in 1820, the magistrates were "compelled to wink at the crime, rather than incur the risk of being insulted and probably maltreated in turn by the criminal." In 1843 it was reported that public confidence in the system of justice was so low that the amount of litigation had actually declined while the population had increased greatly. The Acadians were not seen as disturbers of the peace. The Indians were described as a "harmless race," but that was only with respect to the Europeans: there existed a very serious crime problem among the Indians due mainly to whisky traders. The large-scale importation and sale of liquor caused distress among both Indians and Europeans. Liquor licences were very difficult to obtain and therefore ignored, and unlicensed distributors were uncontrollable. Smuggling was rampant among itinerant traders and fishing ships returning from Spain, Portugal and the West Indies. Many petitions and complaints were sent to Quebec over the years, but government controls were slow to come.¹⁶

The first justice of the peace for Gaspé, Felix O'Hara, was appointed in 1765, but he was given authority to handle only minor cases. By 1788 there were 17 such officers in Gaspé; however, numbers like these were meaningless for many did not reside in the district.¹⁷

The first Court of Common Pleas was established in Gaspé in 1779, with O'Hara as judge.¹⁸ Later Charles Robin and Isaac Mann were added to the court as judges. This court could only hear minor cases, but even then it was not effective because of poor communications. Charles Robin resigned in 1792 because O'Hara would only hold sessions at Percé and Robin could not afford to travel there once a year for three weeks, let alone four times a year. Under these conditions it was difficult to find men to serve as judges¹⁹ and litigants as well found it difficult to get to the sessions. When the government created three judicial districts in Lower Canada in 1793, the county of Gaspé was set aside as an inferior district whose court was not given competence equal to the others. The government granted Gaspé a Provincial Court, but it could not hear cases concerning Admiralty law, matters over £20, or actions concerning real property.²⁰ O'Hara was made first judge of this court. In 1807 the provincial judge in Gaspé was paid £200 a year while his counterpart at Trois-Rivières received £500.²¹ Sessions were supposed to be held annually at Bonaventure, Carleton, Percé and Douglastown, but over the years they were held less and less frequently.

In 1822 the government expanded the competence of the court to include cases involving matters up to £100. Yearly sessions at New Carlisle, Carleton, Percé and Douglastown were made obligatory, as were general sessions of the peace. A session of the peace held in 1824 was the first in 23 years. In the absence of municipal corporations, these sessions allowed the local inhabitants to advise the government of the conditions and needs of their communities, something long lacking in Gaspé; however, while there had formerly been complaints about the courts not sitting, now there were complaints about jurors being selected to serve for long periods of time at inconvenient seasons and at long distances from home. Because it was still a hardship to have to take all criminal and Admiralty cases, all appeals and the more serious civil actions to Quebec, few were referred there. In 1849 the Provincial Court of Gaspé was finally given a competence equal to courts in the rest of the province and the district thereby lost its "inferiority."²²

When the Loyalists arrived Gaspé got its first sheriff. In 1784 Lieutenant Governor Cox appointed Thomas Mann to this office at an annual salary of £20. By 1808 Mann was receiving £50 annually, half the salary paid the sheriffs of the other districts of the province.²³ In that year also, the assembly first voted money for the construction at New Carlisle and Percé of jails with courthouses attached, but it was many years before they were completed: the jail at New Carlisle was finished about 1820. A

few years later the government gave up plans for building one at Percé and instead purchased a large stone building there from John LeBoutillier to serve as a jail and courthouse.²⁴

The people of Gaspé were not punitive by nature and the first execution, performed there in 1866, generated widespread protest. Gaspésians were always interested in the welfare of the prisoners kept in local jails. At Percé, for example, an Indian was charged with arson and held without trial. The sheriff neglected to provide heat and food for him and he died of exposure after 20 months despite the efforts of the townspeople to keep him and other prisoners alive. In another case, the local people forced the government to release a sick, old bootlegger despite the protests of the justice of the peace who felt it would make "punishment a mockery."²⁵ In 1851 the residents of Bonaventure County petitioned the government for a railway to Quebec, suggesting that criminals be used on the construction. They felt that their "principal crimes are ignorance, poverty and misfortune," and that they should be better kept "under the blue vault of Heaven in a healthy climate."²⁶

There were few other government officials in Gaspé and none was well paid. There was a customs collector at Douglastown and at New Carlisle, and a *grand voyer* of roads (he did not have many roads to inspect). The government also paid stipends for a missionary to the Restigouche Indians and for a few schoolteachers. With this small number of officials, not all of them resident, the presence of the government was not widely felt in the Inferior District of Gaspé.

The Needs of Gaspé

The governmental apparatus designed to administer the District of Gaspé was obviously weak. The result of this shortcoming was that the peculiar needs and problems of Gaspé were badly neglected.

Security of Land Title

Land ownership problems plagued Gaspé for more than a century and many people claimed that the insecurity of title severely retarded the economic development of the district. Several attempts were made to resolve the problem but none was fully successful.

Most of the English immigrants of the 1760s settled around Gaspé Bay while the Acadians quietly occupied land along Chaleur Bay, particularly at the *barachois* of Tracadigash (later called Carleton) and at the mouth of the Bonaventure River. Governor Murray apparently granted them permission to settle on these lands.¹ Government surveyors like John Collins passed through Gaspé making quick sketches of the region and subsequently he and other high government officials were given grants to some of the land occupied by the Acadians;² however, the grantees made no attempt to develop the land so the Acadians remained there undisturbed. Land ownership was further complicated by the arrival of the Loyalists in 1784 for some of them were given lands already granted to others. In one case, three groups – Loyalists, Acadians and Indians – claimed possession of some marshland at the mouth of the Restigouche River.³

Gaspé was no longer a vast empty district where a man could settle anywhere he liked. Furthermore, the Loyalists were more insistent than the Acadians in having secure and precise title to their lands; however, to their dismay they were given only location tickets, some of them for lands long occupied or claimed by the Acadians. In an attempt to resolve the confusion, Governor Dorchester sent John Collins, now deputy surveyor general, to Chaleur Bay to gather evidence on land claims from all the residents. Collins toured the bay with Cox in the summer of 1786, taking oaths of allegiance and noting claims, but no "exact survey of all their different settlements" was made as Dorchester had directed,⁴ perhaps because this was a much more ambitious task than Dorchester realized. In 1787 the governor-in-council ordered "certificates prepared and signed by Mr. Collins . . . pledging the faith of Government for the Lots they possess,"⁵ but this, again, was not outright title to the land.

There were also troubles with seigneurial land tenure in Gaspé. For example, three British merchants, Dutens, Anderson and Smith, had obtained a mandamus in 1770 for 10,000 acres on Chaleur Bay where they operated a small fishery for a few years. Dutens had died in 1774 and another British merchant, John Shoolbred, had purchased the mandamus for £3,000 and carried on the business until American privateers drove him out in 1779. One cannot buy or transfer a mandamus, but still, after the war, the government agreed to give him land on the bay at Pointe Miguasha, granting it as a seigneurie, with the understanding that he allow fishermen to use the beaches and adjacent woodlots to cure their fish. A few Loyalists who had already settled on the land were obliged to leave. After all this trouble, Shoolbred did not develop the land and, as late as 1815, Joseph Bouchette reported that not one newcomer had settled there.⁶

Maurice Séguin maintains that the District of Gaspé was distinct from the rest of Lower Canada because it was settled on the township system of land division. Séguin claims that because Gaspé was not operated on the seigneurial system, it was like a foreign country to French Canadians and they were not attracted to settle there.⁷ In the Shoolbred case, however, the seigneurial system was obviously an obstacle to settlement. To complicate matters, several seigneuries in Gaspé which had been granted by the French king continued to exist after the Conquest. The seigneurie of Grand Pabos, for example, was slow to develop and was abandoned when the seigneurial dues collected there caused most of its few inhabitants to leave and establish a new settlement at nearby Newport.⁸ On the St. Lawrence shore, such seigneuries as Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Rivière-la-Madeleine, and Grande-Vallée were mainly settled by French Canadians from farther up the river, but grew slowly because fishing was not as good there and agricultural land was scarce. Thus the Inferior District of Gaspé was, like the rest of Lower Canada, a mixture of the seigneurial and township systems.

In 1787 two British merchants purchased the old French seigneuries of Deneau (Port-Daniel) and Restigouche, but were unable to secure ratification of the transfer of seigneurial proprietorship. The government found that it had placed a large number of Loyalists on this seigneurial land so Dorchester decided that the fiefs must be expropriated. Ten years later the government succeeded in closing a deal with the absentee owners. The land, redeemed from the seigneurial system, could now be held in freehold.⁹ For the period between 1784 and 1797, though, many Loyalists had been occupying land owned

by a second party. In 1797 the location tickets which they had held on this land since 1784 became valid, but again this did not imply true title.

In 1789 the governor created the Gaspé Land Board in an attempt to settle local land questions. The board consisted of Cox, Felix O'Hara and Charles Robin, as well as a Loyalist and two French Canadians, but not one Acadian.¹⁰ The Acadians had little success with the board, but found that by continuing to petition the governor and council at Quebec, their chances were enhanced. In 1796 Lieutenant Governor LeMaistre arranged for John Collins and several other men to relinquish the Acadian-occupied lands granted them in the 1760s.¹¹ Few people lost possession of any land they occupied, but everyone had to live with the uncertainty of not having true title. The government discussed the problem in 1805, but then put it aside hoping that the new lieutenant governor, Alexander Forbes, would be able to resolve it.¹² He did nothing and the question lay dormant for a decade.

In 1818, William Cockburn, member of the legislative assembly for Gaspé, introduced a Bill to create a commission to investigate the land question in Gaspé and to secure land titles for the inhabitants. The Bill received royal assent in 1819.¹³ Appointed to head the commission were Jean-Thomas Taschereau and L.-J. Duchesnay; also included were a secretary, Robert Christie, and surveyors and notaries. (Shortly after their appointment, Cockburn died and Taschereau took his place as the representative of Gaspé in the legislative assembly; he served until 1827 when Christie was elected.)

The governor requested that while the commission was in Gaspé, it should also report on the present state of the district and suggest how it could be developed. Thus the commission's first report, dated 27 December 1820, included a census and detailed the geography of Gaspé, its fisheries, agriculture, lumbering, judicial system, roads, schools, health standards and mail service. Subsequent reports submitted to the provincial legislature were dated 22 December 1821, 28 February 1823, 18 December 1823 and 23 April 1825.¹⁴ The task took nearly six years to complete because of the remoteness of Gaspé and its poor communications, its lack of resident surveyors and notaries, and because some claims were contested and some decisions appealed.

In the summer of 1819 the commissioners visited Douglas-town, Percé, New Carlisle and Bonaventure. During 1820 their itinerary included Grande-Grève, New Carlisle, Restigouche, Cascapédia (New Richmond), Paspébiac and Percé. They returned again in the summer of 1823 to complete their work at

Grande-Grève, Gaspé Bay, Percé, Paspébiac, New Carlisle, Bonaventure, New Richmond, Carleton and Restigouche.¹⁵

Over 600 claims were ruled on and by 1825 only a few had not been decided "because the claimants have not prosecuted their claims." The adjudications were published in the *Quebec Gazette* and deposited in a central registry accompanied by all the evidence, contestations and appeals. Generally, the adjudications were decided on the basis of possession of the land for at least ten years with some kind of "written instrument," or 20 years without.

Although the commissioners were evidently conscientious and thorough in their work, shortly after their departure there were complaints about abuses and shortcomings. Some people had difficulty in recovering documents, but a more serious complaint was that many were charged by the commission staff for notarial and surveying services. The commission apparently had no power either to authorize or prohibit such charges, but the commissioners claimed no one was refused service because of inability to pay.¹⁶ Another problem was that there was some doubt locally as to whether the adjudications were legally sound with regard to land title because one was ruled unacceptable in a Gaspé court. For this reason, the assembly passed an Act in 1831 declaring the adjudications should "have the effect of Grants from His Majesty" and proprietors were asked to deposit a copy of their adjudications in the office of the Provincial Court in Gaspé.¹⁷ Because few people deposited their adjudications within the required three years, in 1836 the assembly passed an Act stating that a copy of the entire register was to be deposited in the Provincial Court in Gaspé and anyone who needed copies would have to pay a fee. At the same time an Act was passed to remedy the lack of notaries in Gaspé; it allowed documents to be notarized by a justice of the peace or clergyman, plus two witnesses.¹⁸

After the land commissioners left, the government appointed James Crawford as agent for the crown in Gaspé to allot unimproved land to new settlers; by the 1830s newcomers were required to buy their land. Many hoped by squatting to gain title to their land sometime in the future, as the land commission had permitted for many residents; however, the government confirmed its policy of selling crown land by holding a large sale in July 1834 at which many of the squatters purchased their land. In the end, those who continued squatting hoping to get title to any lands they improved were not disappointed; the assembly passed further legislation in 1847 allowing them title upon payment of only a small fee.¹⁹ Many people took up the government's offer,²⁰ but for others the uncertainties continued.

As late as 1891 a government official observed that in Gaspé "more than half the people have no title, not even a location ticket for the property they occupy." ²¹

Protecting the Fisheries

The defence of Gaspé and its fisheries was not a subject of high priority in government circles. Great Britain recognised the value of the fisheries to the empire and claimed to be committed to their preservation. The fisheries operating on the open sea were, of course, vulnerable to intrusions by outsiders and difficult to protect; however, Great Britain did not seem to try very hard and, indeed, when it came to diplomatic bargaining, was ready to sacrifice the fisheries for other benefits.

Between 1763 and 1775 there was no real trouble on the Gaspé fisheries, but difficulties began with the American Revolution and for a few years the fisheries were rendered inoperative by ravaging American privateers.

In June 1778 two privateers arrived at Paspébiac and immediately seized and sent off one of Charles Robin's ships loaded with dried codfish. While the Americans were loading a second vessel, two British warships arrived and succeeded in recovering it. Because there were so many American privateers in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, one of the warships remained in Chaleur Bay for the summer.²² Four ships belonging to Charles Robin and William Smith (John Shoolbred's agent at Bonaventure) were seized on the way to their autumn markets in Europe by the privateers shortly after they had ventured into the bay. As a result, Charles Robin left the Gaspé fisheries in 1778 and did not return until peace came in 1783.

By the time John Shoolbred sent his fish off to market in October 1778, the British patrol vessel had left and the Americans easily captured his three ships. Shoolbred tried to carry on in 1779, but in June of that year four American privateers raided his establishment at Bonaventure and seized his money and stores.²³ Shoolbred abandoned the fisheries too and, although he acquired a seigneurie on Chaleur Bay after the war, he did not resume fishing.

After Shoolbred departed there was not much left in Gaspé to attract privateers. The Royal Navy provided a warship to patrol the gulf, but that was too great an area for one ship to cover although by chance the warship was at Percé in June 1780 when four American privateers appeared. Aided by two 12-pounder cannons operated from shore by the local militia, the warship managed to chase the Americans away. Two years later, when two more American privateers visited Percé, the patrol vessel was busy elsewhere. The Americans burned all the sailing craft

at Percé, terrorized the inhabitants and threw the cannons over the cliff. Then they moved on to Gaspé Bay where they took Judge O'Hara prisoner for a time.²⁴

Several times over the years Gaspésians petitioned unsuccessfully for a small detachment of regular troops. After the American Revolution Gaspé was never again threatened with attack from the outside (not even during the War of 1812), but troops were often requested to bolster the civil authority. The 1780 engagement was one of the few occasions the militia was mustered in Gaspé. Although there were frequent reports on the moribund state of the militia and repeated requests that it should be revived, nothing was ever done.²⁵

In the entire District of Gaspé there was only one defensive work, the so-called "Fort Ramsay" at Pointe McConnell on Gaspé Bay. Although the origin of this fortification is unclear, it has a long history. In 1757–58 Pierre Revol, hoping to discourage the British from landing, tried to contrive something which would look like a substantial fortification when seen from the water; this may have been the beginning of Fort Ramsay. In 1765 John Collins set aside a military reserve on Pointe McConnell, noting that a fortification on this elevated site could command the entire harbour. In 1834 John D. McConnell, grandson-in-law of Felix O'Hara, reported that "the remains, Glacis etc. of old . . . Fort Ramsay" could still be seen.²⁶ McConnell did not mention the existence of any cannon, but by 1866 there were three on the site of what was by then the residence of John LeBoutillier, prominent local merchant and member of the legislative assembly for the county of Gaspé. The name Ramsay may have been given to the fortification after the visit of Governor General Lord Dalhousie (George Ramsay) in 1826. The cannon may have been placed on the remains of the work as a decoration by LeBoutillier.²⁷

The Treaty of Paris (1783) gave the Americans the right to fish along all "the coasts, Bays and Creeks" of British North America and to land to cure fish on "any of the unsettled Bays, Harbours and Creeks of Nova Scotia, Magdalen Islands and Labrador." Should these areas become settled, the Americans could remain only with the settlers' permission.²⁸ Quebec obviously was not one of the colonies where American ships could land to cure their fish and complaints arose almost immediately after 1783 that the Americans were violating the treaty in Gaspé, but neither the Royal Navy station at Halifax nor the one at Quebec was well enough equipped to patrol the whole eastern coast.²⁹

The Treaty of 1818 with the United States specified that only ships operating under British navigation laws and manned by British subjects could fish within three miles of the coast of British North America or land there to cure fish; foreigners could land only for shelter, fuel, water and repairs. This condition gave the Gaspé fisheries a little more protection from American fishermen at a time when the latter were becoming even more aggressive, but the problem of enforcement remained. The Royal Navy did not have enough ships to control the hundreds of American ships that came to the Gaspé fisheries every year.

In the 1820s John LeBoutillier, at this time the Charles Robin and Company agent at Percé, took matters into his own hands when one American ship came to fish just off shore. Waiting until the ship was nearly loaded, he led a group of men aboard and threw all the fish overboard. He claimed that the ship left immediately and no Americans came to Percé for years afterward.

The problem with the treaties was one of interpretation: was the three-mile limit to be measured from headland or was it to follow the convolutions of the shoreline? If the former, the Americans could be excluded from Chaleur Bay and perhaps even the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The matter of interpretation was very important for as early as 1824, hundreds of American ships were reported on the Orphan Banks and in Chaleur Bay, and their aggressive fishing for cod and mackerel reduced the catch of local fishermen to almost nothing. Mackerel were especially important as cod bait and when the government finally succeeded in keeping the American fishermen out of the bay, the local catch was much more abundant. The British government eventually decided to measure the three miles from the headlands and, although this ruling did not exclude the Americans from the Orphan Banks, it did keep them out of Chaleur Bay. Nevertheless, it was many years before the Royal Navy was able to enforce the decision; not until 1852 was a regular patrol sent to the Gaspé area.³⁰

The presence of these British naval patrols nearly resulted in armed clashes with American fishermen and, among other reasons, it was to avoid this that the United States and Great Britain were anxious to sign the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. This treaty allowed Americans to fish in Gaspé coastal waters and to land to cure their fish. Gaspésians were allowed access to American fisheries, but no Gaspé fisherman is known to have ever taken advantage of this privilege. The treaty ended in 1866, but by the Treaty of Washington (1871), rights to Canadian fisheries were once more sold to the United States.³¹ Thus,

Gaspé fishermen gained only two years' relief (1852–54) from American competition.

Nevertheless, Canadian surveillance of the fisheries continued after 1854. Dr. Pierre Fortin was sent as a stipendiary magistrate to patrol the waters of the gulf in 1852. In addition to dispensing justice from his armed schooner *La Canadienne*, he checked on smuggling and offences to the Fisheries Act, issued fishing licences, collected statistics and gathered information on settlement and the fisheries for the use of the assembly. In 1867 he was succeeded by his assistant, Théophile Têtu.³²

The United States also took steps to reduce the possibility of friction between American fishermen and the people of Gaspé. William W. Merriam of New York was appointed first American consul at Gaspé Bay in 1856 to represent United States interests there. A few years later the United States erupted in civil war and relations between Britain and the northern states became so strained that British troops were shipped to Canada in 1861. To find out as much as possible about British shipping and troop movements in Canada, the United States sent Thomas Fitnam to Gaspé Bay in the middle of the winter of 1861–62. Officially known as a consul, his mission was to carry out "confidential agencies"; however, the British were completely aware of Fitnam's objectives and Governor General Monck felt that "a spy in an official position is much more easily watched than one in a private capacity."³³ In 1866 the United States chose a Canadian, Horatio LeBoutillier, son of the Honourable John LeBoutillier, to be their consul at Gaspé Bay. A later consul, George Holt, gathered information in 1877 for the Halifax Commission regarding the impact of the earlier Reciprocity Treaty.³⁴ Besides treaty violations, another complaint against the United States was that its fishermen would not obey Canadian regulations against throwing fish offal into the water. The people of Gaspé polluted the fisheries too, but since they fished just off shore it was easier for the local fish companies to control this abuse. The Americans, however, fished on the banks out in the bay or gulf where it was impossible for the Royal Navy or Fortin's fishery patrol to supervise them. The only effective way to control the Americans would have been to keep them out of the fisheries, but to the British, peace and other favours from the United States were more important than preserving the Gaspé fisheries.

Social Assistance

Gaspé was a chronically poverty-stricken region unable to provide such social services as welfare, health assistance and education on its own. At the same time Gaspésians could never

rely on government assistance. Habitually the government either ignored requests for aid or pleaded communication difficulties or lack of funds.

When the Gaspé economy was devastated by American privateers in the revolutionary war, the only aid that Governor Haldimand sent was four guineas and some flour to be distributed among the poor,³⁵ but when the Loyalists came to settle in Gaspé a few years later, Haldimand provided lavish assistance. Crop failures in the 19th century brought varying responses. A shipment of flour was sent in 1816,³⁶ but in 1848 when Robert Christie, member of the assembly for Gaspé, reported a crop failure and a poor fishing season, the government stalled by insisting on petitions direct from the inhabitants. By the time such requests arrived, it was too late in the season to send any aid. The following spring the government agreed to send seed grain, but the cost had to be repaid over two years.³⁷ Similar petitions in 1852, 1855 and 1866, when people were reported dying of starvation, brought no help at all, the government claiming lack of funds.³⁸

Ships in trouble, especially those on transatlantic voyages, were accustomed to heading for Gaspé Bay. Often their trouble was infectious diseases among the immigrants they were bringing to Canada. Canadian quarantine regulations respecting disease-stricken ships for some reason did not extend to Gaspé, which made the area even more attractive for these ships and naturally endangered the health of the people of Gaspé. As the land commissioners noted in 1820, this resulted in the "loss of some respectable and valuable inhabitants." One official, Hugh O'Hara, died after contracting a disease while tending the sick left by a ship in 1818. In 1821 the government conducted a brief smallpox vaccination programme in Gaspé.³⁹ Nevertheless, the district was not equipped to handle general outbreaks of smallpox, cholera, typhoid fever or diphtheria. As late as 1833 there was only one doctor resident in the district and he lived on Chaleur Bay. Occasionally, when a Royal Navy ship visited Gaspé Bay, a naval surgeon helped out. A special session of the peace in 1847 reported that the situation had become very serious and pleaded for a government-established board of health to enable local quarantine of the sick. Two years later the assembly passed such legislation, but the Act gave the board little authority to control the landing of passengers and crews from visiting ships. Furthermore, the Act did not provide any funds to cover the board's expenses and for this reason no board of health appears to have been created in Gaspé.⁴⁰

In 1859 there was fear of a smallpox epidemic and although the people petitioned for free vaccination, the request was not acted on. Even after 1860, when Gaspé Bay was made a free port and maritime traffic consequently increased, the government refused to appoint a health officer or to provide for any resultant outbreak of disease. A diphtheria epidemic in 1862 caused the population to panic, but when the local member of the legislative assembly asked for a doctor to be sent, the request was simply shelved.⁴¹

No school is known to have operated in Gaspé prior to the arrival of the Loyalists. In 1785 the government voted £25 for a schoolmaster, Benjamin Hobson, at the Loyalist settlement of New Carlisle. Hobson taught at New Carlisle until 1822, for the first 15 years in his own home because he was not provided with a schoolhouse until 1801.⁴²

Improvement in the educational facilities at New Carlisle may have been due to the founding of the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning in 1801, the first true school system to operate in Canada. Through this institution the government financed and supervised teachers, buildings and curricula. Education expanded in the District of Gaspé, Douglastown acquiring a school sometime before 1818, and by 1830 schools had also been established at L'Anse-aux-Cousins, Cape Cove, Gaspé Bay, Hopetown, Mal Bay and Paspébiac. An attractive curriculum, often offered in both English and French, was provided at the Royal Institution schools. The one at Douglastown, for example, gave courses in such practical subjects as book-keeping and navigation. New legislation in 1829 and 1832 continued government financial support, but put more organisational responsibility on the local people. In Gaspé this was disastrous and most of the schools closed. Political stalemate in the legislature prevented any further school legislation after the Act of 1832 expired in 1836.⁴³

Few people in Gaspé were enthusiastic about education for they needed their children to work on the beaches curing fish from April to November. Hence, giving local residents more control of their schools only served to retard literacy in Gaspé. In 1811 Monseigneur Plessis had written a Paspébiac missionary that he should "*leur enseigner à lire autant qu'il sera nécessaire pour les mettre en état de chanter le plein-chant.*" In 1836 Abbé Ferland claimed that at Paspébiac, *les écoles sont prosrites. 'Il n'y a pas besoin d'instruction pour eux', écrivait M. Philippe Robin à ses commis; s'ils étaient instruits, en seraient-ils plus habiles à la pêche?*

It must be noted, however, that the source of Robin's alleged statement is unknown. In any case, Paspébiac had a Royal Institution school for a number of years. In 1824 J.F. Winter, senior clerk of Charles Robin and Company, was the "principal visitor" (local superintendent) of that school; he petitioned the institution for a bilingual teacher because of the large number of francophones in the area. The Royal Institution school was still functioning when Ferland visited Paspébiac in 1836.⁴⁴

Only a few schools survived into the 1840s. One was at New Carlisle, which had a long tradition of education and indeed, in 1847, the town petitioned for a secondary school, though unsuccessfully. New legislation in 1845 authorised the creation of municipal school boards with taxation powers. In Gaspé this law was initially met with hostility, but by 1855 nearly half the school-age children in the two counties were attending school for at least part of the year. The school inspector's report for 1855 shows primary schools established – though not necessarily functioning – in most areas. In Fox Township the residents continued to refuse taxation, but in Mann Township the inspector succeeded in persuading the people to organise a school board.⁴⁵

Economic Development

In the hope that through economic development Gaspé would be able to afford better social services, it was often suggested that the government help the district develop a diversified economy based on the use of cash rather than on a barter system. Attempts were made to encourage the development of the mineral, timber and agricultural resources of the area so the fishing industry would not be the sole basis of the Gaspé economy, but the changeover was very slow.

Meanwhile the fishing industry thrived under the leadership of innovative and energetic merchants who felt that the Canadian government could assist the industry to become even stronger. The British government often sacrificed the interests of the fisheries to gain political and economic benefits in other spheres, as, for example, with the Reciprocity Treaty (1854) and the Treaty of Washington (1871). Nevertheless, the government tried to bring some order to the Gaspé fisheries, its first ordinance being promulgated as early as 1764 and followed by revisions and improvements in 1788, 1804, 1807, 1819, 1824, 1826, 1831, 1836, 1841, etc.; however, little was done to inform the local fishermen of the application of these ordinances, and for a long time many of the provisions were unenforceable. As early as 1788 there were authorisations for the appointment of cullers and fish inspectors to standardise the quality of fish

exported, but it was not until the next century that they were able to act. Since the Restigouche River and Chaleur Bay fisheries were shared with New Brunswick, many regulations could not be enforced without the cooperation of that colony. The Acts of 1824 and 1826 provided for commissioners from Canada to meet with representatives from New Brunswick to coordinate fisheries policy, but this was never done.⁴⁶

The fishing companies of Gaspé, although very influential within the district, were surprisingly lacking in influence in government circles. They asked for several concessions to help their industry and, although these were not major requests, they had to wait many years before any were granted, if at all. For example, as early as 1785 the companies requested that a customs house be established at Percé, the centre of the fisheries, so ships bringing men and supplies from Europe would not have to go to Douglastown or New Carlisle to have their cargoes cleared. This would save much valuable time, especially during spring, the important fishing season, but not until 1835 was a customs house established at Percé.⁴⁷

Duties on the importation of fishing equipment were also a sore point. All imports into Canada were subject to a two and one-half per cent ad valorem duty until 1859 when the duty was increased, but in view of the fishing industry's traditional importance as a nursery for seamen in case of war, exemptions were asked for in certain cases. The capacity of the Gaspé fishermen to compete in the world market had been seriously curtailed because fishermen in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island had been granted exemptions and Gaspésians had not. The only important exemption gained was the removal, in 1814, of the duty on salt imported to cure fish. The duty on imported molasses was removed in 1835, which must have helped a little for it stimulated the market for a commodity that Gaspé fishing vessels could carry when returning from the West Indies.⁴⁸ In 1860 several Gaspé ports were declared free ports and the desires of the large fishing concerns were largely satisfied.

Gaspé fishermen were accustomed to operating at a disadvantage because most of their competitors were provided with bounties on fish exports. Newfoundland and Labrador had long enjoyed a bounty on the fish they produced for the British market and in the 19th century New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island also provided bounties for their fishermen on exported fish. New Brunswick, for example, paid 50 cents per quintal of cod that sold for around five to six dollars in the United States. Thus, fish caught in Chaleur Bay brought more profit to a New Brunswick fisherman than to his Gaspé neigh-

bours. The government never relieved Gaspésians of this disadvantage.⁴⁹

The assistance requested for the fishing industry of Gaspé principally benefitted the large merchants. As Pierre Fortin noted in 1865, the creation of free ports in Gaspé in 1860 did not much help the fishermen themselves because control of the economy remained in the hands of the big companies. The 'Jersey Houses,' he said, did not pass on the savings to the local people who supplied them with fish and they worked together to exclude new competition.⁵⁰

Attempts were made to encourage the development of the mineral, timber and agricultural resources of the area to offset dependence solely on fishing. For many years there had been rumours of deposits of coal, oil and other minerals in Gaspé. The first person with any knowledge of geology whom we know to have investigated these rumours was Sir Richard Bonnycastle, who confirmed the existence of petroleum when he accompanied Lord Aylmer to the district in 1831. William Logan, chief geologist for the government of Canada, who was sent to Gaspé in 1844, felt that petroleum deposits on the York and Saint-Jean rivers might be commercially exploitable, and that same year the Gaspé Fishery and Mining Company was incorporated with the hope of exploiting these resources. In 1860 another company drilled several wells on the York River and at Sandy Beach, actually producing a few barrels of oil. The oil companies remained interested, but the capital for further exploration in this rugged and remote area was hard to find.⁵¹

Although mineral development was too expensive for the area, a lumber industry could have provided winter employment for the fishing communities. Unfortunately, this industry was very slow to develop in the Gaspé although it boomed in the rest of the province during the 19th century. This was mainly because the government had a commitment to protect the river fisheries of Gaspé, especially the rich salmon fisheries, from being disturbed by sawdust and the movement of logs. For the same reason Father Painchaud, missionary to the Acadians and Indians, campaigned against lumbering.⁵²

Nevertheless, lumbering was done on a small scale. Charles Robin witnessed two ships loading masts at the Bonaventure River in 1767 and occasionally his company sent lumber to Jersey and the West Indies.⁵³ The government apparently did not enforce Admiralty laws reserving all white pines for ships' masts after it was recognised that Gaspé did not produce trees suitable for this purpose.⁵⁴ Because government regulations with regard to lumbering were not extended to Gaspé, trespassers from as far as the United States pirated Gaspé timber and as

early as 1820 there was concern that this uncontrolled lumbering might result in over-cutting.⁵⁵

Gradually local people got into the timber trade. Bouchette reported that they began in 1815, that in 1818 four shiploads were exported, and that by 1825 as many as 60 shiploads of lumber, mainly pine, were exported.⁵⁶ By 1843 there were sawmills on the Bonaventure, Restigouche, Matapédia and Matane rivers,⁵⁷ yet much timber cut along the Bonaventure and most of that cut along the Restigouche was milled in the New Brunswick towns of Dalhousie and Campbellton.⁵⁸ Not enough wood was cut in Gaspé to generate employment sufficient to improve the local economic situation significantly.

Gaspé timber was very important for the local shipbuilding industry. Small sailing sloops and schooners had long been constructed by the French of Acadia and Gaspé, but Charles Robin initiated a Gaspé tradition of building his own ocean-going vessels. In 1792 he launched his first ship, the *Fiott*, a brig of about 250 tons which, on its first voyage, carried fish oil, salmon and cod to Santander in Spain. Robin was very fortunate in selecting an expert shipwright, James Day, to supervise his shipyards and doubly fortunate that Day was willing to remain in the relative isolation of Gaspé for many years. For a long time Robin's company was able to turn out an average of one ship every two years using the local timber supplies. Some fittings, naturally, had to be imported, but nevertheless the company became somewhat independent of the outside world for its fleet of ships to carry fish to distant markets.

Gaspé became well-known for its shipbuilding capabilities, one observer claiming they ranked "higher than any other colonial built vessels." Although not numerous, the ships were famous for their reliability and durability and within a few years they were being built with a capacity of 4,000 to 5,000 quintals of cod. They were also famous for speed; some were known to have taken two cargoes of dried cod to Brazil in one season.⁵⁹ In 1825 the customs collector at Gaspé Bay wrote, *At New Richmond, Bonaventure and Paspibiac there is considerable ship building carried on and with great success, contracts are generally made for from 5 & 6 pounds per ton exclusive of Rigging; the materials are Bottom plank and timbers black Birch, the upper timbers Cedar and Juniper, the knees either spruced or junipered (the latter is preferred) the trunnels are of Juniper and found to answer much better than Oak, vessels of 3 to 400 tons are built here [Gaspé Bay] and at the Bay of Chaleurs of those materials without iron or copper fastenings and are found to answer a good purpose, they generally run 10 and 12 years without repairs, in one instance the Messrs. Robin*

built a Brig of these materials which has now seen 19 years and nothing has been yet wanted to her woodwork, the trunnels are all driven aslant which precludes the possibility of the plank starting, those vessels are fine handsome models and are in good repute; the forests afford a convenient and ample supply for building, as also white and red pine but at Gaspé [Bay] rather small dimensions, the builders lay down their vessels a good way from the water and when they launch (even large ships) they lower them on their bilge and start them broadside foremost a most simple safe and easy method especially in scarce water; there is no oak grows in this district.⁶⁰

A third means of diversifying the Gaspé economy was to develop its agricultural potential. The government often discussed encouraging the people of Gaspé to become full-time agriculturists, but it could not force people onto the farms. One suggestion was to discourage fishing by shortening the legal fishing season; another was to remove the uncertainty of property title which had been a deterrent to farming for so long. Occasionally the government sent seeds and seed grains to Gaspé, and the district was included in a government programme during the 1840s and 1850s to promote the organisation of local agricultural societies.⁶¹

The soil and climate, however, posed problems for the potential farmer. Along the entire rocky coast from Cap-Chat to Percé, farming consisted of little more than small gardens bordering the coves. South of Percé on Chaleur Bay the terrain was less steep, the climate milder and the soil richer. Travelling along the bay in 1836 Father Ferland noted that the land around Tracadigash (Carleton), at the head of Chaleur Bay where cod were fewer and the fishing season shorter than elsewhere in the district, was very much like that near Quebec. La pêche est d'une importance secondaire; l'agriculture forme leur principale occupation. Des chemins bien entretenus permettent de voyager en voiture . . . ; aussi chaque cultivateur possède cheval et charettes, tant pour les voyages et les promenades, que pour les travaux de la terre.⁶²

For many Gaspésians farming was out of the question because they were indebted to the fishing companies and thus had to continue working for them. Although Governor Haldimand had been aware of the pernicious effect of fishing monopolies and the barter system, no effective action was taken to break up the power of the big companies; however, as the 19th century progressed more people began to raise their own food, especially as the second ranges of townships, away from the sea, were settled. In Bonaventure County the number of families living entirely by farming increased from 362 in 1819 to 459 in

1831. In the whole District of Gaspé in 1819 there were four gristmills; by 1831, there were six. More striking is the increase in horses, cows, sheep and hogs in the district: 11,294 in 1819; 21,477 in 1831.⁶³ In 1830 a visitor was impressed with the quality of the livestock and reported that much of it was sold to lumber contractors.⁶⁴

Communications

In the 18th century Gaspé probably had as much contact with Europe as with Quebec; nevertheless, Gaspé depended on the rest of the province for economic and social assistance, its judicial system, and trade and defence. Within the district, communication was difficult because many people were too poor to afford to travel from one settlement to another except by boat and for a long time there were only a few short stretches of road along Chaleur Bay. In the winter travellers crossed rivers and bays on the ice, but every year someone broke through the ice and drowned. Poor local communications caused great difficulties with respect to holding court sessions, elections and religious services, conducting trade and organising school boards.⁶⁵

Around 1820 the government sent men to explore a route for a road to connect the St. Lawrence River with Chaleur Bay. Work was begun in the late 1820s on the 'Kempt Road' (initiated by Sir James Kempt, administrator of Lower Canada), which cut through nearly 100 miles of forest along the valley of the Matapédia River; it ran from the settlement of Métis (now Grand-Métis) to the mouth of the Restigouche River. It was called a finished road, but only at its two ends were there stretches where carriages could pass. Travellers could easily cross into New Brunswick and continue on to Halifax for roads in the maritime provinces were better than in Gaspé. The connection between Quebec and Halifax was naturally considered very valuable by the British authorities because mail and, in the event of war, soldiers could be more reliably moved from one province to another;⁶⁶ however, in 1837 and 1861, troops travelling from New Brunswick to Canada took the traditional route over the Témiscouata portage.

In the early 1840s the Kempt Road was improved and made "thoroughly passable for wheel Carriages, and all the Rivers bridged in the most substantial manner." Still, when the work was completed there were 78 miles in the interior where there were only two settlers and it was many years before they came in any number.⁶⁷ The Kempt Road only connected one corner of the District of Gaspé to the rest of the province and actually most of the road was not even in Gaspé but in Cornwallis

County (today Matapédia County). Most of the road went around Gaspé and thus did nothing to stimulate settlement there.

But the people of Gaspé wanted roads that would link their communities together, allow internal communication by land, and facilitate settlement and commerce. Some local attempts had been made to construct roads along the shore of Chaleur Bay, notably one 21 miles in length between Percé and Grand-Rivière; but when the terrain was rough and rivers had to be bridged, the cost and technology were beyond the capacity of the local people. In the 1840s the government improved the existing roads and cut new ones through the gaps between the existing roads. One of the longest gaps was through the empty Shoolbred seigneurie. Sixty miles of new roads were constructed as well as several bridges over 200 feet long including a 400-foot bridge over the Petit Pabos River. A short road was also constructed to connect with a ferry from Dalhousie, New Brunswick. By 1844 one could travel by carriage from Quebec to Percé or Halifax.⁶⁸

The new settlements of Cap-Chat, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and Grande-Vallée petitioned for an overland connection with the outside world, their most cogent argument being that such a road would provide for the more efficient rescue of passengers and crews of vessels shipwrecked along the shore. In the following decades sporadic work was done on a road along the north shore of Gaspé, but many years elapsed before it was completed so communication by water continued to be favoured. Thus, supplies brought from the outside were very expensive. Goods were brought down from Quebec to Gaspé Bay before being sent back up the St. Lawrence to the isolated, up-river communities. William Logan observed in 1844 that supplies became more expensive as he went up the river from Cap-des-Rosiers to Cap-Chat.⁶⁹

Gradual improvement in overland communications permitted better postal service. Normally mail was sent by boat from Quebec during the navigation season, but the service to Gaspé was intermittent between December and May. Charles Robin mentioned in 1798 that a mail courier made only one or two trips every winter from Quebec. Robin paid the courier as much as £1 for carrying his letters along a route similar to that later used for the Kempt Road. In 1830 the courier was still making only one or two trips per winter, carrying mail at the rate of two or three shillings per letter; however, by 1839 the Post Office Department reported that it "with difficulty maintains by a weekly foot post a communication between the District of Gaspé and the rest of Lower Canada via the Métis [Kempt Road] route."⁷⁰

Marine communications were also uncertain due to the absence of good navigational charts. The old *North American Pilot*, first published in 1775 for the Lords of the Admiralty, included sailing directions for the coasts of Gaspé based on the hasty surveys done by James Cook, who was with Wolfe at Gaspé Bay in 1758, and by HMS *Norwich*, which participated in the battle of the Restigouche in 1760.⁷¹ The first truly accurate nautical charts of the coasts of Gaspé were made available in the 1830s when Captain (later Admiral) Bayfield was sent by the government to chart these waters. Even after Bayfield's charts became generally available, shipwrecks were common occurrences, especially along the St. Lawrence shore. In 1847 there was, for example, the tragic wreck of the *Carricks* in which about 175 people drowned off Cap des Rosiers. Not until 1858 did the government erect a lighthouse at this strategic point (the first lighthouse built in Gaspé) and no further ones were constructed until the 1870s.⁷²

Further improvements to communications in Gaspé were long to appear. Although first requested in 1857, it was not until 1870 that the government subsidized a steamship company to establish service between Pointe au Père, Québec, and the maritime provinces, which included stops at Gaspé Bay, Percé and Chaleur Bay.⁷³ In 1880 telegraph service, both land and submarine, connected several points in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, including Gaspé.⁷⁴ Although rail service had first been requested in 1851, the Chaleur Bay Railway, running from Matapédia to Gaspé Bay, was not begun until the 1890s and not completed until 1912; it merged with the Canadian National Railway in 1929.⁷⁵

The Consequences of Neglect

After many years of neglect and unanswered petitions it was felt by some residents of Gaspé that the district might be better off on its own than as part of Lower Canada. By the 19th century the most often heard complaints were that the government was spending less money in Gaspé than it was taking out in the form of import tax revenue and that it was spending proportionally more in other districts of Lower Canada. Examples have already been cited of Gaspé officials being paid considerably less than those of equal rank in other districts and of the paucity of government services in the area. It is difficult to determine the disparity with any exactitude since the British government paid for some services such as defence; however, it seems to be true that the government spent more money per capita in settling Loyalists in Gaspé than it did in settling them elsewhere.

In 1830 Judge James Crawford of New Richmond wrote the British government that Gaspé, *although contributing by its Trade and Fisheries proportionately more than any other County, and certainly more in want of aid towards its internal improvement than any in the Province, has at the last Session been allowed no appropriation whatever for the purpose whereas every other County in this respect has largely and liberally participated by Votes of the Assembly from the Public Treasury.*¹

This situation can be attributed to the expulsion of Robert Christie from the legislature, but behind it lay the widely held opinion that the district had long been overlooked by the provincial government. The Gaspé land commissioners flatly affirmed this claim in their general report of 1820. "The imports from Europe . . . realize a revenue considerably beyond the public Expenditure for the Civil Government of the District."² Four years later a Gaspé grand jury suggested that all tax revenue collected in Gaspé should be spent there,³ a form of fiscal self-rule.

By 1832 the assembly was obliged to meet the problem and published an account of net revenue collected in Gaspé since 1791 compared to the amount of money "expended on Internal Improvements" in the district since that time. This account showed £12,400/1/15 collected and £15,451/18/8 spent.⁴ The assembly published a similar account in 1841 covering the period from 1835 to 1840, showing £8,240 collected and only £7,200 spent.⁵

These statistics, however, did not tell the whole story for it was pointed out that many European imports first entered the province at Quebec, where duties were paid, and then were transhipped to Gaspé. Charles Robin claimed, back in 1794,

that his company alone brought in £1,200 worth of merchandise yearly from Quebec, some of which was imported.⁶ (Later petitioners claimed that from one-third to one-half of the dutiable goods used in Gaspé were cleared through the Quebec customs house and therefore would not show in the statistics.⁷) Robin also pointed out that the Gaspé fisheries employed many residents of the Quebec district on a seasonal basis, indicating that the Quebec district was gaining additional revenue from Gaspé commerce. Robin claimed that he paid his Quebec employees a total of £1,000 per year.⁸ Disparities were evident in other areas too: Robert Christie claimed in 1832 that in recent years the Montreal district had received £242,500 from the government for road construction while Gaspé had received only £1,000.⁹ As noted earlier, Christie, member of the legislative assembly for Gaspé, was expelled from that body several times. When the assembly continued to refuse Christie his seat after repeated reelections, many people, including Governor Aylmer, felt that the assembly was harming the interests of Gaspé and seriously considered the advisability of Gaspé joining the province of New Brunswick. Eventually the governor's office itself became involved in the controversy for the Christie case was part of a general political and constitutional dispute between the executive and legislative branches of the government.

Annexation to New Brunswick was first considered in 1789 when the British government was reorganizing the Quebec constitution, but the idea was turned down and Gaspé remained part of Quebec (then called Lower Canada) under the Constitutional Act of 1791, "on account of its commercial connection with this province." The lieutenant governor of New Brunswick also agreed that the district should remain under the government at Quebec.¹⁰ The Gaspé land commissioners considered the question in 1820, reporting that some people felt that Gaspé was "of no advantage to this Province," but rejected this idea on the grounds that the trade and shipping of Gaspé was important to Lower Canada and could become very valuable in the future. If Gaspé left Lower Canada, the latter would lose the financial benefits of this trade (probably import duties), tariffs would probably be set up between the two, and Lower Canada would lose its command of the gulf.¹¹ In no way did the commissioners indicate whether the existing arrangement was advantageous to Gaspé.

Petitions promoting annexation to New Brunswick began in the 1830s. One lengthy petition of 1832 lists many reasons why the district should be annexed to that province: the poor administration of justice in Gaspé and the distance to superior courts at Quebec; the lack of information in the provincial assembly

about Gaspé and its fisheries and the "studied disregard there of them"; the "overbearing party spirit" in that assembly which resulted in the nonrepresentation of Gaspé, and "the anti-commercial and anti-British character of the said Assembly." The petitioners felt that if Gaspé joined New Brunswick there would be more efficient, prompt and cheaper justice; uniformity of fisheries legislation; a more sympathetic assembly which would, they hoped, provide bounties and better protection for the fisheries, and more local improvements. The "constitutional, commercial and British character" of New Brunswick was more attractive as well. Enclosed was a petition from New Brunswickers sympathetic to the idea.¹²

Further petitions protesting the expulsion of Christie and promoting annexation were in turn soon followed by counterpetitions from inhabitants opposed to joining New Brunswick and questioning the validity of the original requests.¹³ These later petitioners declared that most of those signing the earlier documents were "ignorant Fishermen" coerced by the large fish merchants who were motivated by "the temptation alone of the premiums offered by the Legislature of the Province of New Brunswick."¹⁴

Meanwhile, the colonial secretary asked Governor Aylmer to consider encouraging annexation, not for its merits, but "with the view of alarming the Assembly"; that is, to try to force the assembly to modify its attitude toward Gaspé and Christie. Aylmer, who had toured Gaspé in 1831, replied that if a boundary were now being drawn between New Brunswick and Canada for the first time, he would surely say the district should be in New Brunswick; however, at this time he felt it would be better "to ascertain the wishes of the majority of the people," and acknowledged that this would be difficult because of the great "mixture" of people living there. His own opinion was that a majority favoured annexation.¹⁵ A committee of the assembly agreed to investigate the matter and heard much testimony that Gaspésians did not want annexation. Edouard Thibaudeau, member for the new county of Bonaventure, went so far as to say that everyone had "a great deal of repugnance towards the English Laws which prevail in the Province of New Brunswick."¹⁶

The assembly held firm against annexation and against Christie's claims as well; thus, he decided not to try for reelection a sixth time and a new man went to Quebec to represent Gaspé County. By this time the District of Gaspé was better represented in the assembly anyhow, possessing a total of four seats. A new opportunity for change arrived in 1841 with the union of Upper and Lower Canada, but a Gaspé grand jury re-

solved itself opposed to annexation before the idea was revived. The governor general pointed out to the British government that during the 1837–38 rebellions not one inhabitant of Gaspé had even been suspected of disloyalty.¹⁷

The government continued to receive petitions complaining that it was not spending enough money in Gaspé,¹⁸ but conditions improved during the 1840s. Between 1842 and 1844, for example, the government spent £16,666 on the Chaleur Bay and Kempt roads.¹⁹ This was, of course, visible work: the government was seen to be doing something and the matter of annexation to New Brunswick was not heard of again.

The annexation movement may have been inspired by Christie to avenge his treatment by the assembly, but it is more likely that Christie used an already existing movement and exploited it as a weapon against the assembly. Resentment against neglect had simmered for a long time and annexation had been discussed years before Christie came on the political scene. The movement may have been spurred by an inquiry held in the assembly in 1830 when a legislative committee was charged with investigating a lengthy series of grievances detailed in several long petitions signed by hundreds of Gaspé residents. These grievances noted the need for government assistance for agriculture and the fisheries, roads, the postal and judicial systems, electoral practices, land titles, the location of the customs house and many other local problems. The committee heard testimony from a large number of people and it made several recommendations, few of which were translated into legislation. Christie added his personal grievances and became a major spokesman for the movement despite the fact that the signers of one of the major petitions had actually voiced their lack of sympathy with Christie in his dispute with the assembly.²⁰

The movement subsided when Christie gave up his battle, and political stalemate in the legislature and the subsequent rebellions of 1837–38 diverted attention from annexation. In any case, local conditions most likely would have made it difficult to sustain such a movement for any length of time; the very remoteness of Gaspé from the rest of the province made it difficult for indignation to be expressed. Further, people were too busy eking out subsistence on the fisheries to pursue a long-term political goal while the diverse and unintegrated population of Gaspé militated against a cohesive movement of any kind. This short-lived outburst was the only time the people of Gaspé became at all actively indignant at the government's neglect of the district.

Part II The Fisheries of Gaspé

Par les yeux et par les narines, par la langue et par la gorge, aussi bien que par les oreilles, vous vous convaincrez bientôt que, dans la péninsule gaspésienne, la morue forme la base de la nourriture et des amusements, des affaires et des conversations, des regrets et des espérances, de la fortune et de la vie, j'oserais dire, de la société elle-même.

Abbé Ferland

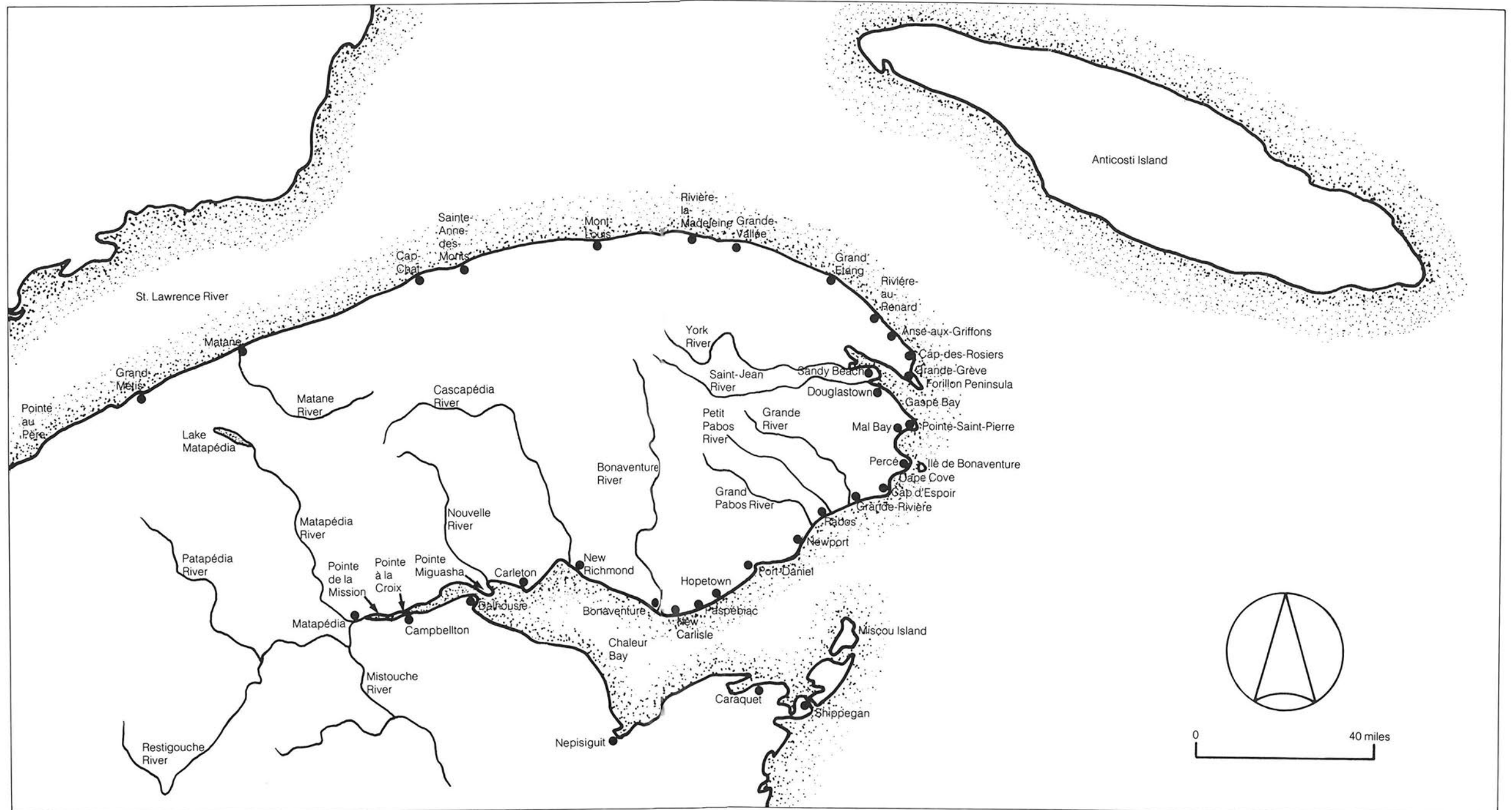
Of Cod and Other Fish

The fishing industry dominated all forms of life in Gaspé. As Abbé Ferland observed,¹ there was no way to escape the odour of cod. Few people in the district were not dependent on the fisheries; most men and adolescent boys worked on the fishing boats while the women, girls and younger boys worked on the beach curing the fish. The merchants, clergymen, doctors and lawyers who provided services in the district were quite likely to be paid in fish. The fishermen bought their store goods with fish and paid their church tithes with it; they manured their gardens with fish and made soap from it. And naturally fish dominated everyone's diet.

Abbé Ferland claimed that the Gaspé fishermen would not eat the best quality cod, "la morue marchande" which was exported to Europe, because they found it "trop insipide" and preferred the cod sent to feed the slaves of the West Indies and Brazil, "la morue de réfection." They shunned the good fish and ate "la chair tachetée [qui] dénote que les mouches y ont déposé leurs oeufs. Ces matières étrangères produisent de la fermentation dans les parties voisines et leur donnent un goût plus piquant." They also ate the lean parts of whale meat but not the blubber although the Indians ate it.²

The Gaspé fisheries enjoyed two advantages over other dry-cod producing areas in North America, particularly Newfoundland. Since there was little spring fog in Chaleur Bay, cod could be caught and cured up to six weeks earlier than at Newfoundland and spring was the season when the cod swarmed in their greatest numbers along the shore. However, the shipping lanes around both Gaspé and Newfoundland suffered from the menace of icefields in the spring. On the richest Gaspé fishery, extending from Cap des Rosiers to Cap d'Espoir, the season lasted from May to mid-November and actually encompassed two seasons. The spring and summer season was the most productive, supplying the ships which left for Europe before the autumn freeze-up. The fall and winter season consisted of whatever cod could be caught after the ships left. Some of this fish was eaten locally, but most was sent to Europe in the spring after the ice had left the shores. There was also some winter fishing – "tommy-cod fishing" – done through the ice of the St. Lawrence River.³

The other advantage of the Gaspé fisheries was that the fishermen had to go only two or three miles from shore to find plentiful fish; thus, only small, relatively inexpensive boats were required. The *berges* or *chaloupes* they used were 18 to 20 feet long in the keel and 6-1/2 feet wide in the beam. They were outfitted with two sprit sails, oars, compass, anchor and a small



cooking stove. They could carry up to eight quintals of fish, which was more than the two-man crew could normally catch (or "make" as it was termed in Gaspé) in one day. In a good year one *berge* could make as much as 300 quintals. The *berges* were pointed at both ends and appeared fragile, but were solidly made and could withstand fairly heavy seas. Normally the keel was made of birch, the timbers of cedar and the planks of pine or cedar; there was usually no deck. A fisherman could buy a *berge* in 1777 for less than £8 and by the 1830s they were reported to cost from "nine to ten Pounds in goods or Provisions sold at an advance of about seventy-five per cent."⁴

Larger vessels were employed in whaling and in fishing for cod on the Orphan Banks, which were farther out in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The "bankers" carried six to ten men and could stay at sea for a few days until they were full. They were more costly and by the 1860s even the large Gaspé fishing companies had given up and allowed the banks to become dominated by American fishermen.⁵

No fisherman was truly self-employed for he was dependent on the powerful merchants to purchase his fish and market it. The fishermen were subject to three systems. Some men were employed directly by the merchant-exporters to work on the firms' boats and beaches, and were paid in credit at their stores. Most fishermen turned over their catch to the merchants to pay for the provisions and equipment which they had earlier been advanced on credit. A third group were those who worked for *la moitié de ligne*; they worked for *bourgeois* who provided the fishermen with *berges* and bait in return for half the value of the fish that they caught. This meant that the two fishermen in each *berge* each received only one-quarter of the proceeds of their lines (and they supplied their own lines). The *bourgeois* received all the fish at the beach and arranged for its curing and sale to the exporters; the fisherman's share of the catch was then credited to his account at the company store. Under this system the fisherman in effect worked for the *bourgeois*, but received his payment in the end from the large companies.⁶

Beginning in the late 18th century, shoremen were brought down from the St. Lawrence river parishes to supplement local labour. The planters had hiring agents in the parishes, of which Saint-Thomas-de-Montmagny (near Quebec City) supplied the most men, and by 1820 their number was estimated at 500 out of a total of 1,800 working on the Gaspé fisheries. By the 1830s some were coming down to fish on their own. They were considered poorly-skilled fishermen, but they were able to make a little money by using the small, unappropriated beaches on the

north shore between Matane and Cap-des-Rosiers. In 1832 a few were reported permanently settled at Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and in later years others settled the north shore, eking out a living by subsistence fishing, practising very little agriculture and cutting wood only in the winter.⁷ Although spring and summer were the busiest times, the winter, too, was a time of work. Wood had to be cut for fuel and building purposes, some fishermen had a few chickens and occasionally a cow to care for, and the fish-curing flakes on the beach and boats and nets had to be repaired. Some were lucky enough to get a few weeks' employment with the big fishing companies making the drums in which cod was sometimes packed. There were also a few winter jobs with the whalers making the barrels in which whale oil was exported.⁸

Few of these jobs paid workers in cash and, indeed, there was very little cash to be found anywhere in the Gaspé economy. The fisherman gained his necessities at the company store on credit and paid his account with fish during the fishing season. For larger transactions bills of exchange were used,⁹ but fish was the general medium of exchange. The best source of capelin for bait was Grande-Rivière; there the seigneur charged two and one-half quintals of cod for every boat which came to gather bait. The Roman Catholic priests of Gaspé were called missionaries, but the parishioners were expected to pay something toward their subsistence. The tithe could be in the form of grain or potatoes, but generally it was fish which the missionary could keep for himself or redeem for goods at the company store. At Percé parishioners were expected to pay the priest one-half quintal of cod for every boat they had, but there, as in most places in Gaspé, tithing was very irregular and unreliable; however, in 1838 the people of Paspébiac agreed to pay their priest one-half quintal of fish per family.¹⁰

Although the Gaspé fisheries had several advantages over competitors, one problem of which the local industry was always aware was pollution of the fishing waters. In 1765 a government surveyor visited Gaspé Bay and suggested that the French might have diminished the local cod fishery by throwing fish offal into the waters of the bay. The cod would eat the offal instead of the bait offered by the fishermen and it also hurt the quality of the fish that fed on the offal.¹¹ Renewal of the Gaspé fisheries under British sovereignty increased pollution. As early as 1769 the problem was considered serious at Pabos and a petition from the few residents complained particularly about the behaviour of fishermen from the thirteen colonies to the south.

At a time when every Individual on the Continent seems Tena-cious of his liberty, permit us, the Poor & Ill-treated Fishermen of Gaspey & Chaleur Bay [to complain about the] Number of Schooners & deck'd vessels amounting to some hundreds yearly, from the Southern Governments, which not only fouls the Shalop & Boat Fishing grounds by the Distructive method of heaving over the Garbage of the Fish, but even keeps within our Capes & Headlands. A practise so distructive in itself that the French, was well aware of & punish'd with the utmost vigor. . . . Let us humbly entreat the Sons of Liberty, who knows us to be a conquer'd Government & naturely polite, to give the Skip-pers of their Vessels for the ensuing year strict orders not to Oppress us more than we are allready, by the aforesaid practise, remembering that they themselves thought His Majesty's Ship was an incroachment last year in Boston Bay, notwithstanding she never foul'd the Ground with Cod heads or Sound bones.¹²

Over the years numerous petitions were sent by Gaspé fishermen imploring the government to impose and enforce laws prohibiting visiting fishermen from throwing fish offal into the water.¹³ They always blamed visiting fishermen and their accusation may have been accurate; local fishermen found it easier to dispose of their refuse and, of course, had a greater interest in the long-term welfare of the fisheries. Legislation introduced in 1788¹⁴ prohibited the dumping of ballast in Gaspé harbours and of fish guts, offal or gurry within two miles of shore, but it was not enforceable because of the weak judicial system in Gaspé. Besides, the dumping of fish refuse farther out at sea harmed the fisheries just as much for the cod was a migratory fish. In 1824 the assembly passed new legislation which forbade dumping offal within six leagues of shore.¹⁵

Americans were considered the worst culprits because not only did they throw their refuse overboard, but also their fishing depleted the supply available to Gaspé fishermen. Charles Robin noted in 1772 how early the presence of American fishermen on the Orphan Banks was felt on the Chaleur Bay fisheries.¹⁶ During the American revolutionary war when very few fish were taken, Nicholas Cox noted that the fishery quickly recovered.¹⁷ Americans who came later to catch mackerel also affected the Gaspé cod fishery because the local fishermen used the mackerel for bait to catch cod.¹⁸

The treaty of 1818 between the United States and Great Britain forbade American fishermen to catch, dry or cure fish within three miles of British territory though they could land for wood, water, shelter and repairs; however, restrictions against coming ashore only meant that they had to dispose of their refuse at

sea. By this time, Gaspé residents suspected that they dumped at sea in order to distract the cod from leaving the banks to follow "their natural course near the shores."¹⁹ M.H. Perley noted that although the "Crown Officers in England" had interpreted that the three-mile provision should be measured from the headlands, Americans were still fishing in Chaleur Bay in 1850.²⁰

Fish Production

It is difficult to determine the exact impact of American fishermen on the Gaspé fisheries, but we do know that exports of most Gaspé fish rose fairly steadily during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Codfish production for example, was reported to have been 28,000 to 30,000 quintals in 1777, the year before American privateers ravaged the Gaspé fisheries,²¹ but during the years of the American Revolution, cod production was probably no higher than that required for local consumption. The fishery must have recovered quickly after the war for 25,500 quintals were exported from Gaspé in 1784.²² During the 19th century, exports continued to increase: in 1811 they were reported at 26,691 quintals and, with a few minor declines, rose to 62,747 quintals by 1835. Statistics after this year are incomplete; however, exports for later years have been found:

Year	Number of Quintals of Cod
1842	98,062
1848	80,339
1864	102,846
1865	120,278
1867	111,731

Total figures for cod exports would be higher for it was shipped in other measures than quintals; for example, casks, hogsheads, barrels, *pacquets*, *caisses*, tierces, kegs, firkins, bundles and boxes. Other cod products exported included tongues, sounds (cod heads) and cod-liver oil. Further, total cod production in the District of Gaspé would have been even greater for a good deal was consumed locally.²³

In 1861 Gaspé Bay was declared a free port, thus attracting a great deal of shipping to Gaspé; many of these ships took cod on their return voyages. The destinations of the 351 ships which cleared the port of Gaspé Bay that year are shown below.²⁴

Number of Ships	Destination
15	Great Britain
6	United States
1	Portugal
119	Spain

112	Nova Scotia
32	New Brunswick
15	Newfoundland
32	Prince Edward Island
13	Italy
6	Brazil

Pierre Fortin, stipendiary magistrate charged with supervising the fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, enumerated many examples of shipping leaving the Gaspé district in his report for the year 1864. Following are a few examples.²⁵

(1) One Charles Robin and Company ship left Paspébiac in June taking cod to Rio de Janeiro; it returned (via New York with freight) in time to take a larger cargo of cod to Brazil again in November.

(2) Another made two trips to Boston early in the year; returning the second time, it "touched at Sydney" to bring coal to Paspébiac, then took cod to Naples in October.

(3) Another brought salt from Jersey in the spring; took cod, oats, herring, shingles and other products to Barbados in June; returned with sugar and molasses in September, and took cod to Brazil in October.

(4) J. and Elias Collas of Jersey launched a 94-ton ship from their Pointe-Saint-Pierre shipyard in the fall which went to Portugal in November with cod.

(5) A ship belonging to John Fauvel of Pointe-Saint-Pierre arrived in Gaspé Bay in May from Jersey with general cargo, left for Cadiz in June with cod, returned in ballast, and left in November to take cod to Naples.

Although cod was the main source of income for Gaspésians, other types of fishing were carried on. Whaling began in Gaspé Bay about the turn of the 19th century; according to tradition, an American from Nantucket instructed the Boyle brothers of Gaspé Bay in his methods of whaling.²⁶ Whaling, a high-risk enterprise, was never actively encouraged by the government. It required a good deal of capital even to begin because it required schooners large enough to carry about 12 men and capable of operating on the high seas (primarily the north shore of the gulf). One season of poor sailing weather could completely ruin a whaler.²⁷

Over the years the gulf whale population declined because of overkilling and the whalers moved into the Strait of Belle Isle and the Atlantic along the Labrador coast, but by the 1860s even these areas were depleted. Fortin tried in vain to encourage the Gaspé whalers to go farther afield, to the Greenland coast, for example; he claimed that they were notoriously bad navigators and gave as an example the fact that the ships tak-

ing Gaspé cod to the world markets were still captained by foreigners (presumably Jerseymen).²⁸

Little whale meat was exported. It was the oil, refined for lanterns, which led men to pursue whales. The oil-refining operations were based at L'Anse-aux-Cousins and Penouil in Gaspé Bay. The task of reducing the blubber to oil and preparing casks for its handling is reported to have employed about 100 people, employment which would have lasted about two and a half months in the autumn after the whaling season ended.²⁹ Although the production figures shown below are scanty, they indicate that whaling was a very capricious enterprise.

Year	Gallons of Whale Oil
1810	15,360
1820	18,000
1832	18,000–20,000
1861	33,600
1862	26,000
1863	14,400
1864	25,014
1865	14,420
1866	12,230
1867	25,890

In 1810 the 27 whales caught produced 480 barrels or 60 tons of oil; valued at £31 per ton, the yield was £1,860. In 1864 oil was valued at 65 cents per gallon.

Salmon exports from the Gaspé district generally came from the Cascapédia and Restigouche rivers. Salmon experienced a dramatic decline in mid-century and only strong legislative measures saved them from extinction. Despite charges that the Restigouche Indians were the chief cause for the decline, many other factors were involved. The Indians were accused of taking salmon before they spawned, but it was Europeans who totally blocked some streams with nets and dams for lumber mills or who choked the rivers with sawdust. There had long been laws governing the salmon fisheries, but there were no means of enforcing them until the mid-1850s when Fortin was made stipendiary magistrate to oversee the Gaspé fisheries. Subsequently an overseer was appointed for the Restigouche River only; in 1861 he reported no breach in the fishing rules and a consequent increase of 60 barrels caught in the river that year.³⁰ Fortin noted that a Mr. Price had constructed a fine fish-way on the Matane River, but no salmon had been seen above it; before Price's milldam had been built the river had produced 25 to 30 barrels a year.³¹

In 1790 the Restigouche River alone is estimated to have produced 6,000 barrels of salmon; by 1823 production had fallen to 1,000 barrels. By the 1850s salmon had almost totally disappeared from the district, but came back slowly during the following decade. The figures below show the amount exported from the Gaspé district in the 1860s.

Year	Number of Barrels
1864	483
1865	517
1866	703
1867	950

In the 1860s sport fishermen using the artificial fly first began to fish the magnificent salmon rivers of Gaspé and licensing of the sport began to bring in some revenue. It was probably Jefferson Davis's visit to Gaspé in 1866 (when he caught 160 salmon) that brought Gaspé salmon to the attention of sport fishermen.³²

Charles Robin mentioned gathering oysters as early as 1769, but they never became a popular object of the Gaspé fishermen's search. In 1859 Fortin transplanted a number of oysters from Caraquet to Gaspé Bay "according to the latest and most generally adopted European method." Few survived and Fortin attributed the failure to the muddy bottom of the bay.³³

Many other fish were caught, especially for bait. Capelin, the chief food of the cod, were netted along the shores of Gaspé and were also popular for manuring local gardens, a practice which was later forbidden. Capelin were especially plentiful at the beginning of the fishing season, but if they became scarce as the season progressed, the fishermen turned to herring, then mackerel and later even to squid, smelt and trout.³⁴ Other fish exported from Gaspé in small amounts included pickled and smoked herring, trout, shad, eels, sardines and mackerel.

Although mackerel were plentiful in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Gaspé fishermen left them to American fishermen who pursued them with scores of ships. Fortin particularly lamented the lack of adventure among Gaspé fishermen who would not pursue whales to Greenland or take advantage of local mackerel resources. The United States market was enormous and American fishermen came long distances to fish in international waters just off the Gaspé coast, but Gaspé fishermen preferred the easier life of fishing for cod in coastal waters.

Sir William Dawson felt the Gulf of St. Lawrence mackerel fisheries should be left to the Americans. Mackerel, he said, was a "vagrant," making the fishery unreliable from year to year. Further, fishing on the open seas raised the risk of calamity; the cod fishery was much safer and more dependable. Dawson added, "Our comparatively thinly settled coasts could ill afford

the frequent unsuccessful voyages and terrible disasters and loss of life that attend the American mackerel fisheries."³⁵

It is interesting that lobsters, although abundant in Gaspé, were never exported. Indeed they were seldom eaten locally, the fishermen rejecting them as nothing more than a nuisance which often tore their nets. Not until the 1870s when American businessmen set up canneries on Chaleur Bay were the Gaspé lobster resources exploited.³⁶

Gaspé Fishing Companies

Gaspé Bay and Paspébiac were the two major centres for the exportation of cod and for the first 30 years of the 19th century two Jersey companies shared the Gaspé fisheries on a non-competitive basis. Francis and Philip Janvrin dominated the fisheries of Gaspé Bay and even held shares in Charles Robin and Company, which controlled the fisheries on Chaleur Bay, including Percé. Many smaller companies tried to compete with the two large firms and some succeeded, especially later in the 19th century, but many failed, particularly in the 18th century.

In the period from 1760 to 1775 there were numerous traders, many operating out of Quebec on a small scale along the coasts, who bartered salt, fishing equipment and provisions, for fish, furs and skins. An early example was William Van Felson, a native of Holland, who took a 15-ton schooner to Gaspé in 1763 with a cargo of "Sea stores & utensils for the fishery"; he continued trading at Bonaventure until the American Revolution.³⁷

Beginning in 1766 a Quebec-based trader, William Smith, with two merchant partners in London had erected several storehouses at Paspébiac and Bonaventure and traded goods with the Indians for the salmon they caught on the Cascapédia and Restigouche rivers.³⁸ As noted earlier, John Shoolbred took over these operations but was driven out by American privateers in 1779.

Charles Robin first came to trade along Chaleur Bay in 1766 and, like Van Felson and Smith, resided on the fisheries much of the time; however, his supply base was Jersey rather than Quebec. Other small-scale merchants who came to trade seasonally along the Gaspé coast included a firm from Halifax.³⁹

Guernsey fishermen who were also traders are known to have been on the Forillon shore of Gaspé Bay by at least 1767.⁴⁰ The LeMesurier and Bonamy families are shown on a census of 1777 as having 17 fishing boats and, besides their families, 58 people working for them (probably brought in every spring for the fishing season). After the revolutionary war the business was run by Thomas LeMesurier and his brothers and by 1789

they were reported to be bringing in 100 fishermen from Guernsey every season and exporting 10,000 to 12,000 quintals of cod to Europe.⁴¹ Charles Robin later commented that it was not a profitable business and apparently the LeMesuriers sold out to the Janvrins in 1792.⁴² Some of the Guernsey people, among them the Bonamy and LeMesurier families, remained on the Forillon peninsula and were joined by workers from Jersey brought out by the Janvrin Company.⁴³

Francis Janvrin was a shareholder in Charles Robin and Company as early as 1787 and he and his sons continued as shareholders for at least 50 years.⁴⁴ The Janvrins, emulating the Robin firm, established their first fishing operations at Cape Breton Island in 1783 and then expanded to the District of Gaspé. Although some of the Janvrin family came out to Cape Breton to direct the fisheries there, their operations in Gaspé were run by a resident agent who received occasional visits from the Janvrins living at Cape Breton. Their first fishing station, slow to prosper, was at Grande-Grève, but success eventually came and the company flourished and expanded.

The devastating war in Europe in the first years of the 19th century resulted in a greatly increased demand for fish and in response the Janvrin company established new fishing stations at Gaspé Bay, Pointe-Saint-Pierre, Mal Bay, Cap-des-Rosiers and Anse-aux-Griffons. Their business was extensive, exporting dried cod to Brazil as well as Europe. They entered an agreement not to compete in the North American fisheries with some Guernsey fishing companies known as the "Arichat and Gaspé Society." The Janvrins were to have no Guernsey competition in Cape Breton and Gaspé Bay in return for not entering the Newfoundland fisheries.⁴⁵ Further, the Janvrins and the Robins did not trespass on their respective fishing areas in Gaspé.

The Janvrins sold their fishing business – it is not known why – to two Jerseymen who had been general managers for Charles Robin and Company. John Fauvel, who had worked at Paspébiac, seems to have purchased the Mal Bay fishing post.⁴⁶ In 1857 William Fruing bought the fishing stations of Gaspé Bay and the Forillon peninsula. In 1861 the Fruing company was reported to be exporting 18,000 quintals of cod to several Mediterranean countries.⁴⁷

The Janvrins and their successors nearly monopolized the Gaspé fisheries from Mal Bay to Anse-aux-Griffons. Only one merchant, the Loyalist Daniel McPherson from Philadelphia, successfully competed with the Janvrins, but he depended heavily on them for supplies.⁴⁸ Charles Robin indicates that McPherson's "Fishery and supplying business," established at Douglastown in the 1780s, enjoyed only modest success, but

by 1802 McPherson had gained enough to buy the seigneurie of Ile aux Grues (Crane Island) near Quebec to which he soon retired. His business then appears to have been continued by his son John and son-in-law Henry Johnston who added to McPherson's business by acquiring the Janvrin properties at Pointe-Saint-Pierre.⁴⁹

Many investors had lost a great deal of money attempting to establish fishing posts in Gaspé after the American Revolution and Robin lists a dozen firms that failed with heavy losses.⁵⁰ Charles Robin flourished on Chaleur Bay, but only by means of great self-sacrifice, energy and business acumen; meanwhile the Janvrins hung on until the world market improved after 1800. They virtually had Gaspé Bay, with its excellent harbour and curing beaches (especially at Grande-Grève, the best beach in the Gaspé district) to themselves, their only competition being the small business run by McPherson on the south shore of Gaspé Bay.

These firms dominated the Gaspé fishing industry between 1790 and 1830 except for a few pedlars who sailed along the coasts of Gaspé every summer touching at each small port and cove. These itinerant traders were often able to sell goods at prices considerably lower than those offered by the large companies, but they seldom had any salt and usually sold their goods for cash only. (Both salt and cash were scarce in Gaspé.) Some of these independent merchants did take fish, but there were complaints that they traded alcohol for fish and corrupted the poor fishermen.⁵¹

It was difficult for an entrepreneur to break into the Gaspé fishing industry which was so firmly controlled by the two large companies. The first man to successfully break into the monopoly and offer true competition was John LeBoutillier. He, too, had come from Jersey at an early age to work for the Robins. About 1830 he established a small fishing post at Percé. He appears to have received some financial backing from François Buteau, a Quebec merchant who had been trading seasonally in Gaspé for 20 years and who participated in the fishing industry at his seigneurie of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. Starting cautiously and at first specialising in the export of "la morue de réfection" to Quebec, they were soon able to expand and by 1836 added posts at Anse-aux-Griffons and Paspébiac. Buteau apparently left the firm early, but LeBoutillier was soon joined by his sons and the firm grew; however, it never reached the proportions of Charles Robin and Company. In 1850 they were reported to be exporting 20,000 quintals of fish a year (compared to the 40,000–50,000 quintals exported by the Robin Company)

and by the 1860s they had posts at Gaspé Bay, Percé and Anse-aux-Griffons.⁵²

About 1838 three brothers who had been working for Charles Robin and Company began a merchandising and fish exporting business on the Paspébiac *barachois* adjacent to the Robins. David, Amy and Edward LeBoutillier were Jerseymen, but only distantly related to John LeBoutillier. The LeBoutillier brothers seem to have been the first Gaspé fishing firm to establish a fishing post on the Labrador coast. They opened posts at Ile de Bonaventure and Miscou Island as well, but their headquarters and shipping centre remained at Paspébiac. From there they were reported, in 1852, to be exporting about 20,000 quintals of cod.⁵³

The LeBoutilliers showed that competition with the two large firms was possible and several other people quickly followed their lead. The Jersey firm of Hamon and LeGros began a fishery at Newport in the early 1830s and the Quebec-based firm of Georges and Ferdinand Boissonault opened one at Bonaventure. Though this end of Chaleur Bay was not rich in cod, by 1850 the two brothers had 150 boats in service there, each of which brought in about 100 quintals a season. Around 1843 William Hyman, a native of Russia, began a small operation on the Forillon peninsula which lasted into the 1960s.⁵⁴

None of these companies fished for whales; that was left to the specialists – the Boyle family of Gaspé Bay. Von Iffland noted in 1821 that the Boyles had, at L'Anse-aux-Cousins, “des fourneaux avec des chaudières énormes où ils font bouillir la chair de ces poissons après l'avoir coupée en morceaux. Des tubes, à ce qu'il m'a paru, transportent l'huile dans un grand réservoir.” By the 1830s the refining operations had been moved to Penouil where the Boyles and others erected “quelques chétives baraques; là sont amoncelées des masses de lard de baleine, que l'on fait fondre dans d'immenses chaudières, afin d'en extraire les matières grasses et huileuses.”⁵⁵

In 1818 the assembly of Lower Canada discussed various problems in Gaspé and Jean Taschereau spoke at length about the need to get more Québécois merchants interested in the district because its economy was dominated by outsiders.⁵⁶ Of all the Gaspé entrepreneurs noted above, only François Buteau, the Boissoneault brothers and perhaps the Boyle family were native to Canada and they were not leaders in their field.

The majority of the capital and management for the Gaspé fishing industry came from the Channel Islands because people there were willing to risk the large initial investment required to become established in the fishing industry. As important as the capital were the many hard years they were willing to invest in

directing the fisheries. The fate of two such investors, Frederick Haldimand and Charles Robin, will be examined to show that the fishing industry dominated not only the lives of the fishermen, but also the lives of management.

Governor Haldimand and His Seigneurie at Pabos

The failure of Frederick Haldimand to establish a fishery in Gaspé shows that it was impossible to operate a fishing industry from a distance. Haldimand was a senior officer in the British army in North America, a man of considerable influence in government circles and eventually governor of Quebec, but these advantages were not enough to help him compete with the energetic traders from the Channel Islands. Haldimand's occupation prevented him from directing his investment on the spot and he was reluctant to endow his local manager with sufficient authority to deal with all the contingencies which arose daily on the fishery. He was also reluctant – or perhaps unable – to invest the amount of capital required to compete with the other more aggressive investors in Gaspé.

Haldimand bought the seigneurie of Grand Pabos in 1765, apparently paying more than 1,000 French *livres* to François Lefebvre de Bellefeuille,¹ whose fishing post had been destroyed by Wolfe's party in 1758. By 1768 Haldimand, then posted in Florida, had constructed a sawmill, wharf, houses, an 80-ton schooner – a considerable investment – and hired an agent to run the business from Quebec.² The agent sent men out to cut timber for the mill and build fishing vessels for future settlers.³ They gave up the idea of trying to export lumber sawn at their mill because it was too difficult to load, since larger ships could not navigate the entrance to the harbour at Pabos. Haldimand hoped to be posted in one of the northern British colonies and have his nephew manage the post, but the nephew died. He then tried to sell the seigneurie, but could not get a satisfactory price.⁴

The Quebec agent was not given enough authority or money by Haldimand to run the operation effectively: it was several years before he could get the remaining parts for the lumber mill and he missed the first fishing season because he had not enough money to outfit the fishing vessels. Haldimand had to be consulted for major expenses, but he was far from Quebec and the Quebec agent was yet another week from Pabos. In 1767 the agent had to turn down an offer by a number of families who wanted to settle at Pabos; he had no authority to guarantee them that they could remain there nor any authority to give them provisions. The agent finally resigned, advising Haldimand to find a partner who would live on the scene and share the profits and losses.⁵ Again Haldimand tried to sell the seigneurie but was unsuccessful.⁶

In 1772 another of Haldimand's nephews took an interest in the fisheries and directed a small fishing operation at Pabos for a few years. He too encountered problems he could not handle.

In 1776 he suffered the loss of three cargoes; one of the vessels was his own and had recently been built at Pabos at considerable cost. The nephew soon discovered that anyone trying to establish himself in the Gaspé fisheries must have substantial capital to compete with the large local fishing and trading firms whose owners fixed prices among themselves. Because these traders charged exorbitant prices, the Haldimands had to import their own salt, provisions and fishing equipment.

By 1777 Haldimand was governor of Quebec and nearer to Gaspé, but still refused to delegate authority, even to his nephew,⁷ nor was he willing to risk and invest the amount of capital and time required to succeed in the Gaspé fisheries. By 1779 he gave up all hope and interest in his seigneurie and it was eventually purchased in 1796 by Felix O'Hara from the trustees of Haldimand's estate.⁸

Haldimand probably lost a good deal of money attempting to establish a fishing post on his seigneurie although he would have lost less had he been content with the small fee – two quintals of cod per shallop – he could exact from every fisherman who came to catch bait in the Grand Pabos River.⁹ During the 1760s his rank was sufficiently high in the army that he was able to use his influence to help him with his investment. In the 1760s he got an army surveying party to look into his interests at Pabos (they advised him to sell)¹⁰ and after he became governor his secretary, Major Mathews, handled some of the affairs and so did the lieutenant governor of Gaspé, Nicholas Cox, and his subordinate, Felix O'Hara,¹¹ but all of Haldimand's connections and influence could not help if he did not have a resident agent with sufficient money and authority to run the operation from day to day. The fishing industry was capricious and demanded constant attention from management.

Charles Robin and His Company

Charles Robin, the third and youngest son of Philip Robin and Anne Dauvergne, was baptised on 30 October 1743 in the parish of St. Brélade, on the Island of Jersey. Nothing is known of his early life save that he was orphaned when he was 11; however, it is evident that he received a good education for his letters and journals¹ show him to be effortlessly literate in both English and French. (The Channel Islands had been under English suzerainty since 1066, but French was still the only language spoken by many of its people.) The Robin family had long held small seigneuries and official positions in Jersey, but Charles Robin's parents were shopkeepers in the busy seaport of St. Aubin.² He was 22 years old when he first visited Chaleur Bay in 1766 and almost 59 when he left the bay for the last time in 1802.

On the Bay, 1766–1802

In the summer of 1766 Charles Robin scouted Chaleur Bay and evidently found it a fertile area for the fish trade. After a short stay he sailed down the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Arichat on Isle Madame, just off Cape Breton Island, where his brother John had established a fishing post the previous year.³ As a result of his report on the potential of Chaleur Bay, Charles was sent out the following year by the Robin, Pipon Company of Jersey to set up a fishing post on the bay.

The Pipons had been connected with the Robins by marriage for several generations, but their connection to the new company was solely financial. Philip Robin, Charles's eldest brother (married to a Pipon girl), directed the company from St. Aubin while John and Charles conducted the business on the fisheries. A contact with the London business community was provided by the financial house of DeGruchy and LeBreton (probably Jerseymen) who held a small interest in the firm.

On his 1766 reconnoitre of Gaspé, Charles Robin decided that the *barachois* at Paspébiac would be the best site to establish a fishing post. To this post he brought men from Jersey to fish for cod in Chaleur Bay and from it he did most of his trading. During his first few years on the bay Charles personally undertook to provide the local residents with salt, fishing equipment, butter, spirits, flour, biscuit, gunpowder, cloth, peas and salt pork. In return he took furs of all kinds, feathers, and fresh meat in addition to cod and salmon. With the Indians he traded spirits and powder for furs and skins. In most cases, he bartered with the fishermen although credit, and occasionally specie, were also used. (Many different currencies were in circula-

tion: French *livres*, Jersey *liards*, American dollars and pounds sterling.)

The Robin, Pipon Company suffered a number of setbacks as it struggled to gain a foothold in the Chaleur Bay fisheries. From the beginning it was determined to own its own ships and not rely on charters to bring men, equipment and trade goods to Gaspé and carry fish back to Europe. In 1768 two of its ships were seized for having sailed directly from Jersey to Canada without clearing from an English port. The loss, amounting to nearly £2,000 plus the time lost in the fisheries, nearly destroyed the company, but eventually the Robins received a small recompense and remedial legislation was passed in the British Parliament allowing Jersey ships to clear directly for Canada.⁴

In 1774 the justice of the peace on Chaleur Bay forced Robin to post a £500 bond in an attempt to prevent him from landing two shiploads of Acadians whom he had brought from France (via Jersey) to settle on the bay as fishermen. The justice was concerned about the loyalty of the Acadians, but the governor at Quebec eventually allowed them to remain as immigrants if they swore allegiance to George III, and ordered Robin's money returned.⁵

With the outbreak of the American Revolution and the arrival of American warships and privateers in the bay, even more serious difficulties befell the company. In 1776 the post on Cape Breton Island was attacked and the following year Chaleur Bay was full of American ships. As a result the Robins lost several shallops, considerable fish and one ship. A second vessel captured by the Americans was retaken by a British warship, but Robin had to pay one-eighth its value to the Royal Navy as salvage.⁶ Charles left the bay in the fall of 1778, not to return until the war was over. While he was gone, the Indians of the Restigouche River, starving because the war had stopped all trade into the bay, pillaged his store, a loss Robin set at £1,500.⁷

Charles spent the war years in Jersey serving as a militia captain and taking part in the Battle of Jersey in 1781. When he returned to Paspébiac in 1783 it was with the intention of spending only a few years there while his three nephews (Philip's sons John, James and Philip Junior) gained enough experience in the business to take it over. Charles' brother John, also married to a Pipon girl, had only daughters and since Charles never married, the family was dependent on the three young boys to take over the business. It appears that John Robin did not return to his Cape Breton fishery after the war; he may have been in ill health for he died in 1793.

After the war two new companies were formed, Charles Robin and Company and the Philip Robin Company. Charles Robin himself only owned an eighth interest in the company which bore his name. John Fiott, a Channel Islander living in London, held a third of the shares while the remainder was divided among Charles's two brothers and minor shareholders like Francis Janvrin and Thomas Pipon. When Fiott died in 1796, Philip Robin purchased his interest from his estate for £6,000; he sold half (one-sixth of the shares) to the P. & H. LeMesurier Company of London and split the remainder between his sons James and Philip Robin Junior.

The Philip Robin Company was a smaller operation formed to continue the fishery begun by John Robin at Cape Breton Island. Charles and Philip Robin Senior and John Fiott each held one quarter of the firm while John Robin was among the minor shareholders. Philip Senior redeemed Fiott's interest in 1796 for £1,500 and sold some of it to the LeMesurier firm.⁸ Although one Robin company carried fish or merchandise for the other occasionally, the affairs of the two family firms were generally kept separate. The Philip Robin Company fishery was directed by an agent who lived at Arichat.

When Charles Robin returned to Chaleur Bay in 1783 he found the fisheries swarming with new competitors, but within ten years they had all failed. Robin won supremacy on the bay because of his previous experience on the fisheries before the war. He knew that success could only be gained by assuring that he had the authority to make virtually all important decisions concerning the operation of his company. He devoted all his energies to the business and he lived permanently on the fisheries. His competitors, on the other hand, were merely agents representing large investors in Quebec, London and the Channel Islands; they had little decision-making authority of their own. Robin also profited from his wide knowledge of the Chaleur Bay fisheries to secure the best beach properties for his company.

Although he complained about it constantly, Charles saw it as his family duty to remain overseas and direct the company operations in the Gaspé until such time as his nephews were able to take over. Philip Junior was only 13 years old when he came out in 1783 to learn the business. His younger brothers followed later. Each received an annual salary of £100 even after they were given an interest in the company.

Robin planned to retire in the mid-1790s, but two emergencies arose in 1793 which postponed this plan for nine years. First there were family problems. In 1793 his nephew and godson John fell seriously ill and it became evident that he was not

suited to the rigours of life on the fisheries; however, Robin contrived a means of keeping him useful to the family business. In 1795 he gave John Robin £1,000 to become a partner with Joseph Axtell, a Lisbon importer and broker. The Robins had long sold fish to Axtell, who had been in business in Portugal for nearly 40 years. Portugal was an important market for dried cod and some of the poorer quality fish was transhipped to its Brazilian colony where it was a major dietary staple of the slaves. The firm of Axtell and Robin became an important European contact for the Robins.

With one departed, Robin now had only two nephews to help him and his relations with them were often strained. Robin was bitter that the two young men returned to Europe nearly every autumn, leaving him alone for the winter. The nephews normally travelled on a company ship taking fish to Spain or Portugal, thereby gaining valuable experience, but Robin remained resentful. He was particularly critical of Philip Robin Junior, considering him careless and unreliable. The oldest nephew seemed impatient for his uncle to retire and spent most of his time in the Percé – Grande-Rivière area. Although the anchorages there were poor, it had good beaches and excellent fishing grounds; by the late 1790s Charles Robin and Company was getting most of its fish from this area. When Philip Robin Junior had achieved this, he left the fisheries for two years, spending his time travelling in Europe and dreaming of making his fortune in other fields.

The second emergency that made it impossible for Charles Robin to retire early arose in 1793 when Britain and France went to war. Again Robin's ships were exposed to capture on the high seas and his Iberian markets threatened with closure. Within a few years war had spread throughout most of Europe. Robin's communications and trading patterns were interrupted, his ships seized by the French and his crews impressed by the Royal Navy, but Robin remained on Chaleur Bay, unlike his actions during the war of 1776–83, and his company carried on.

By piecing together various data on his company's exports between 1790 and 1802, we can see that Robin was able to keep his sales close to an average of 14,000 quintals of cod per year during the war years.

Year	Approximate Amount of Cod Exported (in quintals)
1790	15,500
1791	13,000
1792	12,500
1793	9,500
1794	14,900
1795	8,700

1796	14,200
1797	14,300
1798	14,100
1799	12,400
1800	14,800
1801	13,300
1802	17,000

The slump of 1792 was due to a poor fishing season, but those of 1793 and 1795 were directly attributable to war. In 1793 the company brig *Paspébiac*, which could carry 2,800 to 3,000 quintals of cod, was captured by the French and by 1795 the company had lost three more brigs and a schooner. In every case but one the ships had been captured after having sold their cargoes in Europe.

Losses to war demanded that the company become more independent in its supply of ships. Not only had the French captured four of their vessels, but also another was shipwrecked on the coast of Norway and others had to be retired because of old age. Ships for sale or rent were scarce during the war; the company was unable to buy any and on only two occasions did Robin charter a ship and crew. Robin was always apprehensive about this kind of arrangement because he felt he could not trust the captains.

In these circumstances Robin decided to have his own ships built at Paspébiac by Jersey workmen using the abundant local timber. He was particularly fortunate in finding an excellent shipwright, James Day, whom he paid handsomely to keep him content to work in this remote part of the world. The first ship, the *Fiott*, was launched in 1792; it had a burden of about 250 tons and could carry about 3,500 quintals of fish. It left on 19 November 1792 on its maiden voyage carrying 2,278 quintals of cod, 56 hogsheads of fish oil and 64 tierces of salmon to Santander, Spain. It also carried 49 men and their baggage home to Jersey for the winter, it being cheaper to send them home than pay and provide for them at Paspébiac. The *Fiott* made two voyages to Europe in July and November of 1793 but never returned; in the spring of 1794 it and two other company vessels were captured by the French from the Jersey-Newfoundland convoy which was protected by only one British warship. That autumn, however, the company produced its second ship; indeed, every two years the Paspébiac shipyard turned out a new vessel, six in all by 1802.

During the war years the Royal Navy employed so many sailors that crews were difficult to collect in Jersey and Robin was always short of men on the fisheries. Very little fish was sent to Halifax because of the danger that his men would there be im-

pressed into military service. Voyages were often delayed and one year the company sent out one less ship due to lack of men. By 1800 Robin had to hire inexperienced and even illiterate men to captain his ships selling cod in the United States and Europe. Since the sailors worked on the beaches and shallows in the summertime, Robin suffered from labour shortages on the fisheries too. It was during this period that Robin recruited French Canadians from the parishes below Quebec to come each summer to cure cod on the beaches of Chaleur Bay.

Without the new ships the company would have died. Those which were lost or captured were insured, of course, but having a ship to take fish to market was more important than compensation from an insurance company. Even a new ship was insured for only £1,000, half its value. Insurance premiums were high in wartime; Robin paid three and one-half to four per cent of value for just the short trip from Paspébiac to Boston. He also had to worry that his vessels might be captured before insurance arrangements were made in England.

The war naturally disrupted Robin's trade patterns. For years he had operated a small but profitable three-cornered trade between Paspébiac, the West Indies and Quebec. He sent poorer quality dried cod to the West Indies where it was purchased for the slaves. His ships then returned with cotton, sugar, rum and molasses which sold well in Quebec where Robin bought much of his provisions and hardware. From 1793, however, he sent no more ships to the West Indies, feeling it was too dangerous because of French warships and privateers.

When Spain joined France against England in 1796, Robin's Spanish markets were closed to him, but he quickly adjusted by selling fish in Boston and New York. Although he continued to send cod to Axtell and Robin in Lisbon, in the next five years he sold tens of thousands of quintals of fish to the United States. Since the neutral United States still had access to the Spanish market, a great deal of Robin's fish was simply transferred to American ships which took it directly to Spain; however, this adjustment was strictly temporary for Robin's cod sold for somewhat less in the United States than in Europe. In 1801 Portugal seemed threatened by France so Robin sent all his fish to Boston, except for a small cargo to Halifax. His fears were unnecessary for that year a temporary peace was achieved in Europe. He estimated that the 13,000 quintals of cod he had sent to Boston could have brought between £4,000 and £6,000 more if he had known about the European situation and sent the fish to Portugal instead.

Communications were also disrupted by the war. It was most important for Robin to know how the war was going and where the best markets would be. He worried about France dominating Spain and Portugal and especially about the United States going to war with England. Communications were slow even in peacetime, but during the war Robin had to rely on rumours and out-of-date letters. Correspondence from Axtell and Robin advising him of market conditions in Portugal in August and September 1795 did not reach him until May of the following year. Letters advising him on the United States market were often received more quickly if they were sent overland to Quebec and then brought down to Paspébiac, but in winter this was an expensive arrangement. Mail from Europe might travel through several ports on several ships before reaching Paspébiac and, naturally, some was delayed, lost or captured. To assure that his own correspondence got through, Robin sent copies on subsequent voyages and often by alternate routes. He arranged for the Quebec company which supplied him with many of his provisions to handle his local business and to open and forward his mail.

With regard to markets and weather, timing was very important. Sometimes Robin sent a ship off in June to try to be first to market, while on other occasions he would delay until ice began to form on Chaleur Bay so his fish would be last to arrive at its destination. At times he dispatched a ship before it was full, fearing that the fish already aboard would spoil before it reached port. Ships sent to the West Indies were timed to avoid the hurricane season. After pondering the latest rumours and his out-of-date mail, Robin often simply trusted to his own instinct; as he said, "Trade is a mere lottery." His luck served him well; he lost few ships and usually guessed correctly when the market would be best.

Charles Robin may have personally visited many of the Iberian ports earlier in his career for he knew his markets well. He was aware that some of his ships were too heavy to go over the bar in the harbour of Bilbao and that the bargemen there should not be trusted. He was familiar with seasonal wind conditions in the Straits of Gibraltar and knew the best unloading positions on the dock at Santander. When he was forced to shift his markets to the United States, he knew the most reliable merchants to deal with for he had spent a winter in Boston before the American Revolution. Although he had never visited the West Indies, he was knowledgeable about the weather conditions there.

The company captains played an important role in the commercial process. Robin supplied them with very detailed and precise instructions on every voyage and gave them many responsibilities. They were told to avoid port charges by bartering with the merchants without bringing the ship into the harbour. They could sell some of the fish in one port and then move on to another (Robin often suggested two or more alternative ports), with due care that the extra time spent did not spoil the fish. They had to make sure the fish was always unloaded quickly because of the danger of spoilage and because the merchants would often try to delay them until more ships arrived to drive the price down. The captains were expected to get the best possible deal, but, all things being equal, Robin preferred that they deal with the British merchants and brokers who lived in many of the Spanish and Portuguese ports. There was, indeed, a member of the Pipon family established in Bilbao.

The captains also had to procure ballast or, preferably, cargo for the return voyage; Portuguese salt was always in demand on the fisheries and Spanish wines and olives sold well at Quebec. The captains were charged too with handling mail, arranging insurance for the return trip, hiring new crewmen and asking ships along the way for the latest war news and market conditions. When they arrived back in Gaspé the captains were expected to work on the fisheries directing fishing and curing operations. In addition to either a salary or a percentage of the voyage's profits, they were usually given some of the fish to sell on their own.

Robin had to keep himself well informed on currency matters. He dealt in a great variety of British, French, Portuguese and Spanish coinage and assiduously advised his captains on what form of payment to accept. Normally the cargo sold for one-third cash and the remainder on short-term credit (three to six months) on which one-half per cent per month interest was credited to the company's account in London. Nervous about theft and piracy in Spain and Portugal, Robin instructed the captains to leave specie with the merchants until the day of departure and then hide it well on the ship. He preferred them to use specie to purchase cargo for the return voyage; cargo was not so susceptible to theft as money.

Occasionally Robin planned ruses for his captains to employ if they were stopped by pirates or warships. Inasmuch as most of his captains and crews were French-speaking Jerseymen, Robin, in one instance, told his captain that if stopped by the French he should claim to be a French ship bringing fish from Saint Pierre and Miquelon to Saint Malo; appropriate French

hats were provided the crew. In other cases, captains were told to fly the American flag to trick the French. Robin planned deceptions at the expense of British interests as well. Business was business and, as he said, "Our Master's Interests . . . ought to be no rule in the least." For a trading expedition to Dominica and Martinique he devised a means of registering considerably less cargo with the British authorities than his ship carried; the money he saved on unpaid duties amounted to a handsome profit. Though he failed, he tried to use a similar device in his American trade by forging ships' registers and customs-house papers to indicate that his ships had sailed from Massachusetts, thus avoiding registration fees and customs duties. He was also alert to any threat from foreigners, especially Americans, entering the bay to compete with him for fish. In 1790 he went to great lengths to expose a group of American traders who were operating on forged registries.⁹

Robin normally paid 10 to 12 shillings per quintal for good quality dried fish which he sold in Portugal for around 23 shillings. Although it is impossible to determine how much of the 100-per-cent markup was net gain, Robin normally paid less than other traders for fish caught in Chaleur Bay. Because of his prominence in the fishing industry, he seldom had to raise his price for cod in response to the local supply. In 1796, for example, the catch was poor; Robin did not increase his price yet still managed to deliver as much fish to Europe as he had the previous year. His fish always sold for more than the current price in Spain and Portugal where, he said, "Our Fish is known." He established a reputation for being able, except in wartime, to deliver fish of standard good quality regularly.

A temporary peace in Europe finally allowed Robin to retire in 1802. He had invested his own money and his whole life in the firm and he had always been more interested in building a family business than in becoming a rich man. When Robin died in Jersey in 1824 he left an estate worth about £22,000; his financial rewards had certainly been adequate.¹⁰

Business Methods

By the 1790s only three fish exporters were still operating in Gaspé. The Janvrins and Daniel McPherson worked on Gaspé Bay while Charles Robin had a monopoly on Chaleur Bay. Robin felt that the Gaspé fishing industry required a monopoly; he said after his retirement that "it is evident that if there is no competition at present it is because the place is poor."¹¹ Some historians¹² believe that only a large concern like Charles Robin and Company could efficiently market Gaspé fish in Europe; in this way, at least, the local inhabitants benefited from the effi-

ciency and size of the Robin organisation. Gaspé had suffered depopulation and starvation when trading ceased during the revolutionary war, but during the European wars of the 1790s Gaspé fish did not lose its market; however, the methods by which Charles Robin built his strong and efficient business were often unpleasant and pernicious for the people of Gaspé.

In order to ensure himself of a steady supply of dried fish at the lowest possible price, Robin introduced the truck system of credit into the Gaspé fisheries. After the fisherman caught and cured his fish, Robin would generally have his men inspect and weigh them. The value of the fish would then be credited against the accounts which the fisherman had run up at the Robin store in obtaining such imported necessities as food, clothing, fishing equipment and salt. The fisherman used fish as his medium of exchange to purchase store goods and Robin used goods (or "truck") as his medium to obtain fish. The fisherman procured many of his goods in advance on credit and sometimes, perhaps because of poor weather, he did not catch enough fish in the summer to pay off his accounts at the Robin store. In this case he often had to work for the Robins during the winter, repairing boats and making barrels. Some men were occasionally taken on as crew for Robin ships making their winter voyages to Europe. There were no other merchants on Chaleur Bay with whom the fisherman could trade; if he did not co-operate he could not sell his fish locally or buy salt to continue fishing. In effect, the truck system of credit allowed Robin to buy fish at a price no higher than what it took the fisherman to live on. An observer reported to Haldimand in 1783 that the system kept "the poor Inhabitants so much in debt as to oblige them to spend the whole Summer Season in fishing to pay up their arrears."¹³ The system also allowed Robin to compete successfully and consistently on the European market.

Another means by which Robin protected his investment in the fisheries was by gaining influence in the government. Lieutenant Governor Cox became, for a time, deeply in debt to Robin, and Cox's successor, Francis LeMaistre, was a Jerseyman whom Robin described as "an intimate Friend" of his brother Philip. With these connections Robin was able to secure a seat on the Gaspé Land Board, which had authority to grant lands to new settlers, and a term as judge of the Gaspé Court of Common Pleas.

Robin also allied himself with Felix O'Hara, long-time senior judge in the Gaspé district and the official who acted for the lieutenant governor in his absence. O'Hara's son Edward was the Gaspé representative in the legislative assembly in the 1790s. In 1796 Robin, concerned that Edward O'Hara might not

try for reelection, attempted to get one of his Quebec business associates to run, for "its a good Man & Friend we want." In the end O'Hara ran again and was reelected. Percé was selected as the only poll for the entire District of Gaspé, chosen presumably by either LeMaistre or Felix O'Hara, but Robin too may have had a say in the matter. Although he and his employees were not able to vote because of the distance, Robin was not worried for he knew Judge O'Hara had "a great Influence in that quarter." Edward O'Hara was nominated by Philip Robin Junior and received four of the five votes cast.¹⁴ (The population of the Gaspé district at this time was about 3,000 souls.)

O'Hara did not contest the election of 1800 and Robin decided to remain neutral and offend neither candidate; however, within a year he had fallen out with the winner and vowed to have him defeated at the next election, claiming he could deliver at least 30 votes. Robin retired to Jersey before the next election, but he had established a practice which was followed by his successors: for many years thereafter Charles Robin and Company controlled elections in Gaspé.

Robin's political influence did not win him many favours from the government, but he at least felt safe that his alliances would protect him from any government actions which could harm his interests. One such occasion arose in the 1780s when Robin was trying to secure his land holdings on Chaleur Bay.

A third means by which Charles Robin strengthened his position in the fishing industry was by gaining exclusive control of the best beach properties. In 1773 the British government had approved Robin's petition for land at Paspébiac, but war broke out before the governor at Quebec acted. When Robin returned after the war he found that the land around Paspébiac was being reserved for a settlement of Loyalists so he moved quickly to have Cox protect his interests. First, the land adjacent to the *barachois* at Paspébiac was set aside as a timber reserve, free to be exploited by any fisherman. Then in 1785 Robin was granted title to all the land at Paspébiac on which he had erected buildings besides an additional 1,000 acres at the mouth of the Cascapédia River. The latter was an important salmon fishery and the land Robin obtained at Paspébiac gave him control of the best beach property on Chaleur Bay. Furthermore, in 1786 the government decided that no more beaches would be granted to private individuals or firms on Chaleur Bay; the remaining ungranted shoreline was to remain in the public domain and left open for use by any British fisherman.¹⁵ This allowed Robin to enjoy his own private beach as well as the public beaches of the bay.

In 1793 he extended his holdings by having John Fiott arrange the purchase of the seigneurie of Grande Rivière from its owners in England. The seigneurie was a valuable acquisition for it was not far up the bay from the rich fisheries of Percé. The seigneurie had a good beach for curing fish and within a few years it was supplying Robin with a substantial proportion of his fish production. The only other privately held shore properties on Chaleur Bay were seigneuries which, for various reasons, remained undeveloped for many years.

Charles Robin has been accused of making it his policy "to discourage the cultivation of the Lands."¹⁶ Although he stood to benefit if agriculture did not expand in Gaspé, the accusation is too strong. Certainly Robin wanted to be sure that there would always be enough local residents catching and curing fish for him to buy and that there would be enough men to work on his own fishing boats, beaches and shipyard; if they were farming he could not depend on them. It was also important that the forests near his fishing posts not be cleared for agriculture as Robin needed a nearby source of timber for his buildings, fish-curing flakes and shipyard. But there is no evidence that Robin used his influence with either the government or the fishermen to actively discourage agriculture on Chaleur Bay.

The most important characteristic Robin used to build his company may have been the personal attention he brought to his business. He lived permanently and frugally on the fisheries and devoted his life to the company which bore his name. He seems to have had little interest in things outside the business; he was concerned about European politics only insofar as they could affect his markets. He never married and, beginning in 1783, he spent 19 consecutive years on the Chaleur Bay fisheries. During that period the only time he left the bay was January to March 1787 when he walked to Quebec and back to lobby with the legislative council about fishing regulations.

Robin invested in the fishing industry not only his life and his money, but great physical exertion as well. For example, on his first day on Chaleur Bay in 1767 he landed at Paspébiac at 3:00 p.m., sailed in a shallop for the Acadian village of Bonaventure at 5:00 p.m., arrived there at 8:00 p.m. and traded with the inhabitants throughout the night. He left at dawn and arrived back at Paspébiac by 8:00 a.m. to leave on another trading trip three hours later. It was 20 years later that he undertook his journey to Quebec; in 1787 he was 43 years old and had spent most of his life on or by the sea, yet he walked 300 miles each way in winter along the route which later became the Kempt Road.¹⁷ He kept up a strenuous pace even in his later years, working a seven-day week and spending much of his time afloat

in small, half-decked vessels in dirty weather trading for fish. Occasionally he would lend a hand loading and unloading fish or helping the shoremen cure their cod.

When he was not performing physical tasks, Robin's time was occupied by bookwork. He gave his personal and thorough attention to every possible detail of the business: watching over his shipyard, ordering provisions and equipment from Quebec and England, hiring workers, preparing cargoes, checking inventories and accounts, arranging insurance, instructing his captains and writing voluminous letters.

He was a superb example of the puritan ideal of hard work, self-denial and frugality. Nothing was wasted on Charles Robin and Company fisheries and he himself disputed the smallest apparent discrepancy with his suppliers at Quebec. He enjoyed no leisure time; the enforced idleness of winter was only to be endured impatiently. He complained constantly that his partners did not appreciate his sacrifices and that they did not support his enterprise sufficiently: ships arrived too late in spring, trade goods and provisions were poor in quality, vital correspondence was lost through carelessness and he was not supplied with enough skilled manpower.

The years of toil eventually resulted in stomach ulcers but Robin continued to pursue his life's work. He guided his company through the difficult war years and when he retired in 1802 the firm was in a position to take advantage of improved market conditions. Charles Robin and Company flourished in the 19th century by following the business methods implemented by its founder in the previous century.

Charles Robin and Company after 1802

Charles Robin's eldest nephew directed the company for the next 13 years and under his leadership it expanded enormously. Philip Robin Junior was only 32 years old when he took over the company, but he already had over 15 years' experience on the Chaleur Bay fisheries. After only a short peace, war resumed in Europe in 1803; hostilities continued for another ten years but this time the company was helped instead of harmed. Foodstuffs were scarce in war-torn Europe, fish prices rose and American competition was reduced; the company made good profits.¹⁸ Within a generation Charles Robin and Company was one of the most important enterprises on the entire Atlantic coast.

In 1811 Philip Robin Junior married Marthe Arbou of Percé by whom he had had an illegitimate son and daughter; there was no Protestant clergyman in the area at the time so the ceremony was conducted by a local justice of the peace. He left

her and the children behind when he retired in 1814; he later married another woman and lived in Switzerland where he died in 1841. Even after retirement, however, he appears to have retained a measure of control over the general direction of the family firm.

In his will Philip Robin Junior left £2,000 to his "natural daughter" Elizabeth, who had married John LeBoutillier; a £3,000 trust fund for her and her children, and a grant of £100 annually for Marthe Arbou. He made no recognition of Marthe as his wife. She had had the document witnessed at the 1811 ceremony, the son of the justice of the peace swore it was in the handwriting of Philip Robin Junior and many residents attested that she had always been known as "Dame Philip Robin"; however, the courts refused to recognize her as Philip's widow and legal heir to his estate. The estate totalled £33,000 and £15,000 (United States currency) besides furniture, goods and shares in Charles Robin and Company and in the Philip Robin Company.¹⁹

The year that Philip Robin Junior was married at Percé, Monseigneur J.-O. Plessis travelled through Gaspé and left the following description of Paspébiac and the Charles Robin company:

Paspébiac est l'endroit central du grand commerce de morue de MM Robin; ils y ont leur comptoir et leur principal magasin, et sont propriétaires d'une étendue de terre considérable. Les habitants, auxquels ils se sont rendus nécessaires, sont des espèces de cerfs entièrement dans leur dépendance; ils ont concédé à 33 d'entre'eux, 33 arpents de terre de front sur 10 de hauteur, en sorte que chaque colon n'ayant que dix arpents en superficie pour sa part, ne peut vivre qu'avec le secours de la pêche, et que se trouvant hors d'état d'en faire les avances nécessaires il est toujours endetté au bourgeois, toujours à sa disposition, exposé à être mis à bord de quelqu'un des bâtiments de la compagnie et à faire le voyage d'Europe en qualité de matelot, lorsque ses dettes sont rendues au point de ne pouvoir être acquittées par la pêche. Aussi n'est-il pas rare d'en trouver qui ont été à Jersey, à Lisbonne, à Cadix, à Messine, à Palerme.²⁰

After Philip Robin Junior's retirement the company was directed by his brother James and later by James's son Charles William Robin.²¹ A series of Jerseymen were appointed as managers at Paspébiac. In 1836 Abbé Ferland observed that the company

possède trois grands établissements, un à Percé, un à Grande-Rivière et le principal à Paspébiac. Aucun des propriétaires ne réside sur les lieux. M. Philippe Robin voyage en France et en

Italie; de là, par lettres, il communique ses plans et ses ordres, que M. Jacques Robin, résidant à Jersey, est chargé de faire exécuter. Dans le district de Gaspé, les affaires sont dirigées par six commis, placés deux par deux. Ces employés doivent être célibataires, ou bien, s'ils sont mariés, ils ne doivent point avoir leurs femmes auprès d'eux. On leur a imposé un règlement très sévère, entrant dans les plus minutieux détails de la conduite à tenir, et spécifiant même les plats qui, chaque jour, doivent être servis à la table. Si ce règlement était fidèlement observé, leur cuisine ne serait pas dispendieuse. Quoique les emoluments des commis soient faibles, jamais, cependant, maître n'a été mieux servi que ne le sont MM. Robin. Choisis vers l'âge de quatorze ans, et formés pendant quelques temps auprès des chefs, ces employés sont envoyés dans les établissements de Gaspé, où les intérêts de la compagnie semblent s'identifier avec les leurs. Tous les deux ans, un des commis de chaque magasin va passer l'hiver à Jersey, afin de rendre compte de l'état des affaires. Un des grands principes de MM Robin est de ne permettre aucune innovation.²²

Abbé Nérée Gingras, who served as a missionary at Percé from 1849 to 1856, said:

C'est la maison Robin et Compagnie qui fixe le prix [de la morue] sur toute la côte, et il faut bien que les habitants y passent; car ils sont tous endettés chez les marchands. Cette maison Robin est la plus puissante maison de commerce de tout le District de Gaspé. . . . Ils font chaque année des avances extraordinaires à tous les habitants et à tous les pêcheurs qui paient bien; chaque personne est obligée de solder son compte dans le mois de septembre, ou il n'est pas avancé l'année suivante. Ils prennent en paiement de la morue qu'ils vont peser eux-mêmes sur les graves; ils l'emportent eux-mêmes dans leur magasins. Ils ont à Percé au moins 300 hommes employés durant l'été. Tout se fait chez eux avec une grande honnêteté, et jamais personne n'a été trompé dans leur maison. Aussi les habitants ont une confiance illimitée en eux, ils sont les maîtres des élections et de toutes les affaires publiques. Quoique protestants, ils aiment beaucoup les catholiques et le prêtre catholique; ils préfèrent certainement à leur ministre; ils favorisent la Religion, donnent pour les églises; l'un des vieux Robins [Philip Robin Junior] a laissé à sa mort . . . £1000 sterling pour l'église de Percé, de la Grande-Rivière, de Bonaventure et de Paspébiac.²³

The following is a sample indenture for the Jerseymen who contracted to come out to work for the company:

13 March 1845

He shall not commit fornication, nor contract matrimony within the said term. At cards, dicetables, or any other unlawful game he shall not play. . . . He shall not haunt alehouses, taverns, playhouses, or any other places of debauchery.²⁴

Over the years the company strengthened its marketing position by tightening its standards for fish exports, strictly grading its fish into three categories: (1) Merchantable – the best fish, sent to Spain and Portugal; (2) Madeira – sent to that island; (3) West Indies – badly cured, salt burnt and broken fish, sent to the plantations, also the grade normally sold at Quebec.²⁵ The fish sent to Brazil were packed in 128-pound drums (the Portuguese quintal) shaped to be conveniently carried in pairs on mules into the Brazilian interior.²⁶

The first Paspébiac manager, William Fruing, wrote in 1828 that the company employed 330 men in Gaspé in the fishing season and that it had 1,640 tons (that is, nine square-rigged vessels built in the company's Paspébiac shipyard) of ocean-going shipping and 310 tons (seven schooners) for the coasting trade.²⁷ Undoubtedly, the company was large and powerful if one may judge from the number of complaints about its influence in judicial and political matters. In 1830 François Buteau estimated that no more than ten per cent of the fishermen on Chaleur Bay were not indebted to the company.²⁸ Abbé Ferland charged that if the people tried to sell their fish elsewhere, the company would call in its debt immediately. He said that the company would make no advances before a certain date even if the stores were full and the people starving. Since the people were paid in truck in advance, they could not put anything aside for the future. If they were owed more than they needed, they ended up taking payment in luxuries; thus some of the women were better dressed than those of the Quebec suburbs.²⁹ The competition provided by the LeBoutilliers and others beginning in the 1830s brought prices down a little, but the truck system of credit and the "company store" continued to prevail in Gaspé.

Many people believed that the creation of free ports in Gaspé would be advantageous. After 1861, imports landed at these ports were allowed to enter free of duty; the policy was intended as a favour to the fishing industry in lieu of the bounty which it had long wanted. This legislation generated a great increase in shipping traffic in Gaspé and as a result more ships were available to which local fishermen could sell fish for cash.

Fortin reported in 1864 that

*The old mode of doing business is gone, never to return, which was prevalent at a time when two or three great firms in the whole district, fixed the price beforehand, and on terms suitable to their own interests, and paid for that important article in provisions or goods, almost never with money. Now I have personal knowledge, that in the present year, there have been sales of fish to the amount of many thousands of pounds, ready cash.*³⁰

However, an 1865 report on the effect of the free ports claimed that although there had been a decline in local prices, "the chief advantage has gone to the principal merchants"; it was "useless for small capitalists to attempt competition" against the "Jersey houses" that "practically control the price of fish, which they regulate by an understanding among themselves." They outfitted the fishermen in advance "during winter on account of the succeeding season's fishing" and obtained "the whole season's catch for what it costs the fishermen to live through the year."³¹ The truck system of credit implemented by Charles Robin in 1767 lingered on in some parts of Gaspé into the 20th century.³²

In 1886 another Jersey firm engaged in the Gaspé fisheries amalgamated with Charles Robin and Company to form the Charles Robin Collas Company. In 1910 further changes produced the Robin, Jones & Whitman Company with its headquarters in Halifax instead of Jersey.³³ The firm is still operating under that name today, its headquarters at Paspébiac; however, the people of Gaspé still refer to the firm as "The Robins."

The impact of the fisheries on Gaspé was total. The pattern of life was moulded by one industry and it was controlled by only a few powerful companies. In the case of Charles Robin and his company, the fisheries dominated the lives of the managers as well as the workers; continued success in the fishing industry required management to devote full and constant attention to the business.

The predominance of the fisheries in Gaspé produced a society quite different from that prevailing in the rest of the province. In 1832, while debating the Gaspé fisheries in the assembly, Louis-Joseph Papineau asserted that the Province of Lower Canada was "essentially agricultural," that it should remain that way, and that the fisheries should be given no encouragement.³⁴ In the face of this sort of attitude, the people of Gaspé could hardly feel that they were part of the Province of Lower Canada.

Part III The People of Gaspé

The People of Gaspé: Introduction

The Population consists of a mixture of the Descendants of the Acadians of Nova Scotia, of English, Scotch & Irish Fishermen & other settlers from the United Kingdom; there are even Individuals from the Southern Countries of Europe to be found amongst them, who have found their way thither in the course of the communication existing between Gaspé & those countries in carrying on the Trade in salted Fish, which is their principal occupation; this mixture in the composition of the Population of the District of Gaspé implies a difference in Religion, as well as in other particulars.

Lord Aylmer

Governor General Aylmer was writing to the Colonial Office explaining how difficult it would be to get the people of Gaspé to formulate a common opinion on whether to remain in the Province of Lower Canada or join New Brunswick.¹ There was little sense of community feeling in Gaspé; the people had no sense of common identity. The population consisted of an unintegrated collection of people of diverse origins.

There were Indians on the Restigouche, Cascapédia and other rivers. There were a few French families which had been in Gaspé before the Conquest and stayed on under the new British régime. There were Acadians who had fled to the Restigouche to escape deportation and who subsequently settled along Chaleur Bay. There were Basques who were so expert at curing fish. In the 19th century, French Canadians came down the St. Lawrence River from the parishes near Quebec City to settle on the north shore at Gaspé at such coves as Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Rivière-la-Madeleine and Rivière-au-Renard. There were Guernseymen and Jersey men who were Protestant but spoke French and sometimes English. Some English-speaking people immigrated directly from Britain while others came from Upper and Lower Canada; some came from the thirteen colonies before the Revolution and many more came as Loyalists after the Revolution. There were also the Irish who settled around Percé, Douglastown and Cap des Rosiers and the Scots who settled at Hopetown and elsewhere. There were itinerant Jewish traders and a few scattered Italians, Portuguese, Swedes, Norwegians, Dutch and Germans who found their way to Gaspé.

This diverse population showed little enthusiasm to integrate. The different groups seldom came to blows – most of the complaints about lawlessness in Gaspé involved sailors who came for the summer to carouse, brawl and work on the fisheries.

There was some intermarriage between the groups and most of the population depended on the fisheries and had similar needs and interests, but apathy and poor communications deterred the creation of any integrated community feeling in Gaspé.

The French

When James Wolfe left the Gaspé coast in September 1758 he took with him most of the population of the fishing posts at Gaspé Bay, Pabos and Grande-Rivière. Although these people were shipped to French ports in Normandy the same year, a few of them, like François Ayotte and Olivier Michel, were back in Gaspé by 1765.¹ A number of the residents, especially from Pabos and Grande-Rivière, hid in the woods and were left behind by the British because they refused Wolfe's offer of safe passage to France. Of these, some, like the seigneur Lefebvre de Bellefeuille, made their way to Quebec. The others chose to remain on Chaleur Bay where they waited out the war.²

For several years after the British conquest of Gaspé, life must have been very hard for the original French settlers living there. For those who decided to remain at Gaspé Bay, Pabos and Grande-Rivière, some buildings and livestock no doubt survived the British attack and there would still have been land cleared for gardening. They probably did little fishing for cod for fear of being seen by British ships and, of course, there would have been no goods brought in from the outside world.

Life must have been much worse for the large number of Acadians who had fled northward to the bottom of Chaleur Bay. They were forced to live like the Indians on fish, game, berries and roots although the arrival of about 270 French soldiers and sailors in the spring of 1760 brought some relief. The small French force was defeated by the British in the summer of 1760 and the British allowed the refugees to keep some of the French military provisions from the captured supply ships; nevertheless, Charles Robin recorded in his journal of 1768 that there had been much starvation among the Acadians in 1759–60.³

The French force was repatriated to France in the autumn though a few of the soldiers may have stayed to settle on the bay. One of the senior French officers, M. Bazagier, reported to the king when he arrived in France in December 1760 that 160 Acadian families totalling 1,003 people were camped at the mouth of the Restigouche River.⁴ At about the same time two of the British officers, Major Elliott and Captain Macartney, reported to their superior officers at Quebec that the Acadians and Indians at the Restigouche could be trusted to keep the peace. Indeed, while the British had destroyed the French warships, weapons and ammunition in the summer of 1760, they had sold "a small schooner" to the Acadians and left them a quantity of provisions.⁵

Bazagier also noted that besides the Acadian refugees there were "17 familles normandes et metifs," totalling 100 people, scattered along the coast of Gaspé. These were, of course, the

original French inhabitants of Gaspé who had declined Wolfe's offer of repatriation. In the summer of 1761, a census by Pierre du Calvet of the population between Mal Bay and Paspébiac shows 17 families – such as the Grenier, David and Langlois families – all of whom appear to be the original French settlers living at Mal Bay, Grande-Rivière, Pabos, Port-Daniel and Paspébiac. At Bonaventure were another eight families, some of them original settlers and some of them Acadians. At Cascapédia (New Richmond) a further 13 families were all apparently Acadian. In all, du Calvet counted 150 Europeans on the north shore of Chaleur Bay. There were no Europeans at the Restigouche. Thus, by 1761 the Acadians had left their refugee camp near the Restigouche Indian village and begun to spread out along the bay.⁶

Those Acadians who had been camped along the Restigouche for two or three years were anxious to settle new land and in early 1761 they had asked Governor Murray of Quebec for permission to stay. Murray did not give them a clear-cut answer, but he did not forbid them settling in Gaspé.⁷ As a result the Acadians spread out along both shores of Chaleur Bay where du Calvet found them in the summer of 1761; however, few of the 1,000 refugees reported by Bazagier settled on the north (Gaspé) shore of the bay.

The Acadian population on both shores was severely reduced later in the year. Du Calvet says that after he completed his census, he took two shiploads of Acadians back to Quebec with him. He reported to Governor Murray that more Acadians wanted to leave for all they had to live on was fish and roots.⁸ The additional population trying to live at the head of Chaleur Bay taxed the local fish and game resources and this, in turn, strained relations between Acadians and Indians. In autumn 1761 Captain Mackenzie of Fort Cumberland, concerned about the possibility of the Acadians rearming and engaging in piracy, hurriedly led a force to Chaleur Bay. He had no time to visit the north shore, but he rounded up 250 Acadians from the south shore and transported them back to Nova Scotia.⁹

Mackenzie reported that he had left behind on the south shore a further 373 Acadians. New villages were quickly established there as most Acadians evidently found the Gaspé shore less attractive for settlement.¹⁰ A census of Gaspé taken in 1765 shows only about 160 French residents on the north shore of Chaleur Bay and another 80 around Gaspé Bay.¹¹ There were no further deportations of Acadians from Chaleur Bay after 1761 and that year can be taken as the beginning of permanent Acadian settlement in Gaspé.

By 1777 there were reported to be 400–500 French residents in Gaspé,¹² including 81 Acadians whom Charles Robin brought out on his ships from France (via Jersey) to Chaleur Bay in 1774.¹³ Even after the settlers had been established in Gaspé for many years, poverty was still prevalent. In 1786 the Loyalists were shocked by the “extreme poverty and wretchedness” of those French who were employed in the fishery and Charles Robin wrote of them living in “poor miserable Huts, which would make you shudder did you but see them.” Yet according to Nicholas Cox, the Acadians were “a sober, industrious people.”¹⁴

Dependence on the fishery was usually recognized as the principal cause of poverty among the French and the missionary Abbé Blais wanted legislation enacted to shorten the fishing season and thereby force the people to cultivate their lands.¹⁵ Felix O'Hara tried to encourage the French to attend more to agriculture, noting that the Loyalists would often ask for excessive tracts of land while an Acadian family of ten would typically ask for only 150 acres. Around Tracadigash (Carleton), at the bottom of Chaleur Bay where fishing was poor and the season short, Abbé Ferland noted in 1836 that the Acadians, who predominated there, were principally devoted to agriculture and were much better off. Later, Abbé Gingras at Percé constantly urged his parishioners to cultivate their lands, but he found them lazy, spendthrift and drunken, and felt that they would always be poor.¹⁶

A few individuals did better than others, one being Léon Roussy. Du Calvet said Roussy had been *captain of a large merchant ship, and, after having been taken prisoner by the English, and put on board an English vessel, had risen, with the other French prisoners, upon the English crew, and, seizing the vessel, had carried it to the Bay of Gaspé, and there lived in a lawless manner among the Indians.*¹⁷ In the census of 1765 he was listed as a resident at Paspébiac where he was apparently the wealthiest landholder. He owned at that time one ox – there were only five on the bay – two cows, three bulls and one horse. In August 1766 he was granted title to 200 acres at Paspébiac.¹⁸ Henry Mounier, a French Protestant who had been a merchant at Quebec during the French régime, was given a mandamus for 10,000 acres on Chaleur Bay in 1764. There he operated a fishery for a few years, but was forced out of business by American privateer attacks in 1779 and 1781.¹⁹ Various Quebec merchants, like François Buteau, traded in Gaspé and owned small fishing operations there. The seigneur of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts was Louis Lemieux and the seigneur of Grand Etang was Michel

Lesperance of the parish of Saint-Thomas-de-Montmagny. Georges and Ferdinand Boissonault of Quebec operated a fishing establishment at Bonaventure where they had 120 boats in 1850.²⁰

Acadians were regularly appointed judges in local Courts of Common Pleas, but not in numbers proportionate to their population. In 1829 they claimed that although they accounted for eight-ninths of the population on Chaleur Bay, only three of 24 justices of the peace were French.²¹ In the 1850s the government allowed municipalities to issue public documents in only one language as long as it was "without detriment to any of the Inhabitants." In 1856 the entire township of Carleton proclaimed the sole use of French.²²

The French population of Gaspé increased with great rapidity, mostly through natural reproduction, but there were a few additions from outside the area. In the 1780s Charles Robin began the practise of importing men from Quebec for summer work on the fisheries. Early in the 19th century some of these French Canadians began to settle around the small coves of the north shore of the Gaspé coast – Cap Chat, Matane, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and Rivière-au-Renard – places they passed every year travelling to their summer work. In 1860, 25 Acadian families moved from Rustico, Prince Edward Island, to the Restigouche and Matapédia rivers and more families may have followed in succeeding years.²³

Intermarriage with other groups also added to the French population. Some of the French inhabitants married Roman Catholic Irish immigrants and others married French-speaking Protestant Jerseymen. There were few conversions to Protestantism and the children of these intergroup marriages were generally French speaking and Roman Catholic; nevertheless, the priests tried to discourage mixed marriages.²⁴ There were also marriages to European sailors who worked on the ships which plied between Gaspé and the fish markets of the world; for example, the large Joseph family of Gaspé is descended from a marriage in 1802 between a local girl and Benjamin Joseph Killer, a sailor from Portugal.²⁵ There was also a substantial Basque-speaking population on Chaleur Bay: the Castilloux, Chapados, Aspirot, Roussy, Delarosbille, Otsenat and Duguay families were all of Basque origin and many had been in Gaspé prior to 1760. In 1792 Charles Robin wrote a merchant in the Basque district of Spain that "our fish ought to suit your market, it being cured partly by Basque People settled here when the Country was under the Dominion of France & retains to this day the Name of Morue Basque." The Basques readily intermarried with the Acadians and became French-speaking.²⁶

Most intergroup marriages were between people who lived in the same village. Although these marriages resulted in the integration of a number of people of diverse national origins, many divisions remained. The mixture of Irish and French at Percé posed problems for the Roman Catholic missionaries there; the church tried both French and Irish priests in that settlement.²⁷ There were divisions among the French as well. Abbé Ferland, writing in 1836, claimed that, "Quoique voisins, les Acadiens de Bonaventure et les Paspébiacs ont peu de rapports ensemble. De mémoire d'homme, l'on n'a point vu un garçon d'une de ces missions épouser une fille appartenant à l'autre."²⁸ In 1811 Monseigneur Plessis noted that many of the pre-Conquest inhabitants of Gaspé had married Indian women. These were the people whom Bazagier had called "metis" in 1760. Plessis said that the mixed blood of their descendants

*met entr'eux et les autres habitants de la Baie des Chaleurs une différence capitale. Ceux du bas de la paroisse de Caraquet partagent cette ignominie; les étrangers, les Acadiens surtout, se croiraient déshonorés en s'alliant à ces descendants de sauvages, et ne les regardent qu'avec un certain mépris.*²⁹

Thus, the French population of Gaspé was not as well integrated as the degree of intermarriage might lead one to believe.

The French population was attentively served by the Roman Catholic Church. There was a missionary, Père Etienne, on Chaleur Bay as early as 1760; indeed, there scarcely seems to have been a year when there was no missionary in Gaspé. The famous Mathurin Bourg, the first Acadian priest, served on Chaleur Bay from 1773 to 1794; his family lived at Tracadigash (Carleton).³⁰ He was followed by a long series of missionaries who ministered to the Roman Catholics of Gaspé – French, Irish and Micmac – despite many hardships. By 1833 there were three full-time priests on the Gaspé coast.³¹ Several bishops paid pastoral visits to Gaspé – Monseigneurs Hubert (1795), Plessis (1811, 1812, 1821), and Turgeon (1836, 1841, 1852).³²

The difficulties experienced by the Gaspé missionaries demonstrate the lack of community feeling in the population. In their correspondence with the bishop at Quebec, the missionaries often commented on their parishioners' heavy drinking, lack of piety, and Sunday fishing, though there were also compliments on their personal generosity and hospitality.³³ The priests also complained that the people were unable to organise the parish, to build a chapel or a presbytery, or to provide food, shelter and fuel for the priests on a full-time basis. Plessis noted that it took 15 years for the residents of Percé to build even "une misérable chapelle de bois, où il ne fait bon qu'autant qu'il ne pleut pas dehors." Fifteen years after Plessis's visit, the priest at Percé

had to leave to avoid starvation.³⁴ Parishioners were supposed to pay tithes of a half-quintal of cod for each fishing barge they owned, but they seldom did so.³⁵

The missionaries seem to have had the least trouble in the more homogeneously Acadian parishes of Carleton and Bonaventure though there were problems of drunkenness there too.³⁶ The priests found the least cooperation in the more heterogeneous parishes of Percé, Port-Daniel and Paspébiac. Even stern warnings from the bishop of Quebec failed to prompt the residents of these parishes to provide for their priests.

The British

Not long after New France became British, a flood of British adventurers, merchants, traders and fishing entrepreneurs began to appear in Gaspé. Some, like Captain Joseph Deane of the Royal Navy, were granted great parcels of land and never once saw them: Deane's land in Gaspé Bay remained unused until it was finally reclaimed by the crown in the 1820s.¹ According to the 1765 census, there were already about 50 British people resident in Gaspé² and many more came to fish for cod every summer. As early as 1764 the Admiralty expressed concern that these "mixed & tumultuous Multitudes" would become a threat to law and order: it was usually the outsiders who were blamed for crime in Gaspé. In the early 1770s a group of Rhode Islanders came to establish fishing stations at Mal Bay and Pointe-Saint-Pierre. Although they came before the Revolution, their allegiance to the British crown was questioned and they were carefully watched throughout the war.³

One of the first English-speaking families to settle in Gaspé was that of Felix O'Hara, first reported in 1764 operating a fishing establishment at Gaspé Bay.⁴ In the 1765 census his household consisted of his wife, two sons, two servants and four employees. In 1767 he and some partners were granted land for the erection of buildings required for their fishery,⁵ but fishing became less important to O'Hara as the government endowed him with increased judicial responsibilities. In 1765 he had been made a justice of the peace, in 1779 he became the first judge of the Gaspé Court of Common Pleas, for which he was paid £100 annually, and in 1795 he became the first judge of the Provincial Court of Gaspé at £200 per year. Also, when the lieutenant governor was absent (which was most of the time) O'Hara stood in for him and for many years he was a collector of customs at Gaspé Bay.⁶ One of his sons, Major Hugh O'Hara, succeeded him as collector at Gaspé Bay and died there in 1818 as a result of helping the sick left behind by a disease-stricken ship. Another son, Oliver, served as customs agent at New Carlisle while a third, Edward, was the first member elected to represent Gaspé in the assembly of Lower Canada.⁷ The family held many public offices in Gaspé and was trusted and respected by everyone.

In May 1783 Governor Haldimand sent Captain Justus Sherwood and a company of Loyalists on a tour of Gaspé to reconnoitre its potential as an area for Loyalist settlement. The governor's desire to send Loyalists into the area may have been prompted by his long-time wish to see his seigneurie of Pabos and Chaleur Bay occupied. Sherwood's guide was Felix O'Hara, who said that he fairly pointed out the disadvantages as well as

the advantages of Gaspé. Although the captain reported that perhaps 1,500 families could be settled on the coast south of Gaspé Bay, he did not find the climate attractive nor was he impressed by the life led by the established Acadian residents. Sherwood felt that these residents were impeded by the question of unsettled Indian land ownership and that *this Country never can flourish while under the monopoly of a few designing Traders, who make it their study to discourage the cultivation of the lands, and to keep the poor Inhabitants so much in debt as to oblige them to spend the whole Summer Season in fishing to pay up their arrears. This is the case at present with the poor Inhabitants of Bay Chaleurs, and I think the only reason why so fine a Country is generally reported to be uninhabitable except for a few poor Fishermen.*⁸

(Sherwood later asked that some land on which Acadians were living be given to him; when this request was refused he decided to settle on the upper St. Lawrence instead.) It was years before the Indian lands question was settled and the hold of the large fish merchants on the local economy became more monopolistic during the following decades.

In all, probably 600 Loyalists and disbanded soldiers eventually came to Gaspé.⁹ Governor Haldimand promised them land and rations in Gaspé equal to those he intended to supply Loyalists settling on the upper St. Lawrence River for he considered settlement desirable "in consideration of the great National advantage to be derived from the Fisheries" there. Felix O'Hara, on the other hand, always felt that the fisheries distracted men from the superior advantages of agriculture.¹⁰ Nevertheless, although more rations were expended for settlement in Gaspé, few Loyalists went and fewer stayed.

It was not until the following February (1784) that lots on Chaleur Bay were advertised among the Loyalists awaiting resettlement and not until June 1784 that the first Loyalists left Quebec. Lieutenant Governor Cox accompanied the three brigs and six smaller vessels which brought 315 people to Chaleur Bay. After a rough passage of more than two weeks they stopped at Paspébiac, but the Loyalists could not agree upon settlement there, so Cox directed the flotilla on to Bonaventure where they found the beach and some of the best land in the possession of the Acadians. Although some wanted to dispossess the Acadians, Cox decided that they should move back a few leagues toward Paspébiac. There they founded their town of Little Paspébiac (later New Carlisle). Felix O'Hara, working now as a surveyor, laid out the town. The vessels were immediately sent back to Quebec to return with provisions and baggage before winter arrived. Additional small groups came to Gaspé

throughout the summer on the supply ships. The total number of Loyalists sent to Chaleur Bay is put at either 406 or 435.¹¹ Cox found them quarrelsome and difficult to please. It was not until 10 July that they first swore fealty and drew for their one-acre lots in the town – too late to plant gardens that year.¹²

Haldimand's plan was that New Carlisle would be a "fishing town" while a second settlement should be established on Gaspé Bay for "Artificers & those not engaged in the Fishery." The second settlement was called Douglstown, probably after Sir Charles Douglas, Officer Commanding the Royal Navy station at Halifax at the time. About 54 families were settled at Douglstown, bringing the total number of Loyalists sent to Gaspé in 1784 to around 600.¹³

Some of the land on which Loyalists were later settled was in the seigneuries of Deneau (Port-Daniel) and Restigouche, but it was not until 1797 that the government finally completed arrangements to purchase the seigneuries and thus clear the title.¹⁴ Allotting land in the country inland from Paspébiac was delayed until 1785 and clearing did not begin until 1786. Cox and O'Hara made sure that land grants to the Loyalists did not hamper Charles Robin's privileges on the beach at Paspébiac or on the land behind the shore which he used as a source for timber "for the use of the Fishery."¹⁵

All lots were drawn for; military officers did not get first choice but were given more land.¹⁶ At New Carlisle the officers appear to have received a basic 300 or 400 acres whether they were captains, lieutenants or ensigns. The men who received the most acreage were schoolmasters; one, with four children, got 750 acres and the other, married but childless, got 550 acres. The others generally were given a basic grant of 100 acres and an extra 100-acre lot for each older child. Four unmarried labourers were given only 50 acres each, but all four were choice front lots. Many of the unmarried, discharged, rank-and-file soldiers were given country lots, perhaps because they had come down from Quebec later. In any case, these men and apparently others with better lots did not stay long – perhaps only as long as the rations lasted – but sold their location tickets for small sums and left for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Canada.¹⁷

Most of the Gaspé Loyalists appear to have come from New York, some having been tenants of Isaac Mann in the northern part of that state. A large proportion of them had seen military service with Jessup's and Butler's Rangers or with Burgoyne. The Gaspé Loyalists were said to have received more food and clothing rations per capita than others established in British North America. They were also provided with feed for livestock,

as well as tools to clear and cultivate their lands, seeds to sow, arms and bedding, and other essentials of everyday living. Provision of rations had to be extended until at least 1787 because of the delays in surveying, allotting and cultivating the land. The government also arranged for a former army surgeon's mate to settle with the Loyalists as their doctor. In October 1785, Benjamin Hobson began a career which was to last for about 35 years as schoolmaster at New Carlisle; his annual salary in 1785 was £25.¹⁸

The only family to establish itself as a true Loyalist élite in Gaspé was that of Isaac Mann who, as a resident of New York, fought for the British in the revolutionary war for a short time as a militia colonel. Imprisoned and subsequently banished to Canada, he applied in 1780 (in the name of the whole family) for land on Chaleur Bay and received 2,000 acres. After the war the rest of the family came to Gaspé, including a daughter and five sons, John, Thomas, Isaac Junior, Edward Isaac, and William. Isaac Mann Senior, a widower at the time of relocation, died in 1791.

As former officers, the five sons got at least 400 acres each. With their original grant and the purchase of location tickets of Loyalists who left the bay, the Manns became the major landholders of the area, yet they still appealed to the government for more land. The Mann brothers filled such local positions as justice of the peace, sheriff and members of the Gaspé Land Board. They quarrelled constantly with the Indians and Acadians and because of their powerful position, usually succeeded in getting their own way. In 1819 Edward Isaac was described as "all powerful in those remote places [Chaleur Bay], and holds over the Petitioners and other Inhabitants, as well as over the Indians, a tyrannical Dominion." When Monseigneur Plessis visited the Restigouche Indians in 1812, he called Mann an "exploiter" of the Indians, but when Anglican Archdeacon George Mountain visited Chaleur Bay in 1824 he found Mann to be "a decent kind of Man." He says that Mann was "owner & Master of a tending-vessel to the W. Indies etc.," but he also observed that Mann's house was "comfortless" and his farm buildings "make-shift."¹⁹ The Manns wielded considerable influence on Chaleur Bay but never became rich. Gaspé offered little opportunity for Loyalists to build a fortune nor was any Gaspé Loyalist ever chosen to serve in either the legislative assembly or the legislative council of the province.

Lieutenant Governor Cox and Judge O'Hara were frequently exasperated by the troublesome behaviour of the Loyalists. Before they arrived O'Hara had hoped that "their Examples of Industry and Regularity . . . may produce happy Consequences"

among the local Acadians. They had scarcely landed when he wrote that "to please these discontented people will be the hardest Task I ever undertook." Later he described them as being "unsteady." Cox found that it was the officers (who, as Haldimand pointed out, "should influence the lower people to an observance of Regularity and good order") who were the worst offenders. Haldimand suggested that Cox cut off their provisions for a time to make the Loyalists more tractable. Even Charles Robin, who might have welcomed the arrival of an English-speaking group on the bay, noted as late as 1798 that "these ignorant people have no Idea of Laws & Regulations, their caprice is their Rule."²⁰

Perhaps half of the Loyalists left Gaspé realising that there was no fortune to be made there; most of the residents of Douglastown were reported gone by 1811 – replaced by Irish emigrants.²¹ The Loyalists who remained did not attempt to set themselves apart from the rest of the English-speaking population and some intermarried with the French-speaking people, their children becoming Roman Catholic and sometimes French-speaking.²²

The British population of Gaspé was divided by religion and even language so one can even talk of intermarriage within the British group. For example, the Irish were English in language but Roman Catholic in religion; the Jerseymen and Guernsey-men were French in language but Protestant in religion; many of the Channel Islanders were Anglican but some were Methodist, and the Scots were English-speaking but generally Presbyterian in denomination.

The Anglican Church was slow to send missionaries to serve the British population of Gaspé. Bishop Inglis of Nova Scotia visited Gaspé Bay in 1789 and reported that there was no church there. The Anglicans of Paspébiac requested a minister in 1801, but it was not until 1819 that the first missionary, John Suddard, was sent to Gaspé Bay. A second minister, Richard Knagg, was sent in 1821 to serve the English and Jersey population of Chaleur Bay. As a result of his first visit as Bishop of Quebec (1837), George J. Mountain created a third mission covering the coast between Gaspé Bay and Chaleur Bay (that is, Mal Bay, Percé and Cape Cove). All the missionaries were supported by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Mountain paid a total of six visits to Gaspé, two as archdeacon and four as bishop (1824, 1826, 1837, 1853, 1859 and 1862).²³

The Channel Islanders had a Methodist chapel at St. George's Cove (near Grande-Grève) early in the 19th century that was served, apparently, by a preacher who resided at

Gaspé Bay. When Archdeacon Mountain visited there in 1824 the Methodists begged him to hold services in their chapel. Mountain was reluctant to do so, but was eventually persuaded. Since many of the Jersey men and Guernsey men could not understand English, he preached in French. Mountain stopped at St. George's Cove on later visits to Gaspé (1826 and 1837) and again preached to the Methodist Channel Islanders in French.²⁴

A third religious group among the British population were the Presbyterians, most of whom were Scottish. They had a mission in the Hopetown area by 1830 and at New Richmond by 1847.²⁵

Religious differences seldom led to any serious conflicts; however, in 1819 there was trouble between the Channel Islanders and the Irish at Grande-Grève and St. George's Cove; the Roman Catholic cemetery and church were desecrated and the Methodist chapel was demolished and the preacher roughed up.²⁶ Although there was little strife and some intermarriage, religious differences continued to divide the British population of Gaspé throughout the 19th century.

The Indians

In the historical period Micmac Indians were reported at various places along the coast, including Matane, Mont-Louis, Gaspé and Pointe-St-Pierre,¹ but the main concentrations were at the mouths of the Cascapédia and Restigouche rivers. These rivers were the best salmon streams on the Gaspé peninsula and salmon was the Micmacs' most important single dietary staple. In winter the bands normally dispersed up the river valleys to hunt, but every summer they gathered at the river mouths, especially at Pointe de la Mission near the mouth of the Restigouche. Here they had a rough chapel which had been served, off and on, since the 1730s by French Roman Catholic missionaries. At one time the village and church had been on the south side of the river, but they were moved to the north shore in the English period. Two churches were reported on the river in 1775. A new church, erected at Pointe de la Mission in 1791, became the focal point for all the Micmacs of Gaspé.²

The Micmacs had always wanted their own resident priest, but the missionaries complained that the Indians could not afford even to keep the church or presbytery in good order. As early as 1798 the government was providing an annual stipend of £50 to the church for a "Missionary to the Restigouche Indians." This was a considerable sum at that time – the government schoolmaster at New Carlisle was receiving only £25.³ The stipend was increased to £75 in 1816, but it was not until 1843 that the church sent a full-time missionary to the Restigouche Indians.⁴ The missionaries were habitually more interested in the European population than in the Indians even though they were paid to serve the Micmacs, and when they did minister to the Indians they were habitually careful to serve the government's interests. As Monseigneur Plessis remarked to the governor, the missionary to the Restigouche Indians was fluent in Micmac and thus better able to promote religion, morality and fidelity to their government.⁵

In 1760 the Micmac population on the Restigouche was estimated at 250, but in the 1765 census only 87 Indians were listed. By 1820 the figure rose to 194 on the Restigouche and 41 on the Cascapédia; 20 years later 353 Indians were reported at Pointe de la Mission. In 1858 there were 473 on the Restigouche reserve and 83 at the Maria reserve on the Cascapédia.⁶ The inconsistencies in these figures may have been due to many Indians being absent hunting and the apparent population increase later possibly resulted from the Micmacs becoming sedentary, permanent residents in a village where they could be counted. Also, in the French period there was some intermarriage between the Micmacs and the French and

some of the offspring of these unions chose the Indian way of life and were counted as Micmacs.⁷

Before the Europeans arrived, hunting was almost as important to the Micmac economy as fishing. At first hunting was promoted because traders occasionally came to bargain for furs, as Charles Robin did on his early voyages.⁸ Later traders brought liquor and some witnesses claim that the resultant intoxication ruined the fur trade for the Indians became less willing and less able to go into the woods in the winter. The Gaspé fur trade was never large and it soon virtually disappeared. One witness predicted that due to degradation and intoxication the Indians too would soon disappear.⁹

Fishing thus became even more important to the Indians both as a replacement for meat in their diet and as a staple to trade to visiting merchants. Charles Robin wrote in his 1767 journal that the Indians fished from their canoes and then dried their fish on flakes like the Europeans; this fish would have been for their own use. For the trade they speared salmon, but eventually fishing, especially for salmon, declined as a result of depletion and government restrictions.

The band was able to subsist through other employment, some of the men, for example, hiring themselves out for labouring jobs on the Kempt Road or cutting timber for lumber merchants. Some of the women went to work as domestics in Dalhousie and Campbelltown. Much was written about assisting the band to learn agriculture, but the government never acted on the suggestions; however, most of the Indians kept small gardens and 400 acres were reported under cultivation in 1858. They also kept some livestock and poultry and continued to make maple sugar in the spring.¹⁰

A commission of inquiry reported in 1858 that the Restigouche Indians "have been left very much to their own resources, having never received any presents, and but a scanty share of the Provincial Parliamentary Grant."¹¹ The grant included such assistance as salaries for the missionaries and the schoolmaster, and occasional aid in times of hardship.

When the Restigouche Indians inquired in 1796 why they received no presents like the other Indians, they were told that, unlike the others, they would have to come to Quebec.¹² In 1841 or 1842 three members of the band council went to England to see the queen about an internal wrangle in the council and about getting a grant for the construction of a new church. As a result of their visit, the governor general sent them £30 for the church.¹³

The school on the Restigouche reserve was opened in 1856. The government paid \$200 annually for the schoolmaster's salary but, according to the 1858 report, the schoolhouse was "built principally by the Indians." A school was established on the Maria reserve on the Cascapédia River in 1864, the teacher there being paid \$220 per annum. The children were taught in English. Although Micmac was certainly still the Indians' first language, many of them spoke English and a few spoke French.¹⁴

The government policy towards the Indians of Gaspé was not one of "benign neglect"; it was simple lack of interest. Two issues which particularly vexed the Micmacs of Gaspé were the government's handling of the disputes between Indians and Europeans over land claims, and the salmon fisheries.

The Indian Land Question

After the British troops left Chaleur Bay in the autumn of 1760, the commanding officer of Fort Cumberland on the Chignecto Isthmus, Captain Roderick Mackenzie, received a letter from Joseph Glaude, chief of the Restigouche Micmacs. The letter, delivered by the chief's son and nephew, was dated 7 January 1761. Mackenzie found it very difficult to understand because of its strange grammar. It was written in French, but there is no indication whether Chief Glaude wrote it himself or had someone else write it for him.

The letter indicates that the Indians realised that the British had replaced the French as the political masters of the area. They asked for British assistance in the form of provisions and protection from the Acadians whom they said were trespassing on their hunting and fishing grounds. They also claimed that the Acadians in the area were constructing new boats with the intention of working as pirates raiding shipping in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. This claim was exaggerated, but it indicates that the bad feeling between Acadians and Micmacs dates from very early. When the Acadians wrote Mackenzie a little later, they advised him not to listen to the Indians for they could not be trusted.

On 23 February 1761 Captain Mackenzie sent the two young Micmacs back to the Restigouche with an answer that they should be assured that "the great King, George, is willing to receive you into his Protection and Friendship; otherwise I would not write an answer to your letter, as I do." Mackenzie said he was "well pleased with the information you sent me as to the vessels the Acadians are building, and you may be assured that you will be well Rewarded for any services you do to the English." He promised them that English ships would be sent to

destroy the Acadian ships and to prevent them from interfering in the Micmacs' hunting and fishing. Mackenzie's superior officer in Halifax approved the reply to the Indians and in the autumn MacKenzie visited Nepisiguit (now Bathurst, New Brunswick), Caraquet and Shippegan with an armed force and removed some Acadians from this southern shore of Chaleur Bay. He did not visit the Restigouche or the north shore of the bay because of the lateness of the season nor did he fulfill his promise of protection.¹⁵

On 7 October 1763 the king issued his proclamation concerning the future administration of his new territories recently acquired from the French. The proclamation created the new colony of Quebec and provided for a governor and council. The new colony was

*bounded on the Labrador Coast by the River St. John, and from thence by a Line drawn from the Head of that River through the Lake St. John, to the South end of the Lake Nipissim; from whence the said Line, crossing the River St. Lawrence, and the Lake Champlain, in 45. Degrees of North Latitude, passes along the High Lands which divide the Rivers that empty themselves into the said River St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Sea; and also along the North Coast of the Baye des Chaleurs, and the Coast of the Gulph of St. Lawrence to Cape Rosieres, and from thence crossing the Mouth of the River St. Lawrence by the West End of the Island of Anticosti, terminates at the aforesaid River St. John.*¹⁶

Gaspé was thus part of the new colony of Quebec. The territory outside Quebec and the other British colonies was set aside as Indian land.

*With regard to Indian policy the proclamation read: And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds.*¹⁷

It has been a matter of debate¹⁸ whether this policy was intended to apply exclusively to the Indian lands outside the established colonies or if it applied to Quebec as well. In the years immediately following the issuance of the proclamation, the governor of Quebec and his council apparently considered that this policy did indeed apply to Quebec as well, as can be seen in the council's attitude towards lands in Gaspé.

Shortly after the Conquest there was a small rush by Europeans to acquire land in Gaspé and among the requests was one by a certain Marie-Joseph Philibot for 20,000 acres on the Restigouche. Indeed, Philibot had been granted title to this land on 18 June 1766 by a decree from the Court of St. James. However, in December of the same year a committee of the governor's council in Quebec annulled the grant on the grounds that the land concerned was considered to be the "property of the Indians and as such by His Majesty's express command as set forth in his Proclamation in 1763, not within their power to grant."¹⁹

In May 1767 the council again rejected a land application, this time from "Hugh Finlay, in behalf of certain Acadians for a grant of a Tract of land upon or near the River Restigouche in the Bay of Chaleur." The council argued that "the lands mentioned in the Petition are lands claimed by the Indians whose right has not yet been ascertained – till it is no grant should be given that may prejudice their claim." In 1775 the colonial secretary cautioned against challenging Indian claims on the Restigouche.²⁰

In 1780 the Restigouche band again petitioned the governor at Quebec to stop the Acadians from trespassing on their hunting grounds. The petition this time was in English and may have been written by the two local merchants who signed as witnesses. Their interest in the matter is accounted for with a remark that the Indians are "very willing" to trade with any English merchant who visited them, as the two witnesses could testify. But the principal issue of the petition concerned the Acadians who persisted in hunting and fishing in Indian territory. The Indians claimed all the land from the Cascapédia River to the Restigouche and stated that the governor had granted them these lands and the Restigouche River itself "as our property for us and our children forever." In 1765 Chief Glaude had claimed an area including all land between the Restigouche and Cascapédia, and since this claim was officially noted in the Quebec census of 1765, perhaps the Indians felt that this meant that the governor accepted their claim.²¹

In 1780 Governor Haldimand wrote Lieutenant Governor Cox asking for more information about the case. Haldimand felt that the Indians "must be supported in whatever Rights or Privileges respecting their Hunting etc. they are entitled to at Restigouche but at the same Time, by no means to take any step by which a fair and free Trader may be injured."²² But everyone was too busy with the war at the time and nothing could be done immediately.

By February 1783 the war had subsided somewhat and the Acadians took the opportunity to petition the governor, complaining that the Indians had become more aggressive recently. It appears that because of the war there were no fish exporters operating on Chaleur Bay and a growing number of Acadians had been forced to turn to hunting and agriculture, both of which involved the use of lands claimed by the Indians. The Acadians complained that the Micmacs prevented them from setting traps in the woods, from cutting marsh hay which was useless to the Indians and from salmon fishing even though there was enough for everyone.²³

Felix O'Hara, as senior magistrate of the District of Gaspé, was sent to the Restigouche to investigate, and later reported the feelings of the Micmacs to Haldimand.

*God, and Nature, they say put them in Possession of Rustigash, with all the Lands, Rivers, Lakes etc. Contiguous thereto, and That Them and theirs has Enjoy'd uninterrupted possession of the same, from Time Immemorial. . . . I observed to the Chief that I could not see how the Indians could be sufferers by letting the Acadiens cut the Hay on each side of the River, as they themselves did not pretend to make use of the same. He was not long in convincing me that in this I was mistaken; he sagaciously pointed out that by Cutting away the Grass, they were deprived of their lurking places, where they could creep to their Game undiscovered. But now that it's gone Their Game has forsaken their usual haunts, which often reduces them to extrem want. They seem'd much pleased when I gave them to understand That your Excellency would see them done Justice to.*²⁴

In 1784 Father Bourg, missionary to the Acadians, asked Lieutenant Governor Cox to mediate the dispute though Bourg himself felt that the Indians were mostly to blame. His petition includes the first indication that the Acadians were actually paying a fee to the Indians for the hay which they cut.²⁵ Cox arrived within ten days, met with both groups at Tracadigash (Carleton) and imposed his own solution.²⁶ Cox formalized the tradition that the Acadians should pay the Indians one dollar per year per cow to cut hay on the Restigouche marshes. He also confirmed to the Indians the "sole & usual right of hunting & fishing in & contiguous to the said River Restigouche." The arrangement, which was to "remain during pleasure," also appeared to create a buffer zone which both groups could use for hunting. The zone had as its eastern boundary a line drawn north-south from the Nouvelle River "to the Island called Islo"; its western boundary would appear to have been a similar line one league to the west. It is difficult to pinpoint on a map the island called "Islo," but a year later Charles Robin mentioned in

his journal having lunched "at the Islots," five hours' march from Pointe de la Mission.²⁷

Cox's solution was committed to writing and signed by Micmac and Acadian representatives. In communicating the document to Haldimand, Cox made it clear that it was intended to serve as only a temporary arrangement. He noted that "as the Accadians have increased in number, and [are] now stronger than the Savages, they would soon have forced a Settlement, for their common conversation is they could soon beat them out of the Province." He emphasized that a definitive boundary line would have to be drawn soon. The next year (1785) Judge O'Hara visited the Indians again, reported on the tense situation and again urged an early solution.²⁸

It was obvious that the situation was becoming serious for it was at this time that a third and even more aggressive group, the Loyalists, was being introduced into this region of unsettled title. As early as 1780 the Mann family had asked for and received 2,000 acres of land on Chaleur Bay west of the Nouvelle River, which the Indians now claimed as their eastern limits, and west of the buffer zone Cox was to set aside four years later. In their petition they had added that they hoped that "when the Indians remove further from the Western boundary of the Tract, it may be enlarged by a new grant."²⁹

In his 1783 report on land for Loyalist settlement, Justus Sherwood mentioned the Nouvelle River, where he found "a large body of good land, but the Restigouche Indians claim it, as they do all the Meadows up the Restigouche River, which are the largest and finest that I know of in the world."³⁰ Haldimand realised that when the Loyalists came to Gaspé the Indian lands would be under new pressure and directed Lieutenant Governor Cox to

*consider those Indians under your protection, and not permit their rights to be in any respect invaded, by suffering any persons to interfere with their Salmon Fishery, or to cut Hay upon their Land, without first obtaining their consent, and allowing them such compensation as they shall require.*³¹

By 1786 the Loyalists were settled on Chaleur Bay and the new governor, Lord Dorchester, made an attempt to resolve the boundary question definitively. He sent Cox and Deputy Surveyor General John Collins to meet with three chiefs of the band over a period of three days between 29 June and 1 July.

The Indians made two claims: all the land from the Nouvelle River to the Restigouche and the exclusive right to the salmon fishery on that river. On the third day Cox and Collins reminded the Micmacs that the French had granted some of this land as a seigneurie, but the English king only wanted to help them so he

had recently purchased the land which "we are persuaded that his representative Sir Guy Carleton [Lord Dorchester] . . . will give up to accommodate you." In return they hoped the Indians would "give up a portion of your extensive claims to settle others of his children the English & Acadians. . . . We have reason to believe that from our representations you will receive a just equivalent not less useful to you than what you sacrifice." In return for renouncing their claims in the area of the Nouvelle River and Pointe Miguasha, "an extensive tract along the Western Bank of the River Restigouche to its source will we doubt not be assigned to you for the purposes of the chase . . . & further that in exchange for this trifling concession you will receive a gratuity from the British Government more valuable to you." With respect to the Restigouche salmon fishery, "we are well assured that [Lord Dorchester] . . . will continue to protect you in all your ancient rights and privileges." Cox and Collins reported that the band "consented peaceably to assign for His Majesty the Great River Nouvelle and Point Macgache."³²

Although Cox and Collins said that they came to the Restigouche to arrange "a final settlement," it must be noted that they could never make fixed promises for the governor and his council would have had to approve them; nevertheless, they did give the Indians the impression that many good things would be done for them.

None of the assurances made by the commissioners was to be fulfilled:

- (1) The truth about the seigneurie was far from what Cox and Collins claimed. In 1786 the government was only thinking about buying the Deneau and Restigouche seigneuries and it was another ten years before the purchase was consummated. Besides, the government at this time was actually planning to use it as land for further Loyalist settlement, not for Indians. Furthermore, the commissioners exaggerated the extent of the land involved.³³
- (2) The "extensive tract" on the west (or south) bank of the Restigouche River was not even in the Province of Quebec but in New Brunswick so Cox and Collins had no authority to make such a promise.
- (3) The "valuable" gratuity was never heard of again.
- (4) The protection of the Indians' "ancient rights and privileges" in the Restigouche salmon fishery was quickly forgotten.

In any case, the arrangement appears to have been rejected by the governor or his council. A report on the matter, written by John Shoolbred, was read to the council on 2 March 1787. It listed numerous reasons against granting such a large tract of land to the Micmacs despite the fact that it acknowledged that

"Messrs. Cox and Collins have . . . given assurances to the Indians that Government here will Confirm their Right." The basic objection was that it was foolish to grant the territory "to a Description of Men, who do not know how to improve it." British settlers would exploit the fisheries more efficiently and consequently encourage trade, manufacturing and shipping. Besides, the salmon which the Indians currently bartered to the traders were poorly preserved and partly spoiled because they were speared rather than netted; such fish could only be sold in the West Indies for low prices. As well, if the Indians became too involved in the salmon fishery, the small fur-trading production of the area would totally disappear. Instead, the report suggested, the Indians should be given a grant in the interior with a limited access to the river.³⁴

Isaac Mann had already applied for some of the land and five months after the report was read the council approved his request. The council commented, *It is recommended that Lieut. Governor Cox be directed to send up a statement to His Lordship of such presents as will be necessary to extinguish the claims of the Indians to the hunting grounds offered by them to be given up, as mentioned in a Report of Lieut. Governor Cox and Mr. Collins's, dated the 29th of June, 1st of July 1786.*³⁵

The council simply accepted the Indians' cession of their land claims, ignored what Cox and Collins had "assured" them in return, and decided to send some presents instead. There is no evidence to suggest that the gifts ever arrived.

The Restigouche Indians apparently were not notified of this change in policy. What happened was that land was simply granted to Loyalists on both sides of the Indians, leaving them a small tract around their church at Pointe de la Mission. William Vondenvelden, who surveyed the area in November 1787, drew a line between the Micmacs and Isaac Mann, their neighbour to the east, running north 45 degrees west, two chains past Pointe à la Croix. A subsequent description dated 22 May 1788, written by Vondenvelden's superior, John Collins, shows this boundary as bearing north 12 degrees east, which was more natural for it would be parallel to all the other boundary lines in the area, including the eastern boundary of Mann's lot. Vondenvelden also drew the western boundary of the Indian land parallel to north 12 degrees east, with the result that 200 Indians were left with a triangular lot of 840 acres "for the purposes of the chase," while the Mann family received 2,000 acres for their farm in addition to their several hundred acres near New Carlisle. Apparently two minutes were issued by the governor's council, one ordering a grant on the Vondenvelden lines and

the other on the Collins line. Thus the boundary remained unsettled.

The Gaspé Land Commission, which was created to adjudicate boundary disputes in the early 1820s, ruled in favour of the Mann family and the Vondenvelden survey. The Indians could have appealed the ruling but, according to their missionary, did not know that they could do so. When they did protest in the 1830s, the government again favoured the Vondenvelden survey. The explanation given was that Collins, working in Quebec, had simply used a line parallel to the others, while Vondenvelden, working in the field, knew the local situation better and gave Mann an extra portion of land which he needed for his farm. Collins, of course, had been well acquainted with the local situation: after all, he had been one of the agents who had met the Indians in 1786 and he had been surveying in Gaspé since at least 1765.³⁶

In any case, it is evident that the Micmacs of the Restigouche did abandon their claims to the territory around the Nouvelle River and Pointe Miguasha. They did not get the hunting grounds assured them by Cox and Collins, nor the gratuity, nor the new lands on the New Brunswick side of the river, nor the exclusive rights to salmon fishing in the Restigouche. With the arrival of the Loyalists and the prevalence of large Acadian families, the European population of the area quickly surpassed that of the Indians and the latter became quite passive for a generation.

It was the Acadians who disputed the large grant given to Isaac Mann. In 1790 they sent two petitions to the governor complaining that for many years they had been accustomed to paying the Indians an annual fee to cut hay on this land and therefore felt that they had some claim to it. (A copy of one rental agreement between the Indian chief and an Acadian is in the archives of the Restigouche Indian mission.³⁷) In an appearance before the land committee of the governor's council, Mann pointed out that since the Acadians paid rent to the Indians, it was clear that they had no title to the hay marshes. He also noted that the government had cleared all Indian claims to the land before granting it to him. The committee accepted Mann's argument and Mann said he would allow the Acadians to rent from him;³⁸ however, it must be noted that Mann was in an advantageous position for he had been a local justice of the peace since November 1788 and a member of the land board of the District of Gaspé since March 1789. As well, his son Isaac Junior was a judge of the local Court of Common Pleas and another son, Thomas, was the sheriff of the entire Gaspé district.³⁹ In 1819 the Acadians again complained to the governor general

that Isaac Mann Junior was "all powerful in those remote places." As a justice of the peace he imprisoned them "and with his tyrannical Dominion" over the Indians he induced the latter to be hostile to the Acadians.⁴⁰

In 1812 Monseigneur Plessis visited the Restigouche Indian mission and reported on the apathy of the Indians. The Europeans tricked them out of their land, cut their hay and used their fishing grounds but they offered no resistance. Plessis recognized Mann as "un de leurs spoliateurs et assurément le plus subtil," but when Mann invited him to dinner he accepted gladly for the meal was sure to be better than what the Indians had been feeding him. He reported that "la soirée se passa fort agréablement."⁴¹ The Gaspé Land Commission (1819–25) affirmed the 840-acre triangular lot and the matter of native land rights on Chaleur Bay was considered settled. As Robert Christie, a member of the commission, stated in 1826, any relief given the Indians should not be based on legal merit but on the governor general's pleasure or charity.⁴² When Governor General Lord Dalhousie visited Gaspé in 1826, he offered the Indians £600 and twice as much land on Lake Matapédia if they would resign their title, but they refused to leave the land of their forefathers.⁴³ Christie soon became actively involved in the issue for he bought the Mann family's lands by sheriff's sale. Perhaps it was due to the insecurity of his elected position in the legislative assembly that he became desirous of selling some of his land to the government for the Indians.

In the 1830s the Indians threw off their apathy and occupied 1,200 to 1,500 acres they felt they had been cheated out of by the late Isaac Mann. Joseph Duchesnay, a government official, tried to enlist the aid of the missionary to intercede with the Indians on behalf of the government, but the priest was either unable or unwilling to persuade the Indians to withdraw. Duchesnay, earlier a member of the Gaspé Land Commission, reported that the Indians had had 12 months to appeal the adjudication of the commission, "but they never attempted it, if they had they could not succeed to have it reversed"; however, he felt that it was "most desirable & necessary to their welfare" to allot them additional land.⁴⁴

The surveyor whom the government sent to report on Christie's land concluded that the Indians did not need all they were claiming and evaluated only about half of it. Christie, dissatisfied with this decision and the price per acre, called upon locals who were more familiar with the situation for a re-evaluation which resulted in a higher price per acre.⁴⁵ He also supported the Indians' case that they "no doubt have been neglected and have a strong claim upon Government from the manner in

which they were dealt with at the outset of the settlement of this River."⁴⁶

Christie asked two local justices of the peace, long-time residents of the area, to help the Indians plead their case. The result was a lengthy petition dated 21 May 1838. According to it, although the Indians feared that their numbers were diminishing, a large number of families were still trying to subsist on a very small plot of land. The land produced only a few potatoes and was now stripped of all firewood and its hunting and fishing resources were "in a manner exhausted." The petition includes a copy of the Collins-Cox account of their conference of 1786.⁴⁷

In 1840 a government agent was sent to the bay to investigate the needs of the Restigouche Indians. In his report he recommended they be given a grant inland from their reserve to provide them with their fuel requirements, that they be instructed in agriculture and be given a school for their children. If the government had no money for a teacher, he suggested that it be taken from the £75 annual grant paid to the missionary who visited them only rarely.⁴⁸

In 1843 the government asked A. Russell, superintendent of the Kempt Road construction project, to look into the matter. He knew the local Indians well, having employed them in construction work, and found them "sober, virtuous, quiet and industrious." In his report Russell notes that the Indians had recently shown an interest in agriculture and suggested that the government encourage this interest by supplying seeds and equipment; however, he made no reference to land requirements.⁴⁹

In 1845 the government approved, by order in council, the principle of granting the Micmacs of the Restigouche "the unused Tract of Land of Ten or Twelve Miles Square as a Reserve from which they may supply themselves with fuel."⁵⁰ Three years later the commissioner of crown lands confirmed that such land was available.⁵¹ No further steps had been taken by 1850, the delay possibly due to difficulties financing a survey, so the chief of the band wrote the governor general offering to pay for the undertaking.⁵² A large grant of land in the rear of their original grant was finally awarded the Indians in 1851 by an Act of the provincial assembly.⁵³ When the band again petitioned the government in 1857 for the long-disputed tract granted Isaac Mann, the government replied that this claim had been "fairly settled by the appropriation" of 1851,⁵⁴ an admission, perhaps, that the Indians had been right all along. A similar statement is made in the *Report of the Special Commissioners of Indian Affairs* of 1858 which also notes that the reserve was subject to "extensive encroachments" due to the "cupidity

of the neighbouring settlers."⁵⁵ Although the Indians protested the trespasses, the offences continued unchecked.

The 1858 report stated that the exact size of the 1851 addition had not yet been settled. The original grant had been for 9,600 acres but a few European squatters had occupied some of it. The report recommended that the Indians be recompensed, for the squatters' rights had been recognised and now the reserve totalled only 8,916 acres.⁵⁶ The matter was further confused by a letter dated 24 April 1871 which said that the additional grant of 1851 had totalled 9,642 acres.⁵⁷ In 1913 the reserve as a whole was reported to cover 8,869 acres.⁵⁸

The Salmon Fisheries

The most important dietary staple of the Micmacs of Gaspé was salmon and, as noted earlier, the two best salmon rivers of Gaspé were the Restigouche and the Cascapédia. Europeans were established at the mouths of these rivers as early as the 1760s, trading for salmon and fishing for themselves. After a few years it became evident that the salmon were becoming depleted. An estimated 6,000 barrels of salmon were caught in the Restigouche in 1790 but by 1823 production had fallen to 1,000 barrels. The Indians were blamed for taking salmon before they spawned, but it was the Europeans who totally blocked some streams with nets and later with dams built for lumber mills, which, in turn, choked the rivers with logs, bark and sawdust.

In 1786 Cox and Collins had "assured" the Indians the exclusive right to the salmon fishery of the Restigouche River, even though half of it was in New Brunswick. In 1807 the government took its first legislative steps to try to conserve the salmon resources of the area. Salmon fishing was forbidden between 15 August and 1 December except by the Indians for their own use, and nets and seines were prohibited above the first rapids of both the Restigouche and Cascapédia rivers.⁵⁹

In 1824 a new Gaspé Fisheries Act imposed further restrictions. The off season was lengthened; everyone, including the Indians, was forbidden to fish for salmon after 1 August. The Indians were not to use weirs to catch salmon nor to fish at night by means of torches at any time of the year. No one was allowed to trade for or buy salmon from the Indians at any time on any river in Gaspé.⁶⁰

Although these laws were often difficult to administer, they still proved a hardship to the Micmacs. The 1824 law was particularly so and the government realised it. The Indians suffered the very first summer⁶¹ and when Dalhousie visited Gaspé in 1826 he gave them some special gifts "in consideration of their

destitute state this year, arising out of the hardships occasioned by the Act of the Provincial Parliament, for the protection and regulation of the salmon fisheries."⁶² By 1828 the Indians were in such poor straits that they were apparently ready to rise up and drive all the European residents from the area. Father Faucher, their priest, succeeded in calming them with the assurance that the law would be changed the next year.⁶³ Faucher knew that the 1824 Act was due to expire in 1829 and, indeed, a new Act in 1829 did drop many of the restrictions which were particularly harmful to the Indians.⁶⁴ By 1839 the legislature had enacted a new law restoring all the old restrictions and shortening the fishing season to the period before 20 July;⁶⁵ however, many of these restrictions were dropped again by the legislature of the new United Province of Canada in 1841.⁶⁶

In dealing with the Indians of the Cascapédia the government was more straightforward; it gave them no assurances of exclusive fishing rights. When the Indians had met with Lieutenant Governor Cox in 1784 and claimed all the land from the Restigouche to the Nouvelle River and the Cascapédia River as well, there were only four or five Indian families permanently living on the Cascapédia.⁶⁷ At that time Cox felt that the Indian claim was "unreasonable" and the Cascapédia Micmacs never gained exclusive rights to the fishery on that river; however, their occupation of the west bank was tolerated and eventually accepted.

By 1840 there were 18 families (71 people) reported on the Cascapédia, cultivating 12 acres of land.⁶⁸ In 1858 the special commissioners on Indian Affairs reported "83 persons divided among 18 families, who support themselves principally by fishing. It would be desirable to concentrate these Stragglers in the Reserve at Mission Point."⁶⁹ The Cascapédia Indians were also accustomed to using Ile du Cheval (Horse Isle) for maple sugaring. This island in the Cascapédia River covered an area about equal to the present reserve. In 1846 they complained to the superintendent of Indian Affairs that the land commissioner had sold the island to an European. The superintendent replied that he regretted the sale but that nothing could be done about it now. The Indians submitted another complaint in 1896, but were told that they had been granted land on the Cascapédia as a reserve "in satisfaction of their claims to other lands."⁷⁰ The reserve was called Maria, taking its name from the township wherein it is located and which was named for Maria Carleton, wife of Governor Carleton. The reserve now covers 416 acres, its title based on Indian occupancy "from time immemorial."⁷¹

Not occupying a strategic area, the Micmacs of Gaspé were of little importance to the government and consequently received little attention. The few times the Indians dealt with the

government gave them every reason to distrust it for it usually appeared to side with the European settlers of Gaspé. Inter-marriage between the Europeans and Indians did not result in an integrated society and, indeed, relations between the two groups before 1867 were often hostile. The Indians of Gaspé certainly felt no affinity towards the rest of the population of Gaspé or towards the Province of Canada and its government.

Conclusions

Besides the District of Gaspé, several other administrative and judicial districts were set up in the provinces of Quebec and Canada between 1760 and 1867, but none was as "peculiar" and unique as the District of Gaspé. Its remote location and rugged terrain made communications with the rest of the province difficult. In some respects Gaspé seemed to exist as a separate colony and in other respects it seemed to have closer relations with Europe than with Quebec. Communication difficulties were partly responsible for this phenomenon but there were other reasons.

The fisheries were paramount in Gaspé, but the province as a whole was essentially agricultural. As a result, the government of the province paid little attention to the needs and interests of Gaspé. The government was slow to resolve the uncertainty of land titles and to provide an adequate judicial system. It never tried to break the baneful influence of the big fishing companies or to encourage agriculture and small, independent fishermen. Its indifference towards starvation and epidemic was scandalous and it was never fully honest in its dealings with the Indians. In other words, the government did little to make the people of Gaspé feel a part of the province.

Besides being remote and neglected, the people of Gaspé were quite different from those in the rest of the province. The fishing industry made Gaspé a district which was unique in Lower Canada: in no other district was the economy totally dominated by one industry. The fisheries dominated the lives of everyone in Gaspé – workers and management.

Further, no other district of the province had a population with such a wide diversity of origins. This, along with the problems of endemic poverty, the constant demands of the fishery and poor communications between the scattered settlements, combined to inhibit the growth of any community feeling in Gaspé. Not only did the people of Gaspé feel little identity with the people of the rest of the province, they felt little common identity with their fellow residents of Gaspé.

The people of Gaspé actually did have much in common: most of them worked on the fisheries and they were all very conservative. They were slow to take up such modernisms as government programmes in education. Aside from the Boyle family, no native of Gaspé seems to have risked any large amount of capital in the local fishing industry. All the money and all the management came from outside, especially from Jersey. Even the ships which took the fish to the markets of the world were captained by outsiders. For some reason, long-time residence in Gaspé seems to have produced a conservative

tendency among its people. When Charles Robin first came to Gaspé he was daring, imaginative and innovative in his business methods, but, as Abbé Ferland noted a few decades later, his nephews allowed no departure from the methods Robin had developed. The people of Gaspé would not leave their coastal cod fishery to catch mackerel in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The whalers would not leave the gulf to pursue whales out in the Atlantic. Mackerel and whales were left to the American fishermen just as it was left to the Americans to begin a lobster industry on Chaleur Bay.

In 1867 the population of Gaspé was, of course, many times larger than it had been in 1760, but life was not much different.

Endnotes

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Of Cod and Other Fish

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Canadian Historic Sites No. 23

Blockhouses in Canada, 1749–1841:

A Comparative Report and Catalogue

by Richard J. Young

From the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s British North America found itself with an enormous territory to defend, yet Parliament was unwilling to spend the enormous amounts of money which would have been necessary to build and maintain a permanent system of fortifications at the important Atlantic harbours and along the interior frontier waterways. The blockhouse, which could be quickly built, using local materials, without any large expenditure of labour or money, provided a temporary answer to the basic dilemma of money and security. It could be adapted for any of a variety of uses from an isolated post to a structure within an elaborate complex. Size, shape and construction details varied with its function and with the skill and idiosyncracies of individual builders.

Gaspé, 1760–1867

by David Lee

In the years between the Conquest and Confederation, Gaspé seemed to exist almost as a separate colony. Its remote location and rugged terrain impeded communication between it and the rest of Quebec and this, combined with the economic and demographic differences between it and the rest of the province, resulted in considerable government neglect of the district. Indeed, in many respects Gaspé had closer relations with Europe than with Quebec. Moreover, within the district the poor communication system and diverse origins of the population hindered the development of a community feeling among the residents in spite of their common dependence on the fishing industry and their sharing of an essentially conservative philosophy.