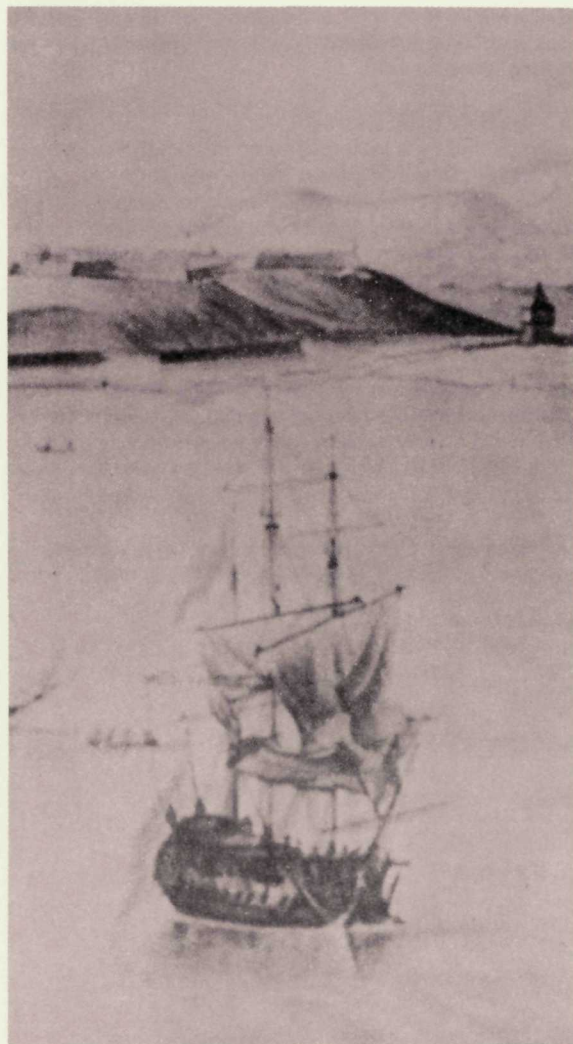


FORT ANNE

National Historic Park

NOVA SCOTIA



THE BEGINNINGS

As the seat of government in Nova Scotia for part of both the French and British regimes, Annapolis Royal held an important place in Canada's early history. Called Port Royal by the French, it is one of the oldest continuously occupied settlements in North America.

The first settlement, established in 1605, was built five miles down the Annapolis River where Port Royal Habitation National Historic Park is now located. This earlier colony was destroyed in 1613 by the English, but by 1635 the French Governor, Charles de Menou d'Aulnay, had built a new Port Royal here at the junction of the Allain and Annapolis Rivers. Over the next century, other settlements grew up throughout the area of present day Nova Scotia, eastern New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island to create the vaguely defined territory of Acadia.

THE CONFLICT

Alarmed by recurring privateering attacks on their ships and by raids from the Indian allies of the French, the New England colonies to the south tried to destroy the Acadian communities. Quebec was the logical target of New England's reprisals as it was the source of the heaviest French attacks, but the colonists couldn't muster the large-scale effort required to hit back at that distance. Consequently, the more accessible Acadian centres in Nova Scotia bore the brunt of their retaliation.

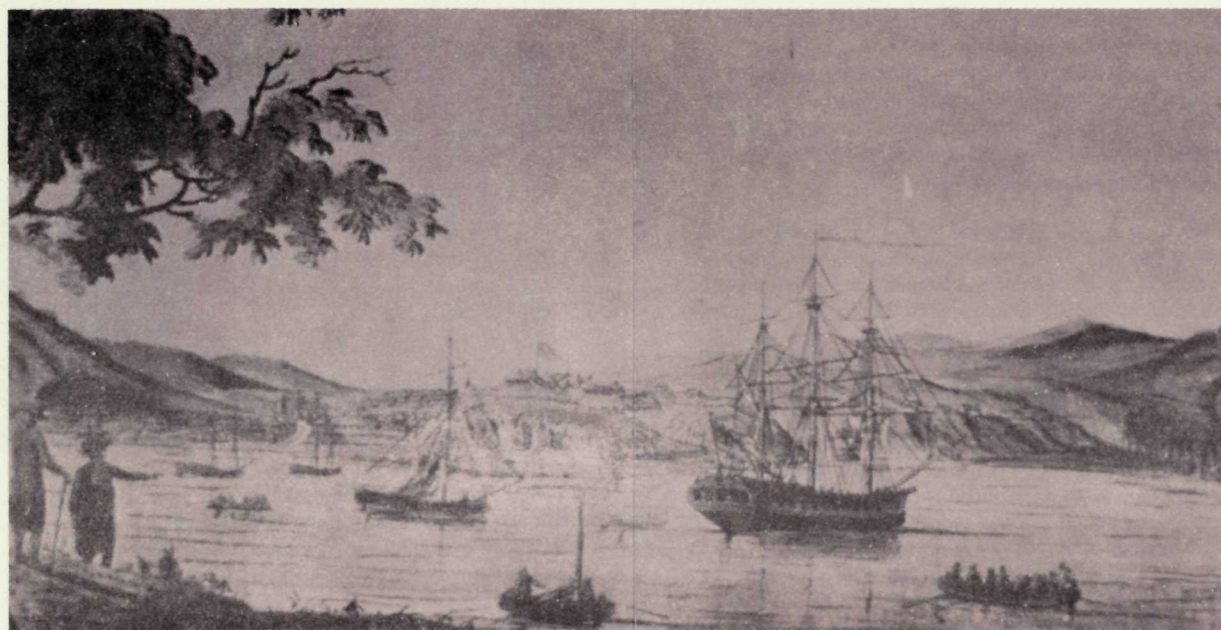
Port Royal, Acadia's largest settlement, suffered through several raids but by 1700 belated support was arriving from France and the colonists were building the substantial fort which is commemorated on this site. But it was a case of too little too late. Before the fort was half-finished the attention and support of France had been distracted by European problems and local officers had to scrounge for materials and money to complete the work. And while two attacks were beaten off by the garrison in 1707, in 1710 Colonel Francis Nicholson laid a final siege with a force of New England troops and British Marines. The Governor, Daniel Auger de Subercase, held out for two weeks but lack of food supplies and the constant artillery bombardment finally forced him to surrender.

THE BRITISH ERA

The conquered town was renamed Annapolis Royal in honour of Queen Anne and became the official capital of Nova Scotia after the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) ceded mainland Nova Scotia to the British. But the neglect which the new British province now suffered wasn't much improvement over what it had experienced as a French possession. Aided by a rag-tag garrison of regular troops and frequent reinforcements from Massachusetts, the new administrators attempted to establish an effective British presence in a province still populated with Acadians and infiltrated by raiding parties from Quebec and from the Fortress of Louisbourg on French-held Isle Royale, now Cape Breton Island.

A twelve-man military and civilian council headed by the senior resident officer managed as best they could in a situation where the chief official, the Governor, resided back in England.

The work of the council and the garrison was complicated by crumbling fortifications, poor morale



among the troops, frequent ambushes outside the fort and a lack of urgency on the part of authorities in England. The garrison was poorly fed, the soldiers' pay was usually overdue and the officers — when they weren't quarrelling — often had to pool their own money to support their troops. And some of the soldiers who fought in the siege of 1710 were still there in 1750!

Nevertheless, the unhappy garrison managed to defend the town and fort against several French attacks. Because of transportation difficulties, the French raiders never brought artillery with them and this factor along with the promise of neutrality extracted from the Acadian population, gave the British their tenuous hold on the province for almost forty years. By the mid 1740's a more vigorous policy towards North American affairs was being adopted in Great Britain. In 1749 the capital was switched to Halifax where a military base was established to counter-balance the strong French presence at Louisbourg and the fort at Annapolis Royal declined to the status of an outpost. The new governor and council at Halifax weren't satisfied with the rule-of-thumb policies of their

Annapolis Royal predecessors — particularly regarding their failure to extract an oath of allegiance requiring the Acadian population to bear arms for the British Crown. Insisting that mere neutrality was inadequate, the new administration ultimately forced the tragic expulsion of the Acadians from the province in 1755.

Meanwhile, the fort at Annapolis Royal went through fluctuations in importance as British policy towards the military requirements of the province changed. By 1854, however, the last detachment of troops had been withdrawn and by 1890 only the two magazines, the officers' quarters and two artillery sheds remained within the old earthworks.

PRESERVATION OF THE SITE

The decay that had set in was partly checked in 1895-97 when a group of townspeople organized a committee and obtained government grants to repair the crumbling magazines, sally port and officers' quarters. In 1917 the old fort was transferred from the Department of Militia and Defence to the National Parks Service and became Canada's first National Historic Park. It is now maintained by Parks Canada, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

The surviving original buildings are the storehouse in the northwest bastion and the powder magazine in the southwest bastion. The earthworks, among the oldest historic features in the National Historic Parks system, have been left in their "as-found" condition.

The museum building is a 1935 reconstruction of the officers' quarters originally built in 1797.

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