

Quebec

Fort Chambly National Historic Park



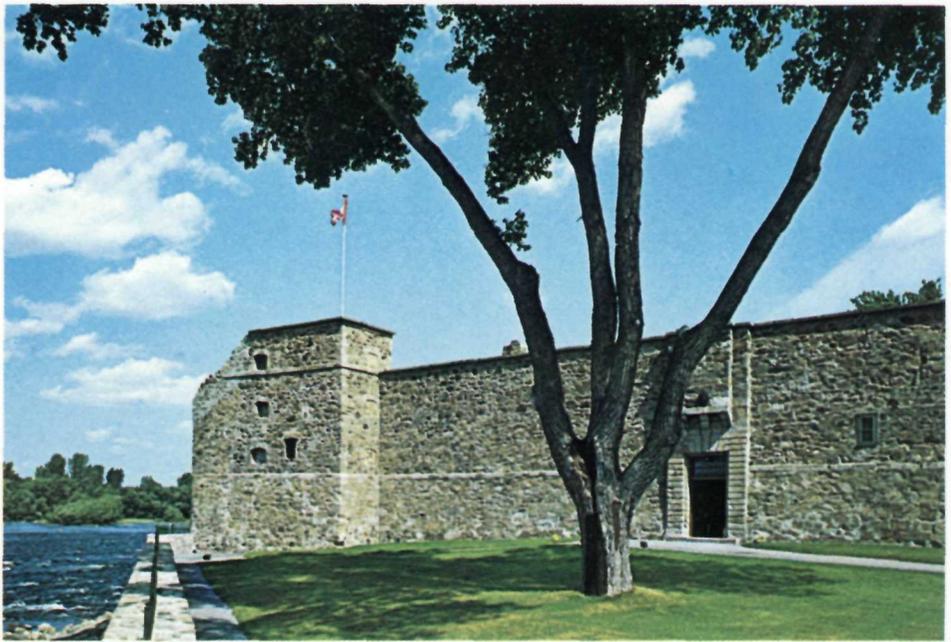
Brief History

In the beginning were the Iroquois. The Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy (Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas) controlled the territory south of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario, between the Hudson and Genesee Rivers in present day New York State. They lived in permanent villages established on good agricultural land and used the rest of their territory as hunting grounds.

The white man first disturbed this life in 1609 when Samuel de Champlain accompanied a Huron war party up the Richelieu River to attack the Iroquois. The Iroquois and Hurons had long been enemies, but now the white man arrived to exacerbate the situation. The French allied themselves with the Hurons, the Dutch and British with the Iroquois, and the two groups competed aggressively for the fur resources of the New World. So many Iroquois war parties passed by the Chambly rapids en route to attack Canada that the river became known as "la rivière des Iroquois". Within 50 years the Hurons had been dispersed and the French settlements on the St. Lawrence nearly destroyed.

At the same time, thousands of miles away in France, a 22-year-old King, Louis XIV, who ascended the throne at the age of five, took control of his government and declared Canada a royal colony under his protection. In 1665 he sent 1,200 soldiers to Canada to make it safe for settlers, missionaries and, of course, fur traders. Four companies of the Carignan-Salières Regiment were led by a young captain, Jacques de Chambly, who was sent up the rivière des Iroquois to build a log fort at the rapids which later bore his name. Eventually the fort also was called Chambly. Other forts were built along this war road and in 1666 were used as bases for two French attacks on Iroquois villages to the south.

Relative peace came to Canada for 20 years as a result of these attacks and the colony flourished. Before he left to become Governor of Acadia in 1673, M. de Chambly



was granted a seigneurie on the land about his fort. Here he began a small settlement which included men disbanded from his old regiment. This village was the first permanent settlement of Europeans on the rivière des Iroquois and the beginning of the town of Chambly.

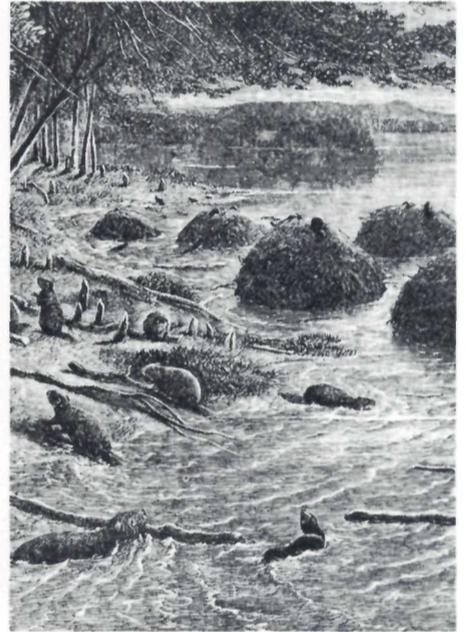
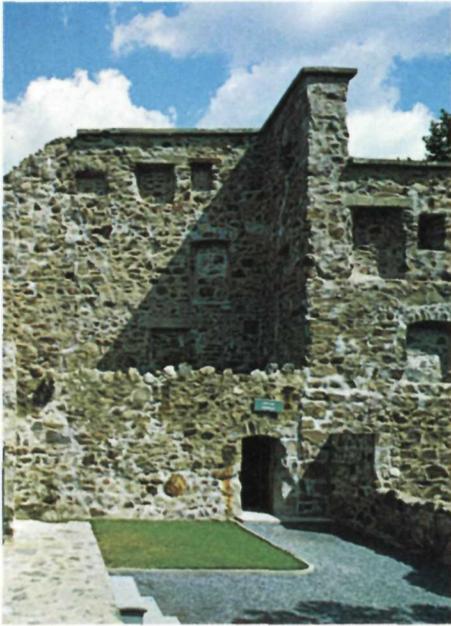
Thus, a French presence was implanted and consolidated on land which had been Iroquois for centuries. Within a few years the French decided that the Iroquois Confederacy would have to be crushed to stop the Iroquois disturbing French trade with western Indians. Governor Denonville himself led a large force of French troops to attack the Senecas, but succeeded in only temporarily disabling them. Instead of assuring the French permanent peace it led to 25 years of attritional wars with the Iroquois. Again Iroquois survival was threatened and again war parties passed by the Chambly rapids en route to Canada.

One of the first Iroquois reprisals was directed against the small town and fort at

Chambly. On October 4, 1687, 150 Mohawks attacked. There were about 80 French settlers in the community. They presumably took refuge in the fort and helped the 19-man garrison resist the onslaught. The Iroquois succeeded in capturing one soldier, his wife and child, but the fort held out.

Relations between the settlers and the garrison were not always good, however. There was an effort to keep out British goods while often British traders in the south offered the settlers better returns. The garrison was expected to curtail the smuggling of French furs to the British at Albany, a practice in which some local people engaged enthusiastically even when the French and British were at war.

It is ironic that Fort Chambly was destroyed in 1702, not in war, but in a fire accidentally caused by the chaplain, who died in the blaze. Now the settlement was unprotected, right on the route which the British would be most likely to take in attacking Canada, and especially Montreal.



A small log fort was hastily erected, but it was recognized that a more substantial work was required. Thus, in 1709 Governor Vaudreuil ordered the people of Montreal to carry to Chambly the stone, lime, and timber required for the construction of a massive new fortification. That very year the British were preparing a large invasion force in New York, but it never reached Chambly.

For the next 50 years only small detachments of Marine troops guarded the massive new fort while the civilian population of the area grew and flourished in peace. Chambly was not threatened again until the Seven Years' War. In 1760 a new British force pushed along Lake Champlain and down the Richelieu. Chambly was no longer the most advanced fort defending the southern entry to Canada, and the last resistance on this frontier was offered 20 miles to the south at Ile-aux-Noix. The garrison at Fort Chambly could not expect to hold out against the British; it surrendered without a shot. A few days later Montreal fell and Canada became British.

British troops, often accompanied by their families, occupied the fort thereafter, but the surrounding area remained French. When revolution erupted in 1775 in Britain's thirteen colonies to the south, American rebels convinced some of the local people to join them in an attack on Fort Chambly. There was a force of 80 men in the fort but it capitulated after a siege of only a day and a half with no serious injuries or damage. The commander was severely criticized not only for his feeble resistance but also for his failure to destroy his stores and equipment. The rebels went on to besiege nearby Fort St. Jean, which they could not have captured without the ammunition taken from Chambly.

The Americans used Fort Chambly as a detention centre for Canadians who would not collaborate with the troops occupying Canada. By the following year the fortunes of the Americans had changed. Sickness among their ranks and reinforcements from Britain forced them to retreat along the Richelieu to New York. At Chambly they left behind a partly burned fort and the body

of their leader, General John Thomas, dead from smallpox.

In 1777 Chambly and the surrounding area were filled with troops. General "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne was collecting for his expedition to New York which was to end in grief at Saratoga. Thereafter only small detachments occupied the fort, and life around the town was quiet.

However, even this small force aroused resentment, and men from the fort scandalized the townswomen by bathing in the river near the market-place. The men at the fort failed their duty of guarding prisoners and provisions for there were several cases of American prisoners escaping past sleeping sentries and of soldiers stealing rum from the warehouses.

During the War of 1812 a relatively small number of regulars from British regiments were stationed at Chambly and the fort continued to serve as a supply centre. Their ranks were supplemented by local militia and Canadian Voltigeurs led by Charles de Salaberry. By this time the fort was beginning to deteriorate and men and supplies were accommodated in buildings outside the fort or in the town itself.

Only a token force remained after the war. The fort was temporarily re-occupied during the rebellion of 1837-1838 when a few rebels were imprisoned there, and during the Fenian scare of the 1860's.

As the military importance of Chambly declined in the 19th century, the town and surrounding area grew and flourished.

What to look for

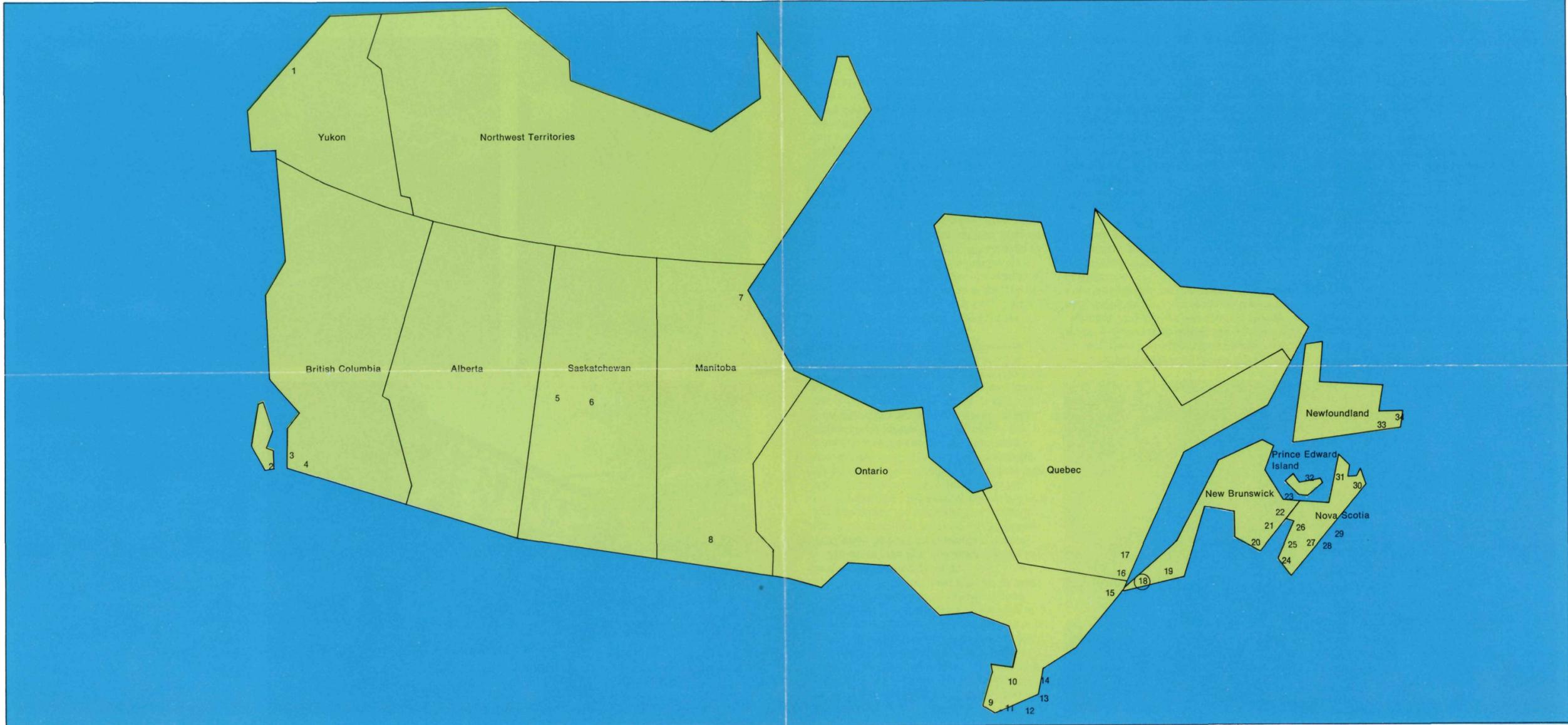
The fort's high, thick, stone walls, resembling a medieval castle, made it an unusual structure even in its day. It lacked the earthen defences designed to absorb the pounding from the heavier artillery armies carried in the 18th century. The fort today is much different from the original, as alterations were performed over the years by French and British troops. In the 19th-century the fort was neglected and some of the walls crumbled.

Fort Chambly was probably the first historic site in Canada to be preserved by the federal government, and as early as 1882

money was provided for maintenance. Joseph Ovide Dion, a caretaker and guide, who lived in the fort, supervised repairs and guided visitors until his death, in 1916 at the age of 78. In 1921 the fort became a national historic park.

1. *Entrance Gate*. In the 1880's, names of French commandants at the fort and other heroes of New France were carved on the stones around the entrance gate.
2. *Display Room*, on west side of the entrance-way, in former guard room. Exhibits include a scale model of the fort, archival illustrations and artifacts.
3. *Theatre*, on east side of the entrance, features a three-screen audio-visual slide-story of two centuries of fort history. Seats about 40.
4. *Courtyard*. Once inside, it can be seen that only a shell remains of the original fort built by the French between 1709 and 1711.
5. *Buttresses*. All that remain of the river wall.
6. *Bastions*, pentagonally shaped. From these points, defenders could enfilade (rake with fire) attackers at the gate or trying to scale the walls.
7. *Foundation remains of walls*, which once stood two storeys high and enclosed the workshops, storerooms and living quarters of the garrison, can be seen along the west and south walls.
8. *Cemetery*. To the southwest of the fort, lie remains of early French settlers, British and Americans, the victims of war and plague. The best known is the American general, John Thomas, who died of smallpox in 1776.

Chambly Canal (not shown on map) opened in 1843. The first three locks are about 500 yards northwest of the fort. Using the locks, river traffic by-passed the rapids between Chambly and St. Jean to reach the Champlain Canal in New York State and the Atlantic Ocean at New York City.



National Historic Parks & Sites

- 1 Dawson City, (Yukon Territory) Centre of the Klondike Gold Rush. Palace Grand Theatre and riverboat S.S. Keno preserved as national historic sites.
- 2 Fort Rodd Hill, (British Columbia) Nineteenth century British coastal fortification with historic Fisgard Lighthouse nearby.
- 3 Vancouver, (British Columbia) The schooner, St. Roch, first vessel to navigate the Northwest Passage from West to East; built in 1928 for the R.C.M.P.'s Arctic patrol service; exhibited at the Vancouver Maritime Museum.
- 4 Fort Langley, (British Columbia) A partial reconstruction of palisaded Hudson's Bay Company post of 1850's.
- 5 Fort Battleford, (Saskatchewan) North West Mounted Police Post built in 1876 in the territory of the Cree Indians. Original buildings house interesting museum collection and are surrounded by a log stockade.
- 6 Batoche Rectory, (Saskatchewan) Headquarters of the Metis during the North West Rebellion of 1885 at Duck Lake.
- 7 Fort Prince of Wales, (Manitoba) The most northerly fortress on the North American continent built by the Hudson's Bay Company between 1733-1771. Opposite Churchill.
- 8 Lower Fort Garry, (Manitoba) Stone fort built by the Hudson's Bay Company between 1831-1839. Located on west bank of Red River about 20 miles north of Winnipeg.
- 9 Fort Malden, (Ontario) At Amherstburg, museum buildings, and earthworks of defence post first built in 1797-1799, destroyed by the Americans, 1813, rebuilt 1819-1823.
- 0 Woodside, (Ontario) At Kitchener, the boyhood home of William Lyon Mackenzie King, tenth prime minister of Canada.
- 1 "Navy-Hall", (Ontario) At Niagara-on-the-Lake, built in 1817 as commissariat store. Located on site of earlier naval compound, built 1775-1778; hence the traditional name "Navy Hall".

- 12 Fort George, (Ontario) At Niagara-on-the-Lake, main fortification built 1797-1801; reconstructed 1937-1940 by Niagara Parks Commission; declared National Historic Park, 1969.
- 13 Queenston Heights, (Ontario) Site of major American invasion, critical battle and American defeat during War of 1812. Monument to Major-General Isaac Brock killed during the repulse.
- 14 Bellevue House, (Ontario) At Kingston, home of the first prime minister of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald.
- 15 Fort Wellington, (Ontario) At Prescott, defence post built between 1812-1814, with blockhouse dating from 1839, and museum.
- 16 Coteau-du-Lac, (Québec) Late 18th-century British military post and site of first canal on the St. Lawrence River at Coteau-du-Lac.
- 17 Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Birthplace, (Québec) House at St. Lin des Laurentides where Canada's seventh prime minister was probably born.
- 18 Fort Chambly, (Québec) Fort first built by French in 1665 was destroyed by fire and rebuilt between 1709-1711. It was occupied by the Americans and British. At Chambly, about 19 miles southeast of Montreal.
- 19 Fort Lennox, (Québec) On Ile-aux-Noix in the Richelieu River near St. Jean, an island fort, first built by the French in 1759, rebuilt by the British, 1776-1782. The present fort dates from 1819-1829.
- 20 St. Andrews Blockhouse, (New Brunswick) At St. Andrews, only remaining defence-work of a series of blockhouses and batteries built by civilians against American privateers.
- 21 Carleton Martello Tower, (New Brunswick) At Saint John, built during War of 1812. With the addition of a concrete superstructure, Tower became part of city's war defensive fire control center during World War II.
- 22 Fort Beauséjour, (New Brunswick) Site of major French fort in area, 1750-1755; captured by the British in 1755; defended against the Americans in 1776. Near Sackville.
- 23 Fort Gaspereau, (New Brunswick) Near Port Elgin on Baie Verte, square palisade with blockhouse at each corner, built by French in 1750 to defend Acadia (New Brunswick); burnt by British in 1756. Remains of parade square and ditch may be seen.
- 24 Port Royal, (Nova Scotia) Restoration of "Habitation" or first fort built in 1605 by Champlain, DeMonts and Poutrincourt.
- 25 Fort Anne, (Nova Scotia) At Annapolis Royal, well-preserved earthworks of fort built by the French, 1695-1708, and enlarged by the British, 1710-1750. The museum building is a reconstruction of the Officer's Quarters built in 1797.

- 26 Grand Pré, (Nova Scotia) Evangeline Chapel and museum stand near the village where the principal events in the expulsion of the Acadians took place.
- 27 Halifax Citadel, (Nova Scotia) Nineteenth-century stone fortress, one of the largest in North America, contains three spacious museums relating to Canada's naval, military and provincial history.
- 28 Prince of Wales Martello Tower, (Nova Scotia) At Point Pleasant Park, Halifax, built by British between 1796-1798. Modified in 1862 to provide powder magazine, armament, four machicolation galleries and parapet at roof level. Tower is last remaining example of this style of 19th-century fortification in Nova Scotia. Several exist in Quebec and Ontario.
- 29 York Redoubt, (Nova Scotia) Begun in 1793 by the British to defend the port of Halifax, it had a battery of eight 24-pounder guns. Remains of foundations for 30-foot stone martello tower and other defence-works built since 1798 may be seen. Most structures date from the 1880's when defences were modernized.
- 30 Fortress of Louisbourg, (Nova Scotia) The French outpost on the Atlantic coast built after 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. In 1720 work began on the defences and a sizeable town was built within its walls. Restoration of buildings and some massive defences reconstructed to the 18th-century period. About 23 miles south of Sydney.
- 31 Alexander Graham Bell Museum, (Nova Scotia) A large museum of original design at Baddeck contains extensive collection of relics of experiments in many scientific fields by Bell and his associates.
- 32 Fort Amherst, (Prince Edward Island) At Rocky Point across the harbour from Charlottetown, site of Port La Joye, French settlement of 1720, captured by the British in 1758. Earthworks of British fort built there still visible.
- 33 Castle Hill, (Newfoundland) Ruins of harbour fortifications begun by the French at Placentia about 1662. Interpretation centre.
- 34 Signal Hill, (Newfoundland) Rocky headland at entrance to St. John's harbour. Site of numerous early fortifications and the last battle during the Seven Years' War in North America. Includes John Cabot Memorial Tower.

