

Manitoba

# Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park





The Red River area had been important to the fur trade as early as 1738, when La Vérendrye, in the name of the King of France, founded Fort Rouge at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. Around 1800, the Hudson's Bay Company began to establish its authority in the region, and in 1821 it built a fort near the site of Fort Rouge as a trading post and as a depot for shipments of pemmican (dried bison meat).

This fort, the original, or Upper, Fort Garry, which was named after Nicholas Garry, Deputy Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, was severely damaged by flooding in 1826. Governor (later Sir) George Simpson decided to replace it with a fort to be built on higher ground. A location 19 miles downstream from the Upper Fort was chosen, and work on Lower Fort Garry (also called the Lower Fort or Stone Fort) began in 1831. The Fort was finished in 1847 with the completion of the wall surrounding the buildings.

Simpson hoped that his new fort would replace the Upper Fort as the centre of the

Red River colony. However, the settlement at the Upper Fort was too firmly established, and the junction of the rivers was the natural place for the growth of commerce; thus, in spite of floods, it prospered and eventually grew into the city of Winnipeg. Although the Lower Fort never attained the status which Simpson had hoped for, it saw much that is exciting and important in the history of the West and of Canada.

For a period of eighty years a wide variety of activities, commercial, agricultural, and social, took place at the Lower Fort. From 1831 until the Fort was closed in 1911 it housed a retail sales shop where goods of all kinds were sold, both for cash and for furs, to Indians, Métis, and whites. A brewery, sawmill, and flour-mill were located in the Fort complex, and the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company grew crops in the fields outside the walls.

Lower Fort Garry's associations go far beyond the range of the merely commercial into the story of Canada's military, social,

and political development. The calm routine of the Fort was often shattered by unexpected occurrences which thrust it into the mainstream of historical events. In 1846, during the Oregon boundary crisis, when war between Britain and the United States seemed imminent, a detachment of the 6th Regiment of Foot arrived from England to be stationed at the Fort. The anticipated American invasion did not occur, but the walls of the southwest bastion, still blackened by soot from the troops' cooking fires, record the episode.

In the mid-19th century the Fort housed a number of important historical figures. Among these was Dr. John Rae, the Arctic explorer, who lived at the Fort while planning the Franklin Relief Expedition. The Rt. Rev. Dr. David Anderson, first Bishop of Rupert's Land, also lived for a time at the Fort, as did Thomas Simpson, another famous Arctic explorer.

In the winter of 1869-70 the Fort was used as a rallying-point by Colonel Stoughton



Dennis and some of the settlers opposed to the provisional government of Louis Riel. Riel himself, with a number of his followers, made a surprise visit to the Fort in an unsuccessful search for his chief political enemy, Dr. (later Sir) John Schultz.

Later in the year 1870, the Fort was occupied by the 2nd Battalion, Quebec Rifles, part of the Red River Expeditionary Force sent west to suppress the Red River Rebellion. Six companies were garrisoned at the Fort.

In 1871 the Fort was the scene of the signing of Indian Treaty Number One, between the Government of Canada and the Chipewya and Swampy Cree tribes, an event which set the pattern for the other treaties which permitted the peaceful settlement of the Canadian West. Over a thousand Indians gathered outside the west wall of the Fort, where the highway now runs, to negotiate the treaty with the government Commissioner, Wemyss Simpson.

In the winter of 1873-74 the newly formed North-West Mounted Police (now the RCMP) received its first training at the Lower Fort. The raw recruits learning to ride were repeatedly thrown from their horses to the frozen ground. However, by June 1874 the NWMP was ready to set out on its historic ride to the far West, a journey which brought to the country the first law and order it had known.

During the 1860's and 1870's, the importance of the Fort as a trading centre declined, and agriculture became paramount. Barley and wheat were grown in the fields outside the walls of the Fort, vegetables were raised in the Fort gardens, and meat was pickled in barrels – all for sale or export to the Company's more distant posts. Such industries as boat-building, sawing, lime-burning, iron-working, and brewing flourished during this period. Most of this work was done in buildings, no longer standing, which were located at the mouth of the creek to the south of the Fort.

With the advent of new methods of provisioning and transportation, the importance

of these ventures declined, and the Fort was used for a number of years as a summer residence by the Commissioners of the Company, who moved out from Winnipeg with their families.

In 1913 the Fort was leased to a group of Winnipeg business and professional men incorporated as the Motor Country Club, and was used as a golf and social club until 1963.

In 1951 Lower Fort Garry was given to the nation by the Hudson's Bay Company and declared a National Historic Park by the government. The present work of restoration and reconstruction was started in 1964.

#### The Buildings of the Fort

1. The Big House. This was begun in 1831 and completed the next year as a residence for George Simpson, Governor of Rupert's Land. It has been restored to the period of 1852, at which time it was occupied by Governor Eden Colville and his wife Anne. It was this building which served as an Officers' Quarters for the 6th Regiment of Foot, the 2nd Battalion Quebec Rifles, and the North-West Mounted Police.
2. The fur loft building. This contained a retail sales shop on the ground floor. On the second and third floors was storage space for dry goods and furs. The original fur press used by the Hudson's Bay Company has survived, and some of the marks used to distinguish the bales belonging to the Company may be seen on the walls of the upper storeys.
3. Museum building. This building is a modern reconstruction of one of the Company's retail stores which stood on this site. It now houses a museum and offices.
4. The south-west bastion. This was used as a wash-house and a cook-house by the 6th Regiment of Foot in 1846-47. It was later used as a storehouse and still later as a summer house for the children of the Company's Commissioner.
5. The south-east bastion. This was originally the Fort's ice-house; it now houses the public washrooms.

6. The main or front gate. On the gate pillars are carved the names of some of the soldiers of the Red River Expedition garrisoned at the Fort in 1870-71.

7. The north-east bastion. This was the Company powder-magazine.

8. The penitentiary building. Originally a storehouse, it was used from 1871 to 1877 as the Manitoba provincial penitentiary, and subsequently as an asylum for the insane. Some of the original "solitary" cells have recently been discovered below ground level.

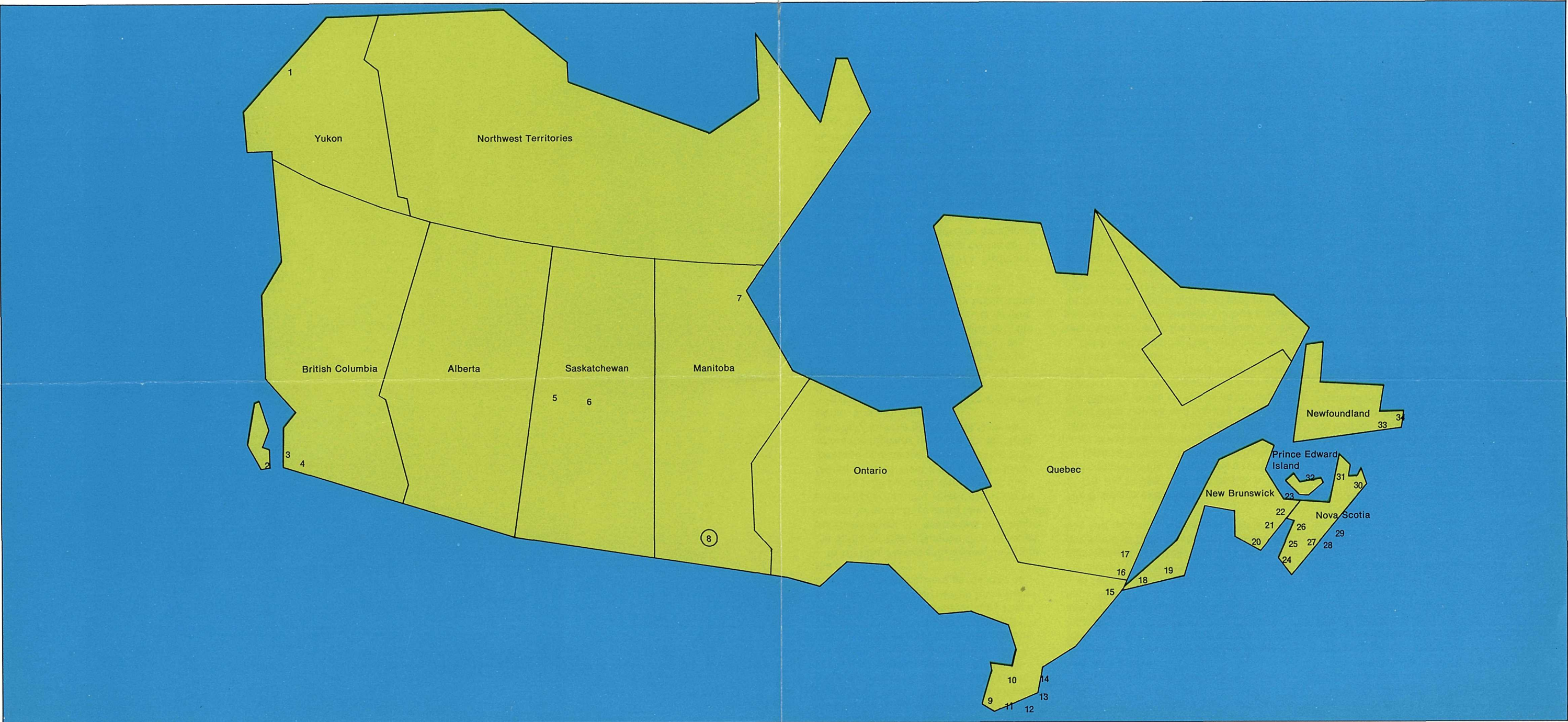
9. This wooden building, built in 1885, was used as an office by Dr. James Young, the asylum doctor.

10. The north-west bastion. This was the main Fort bake-oven. Individual bake-ovens were also located behind the penitentiary building and at the rear of the Big House.

11. This building was originally a residence for Hudson's Bay Company employees. It was used as a stable by the North-West Mounted Police during their stay at the Fort.

12. The engineer's cottage. Built in the 1840's, it was occupied for a number of years by E. Abell, the Hudson's Bay Company engineer in charge of the various industries at the Fort.

13. The Fraser House. This building was originally constructed by James Fraser around 1835. Born in Scotland, Fraser came to the Red River Settlement in 1815 to work on a hay farm. The house was moved to this site from its original location in West Kildonan. It represents a typical homestead of the Red River Settlement period.

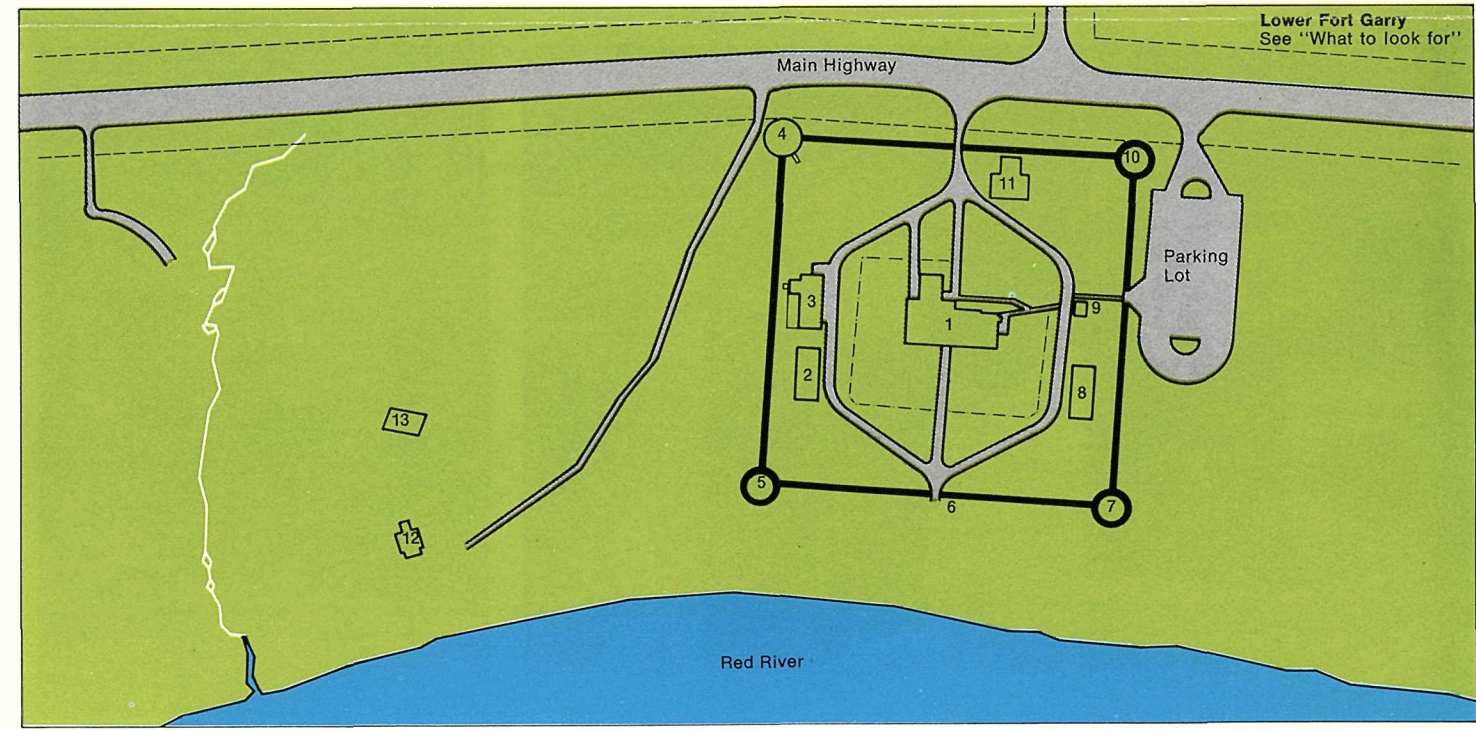
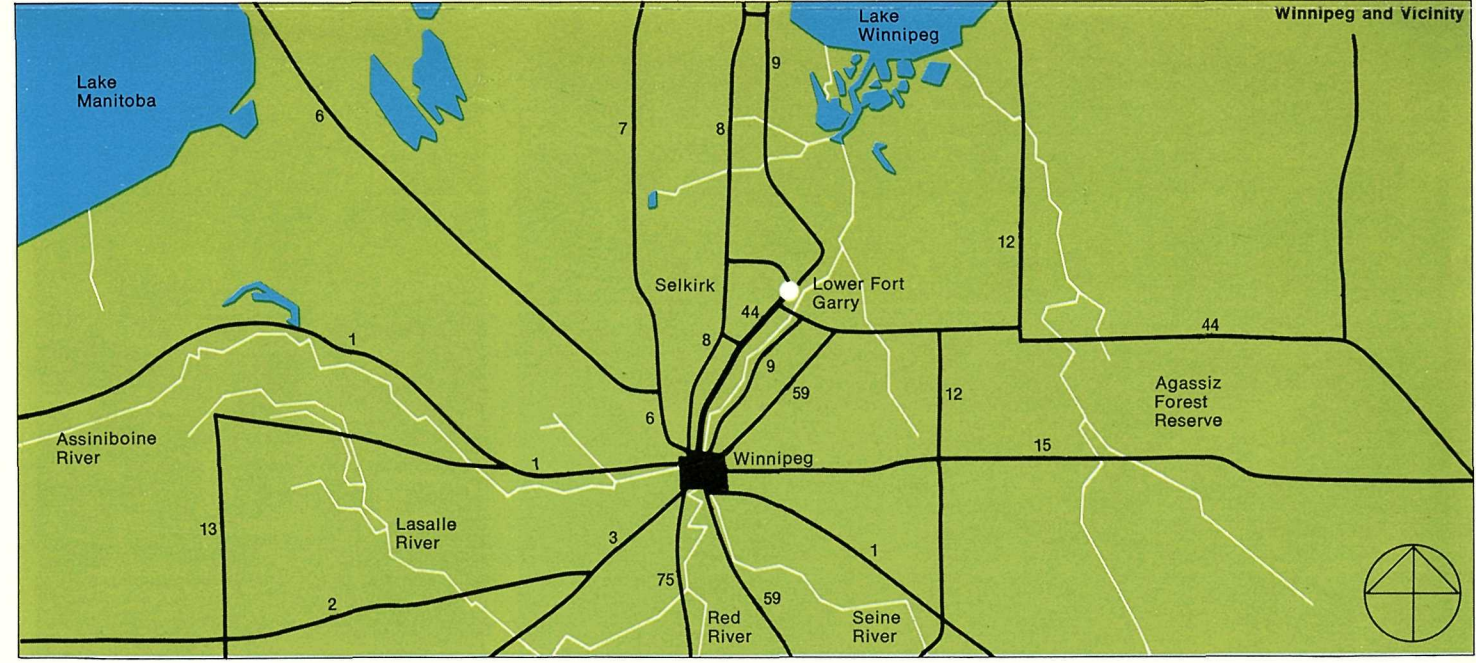


**National Historic Parks & Sites**

- 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.
- 10 Woodside, (Ontario) At Kitchener, the boyhood home of William Lyon Mackenzie King, tenth prime minister of Canada.
- 11 "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.



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