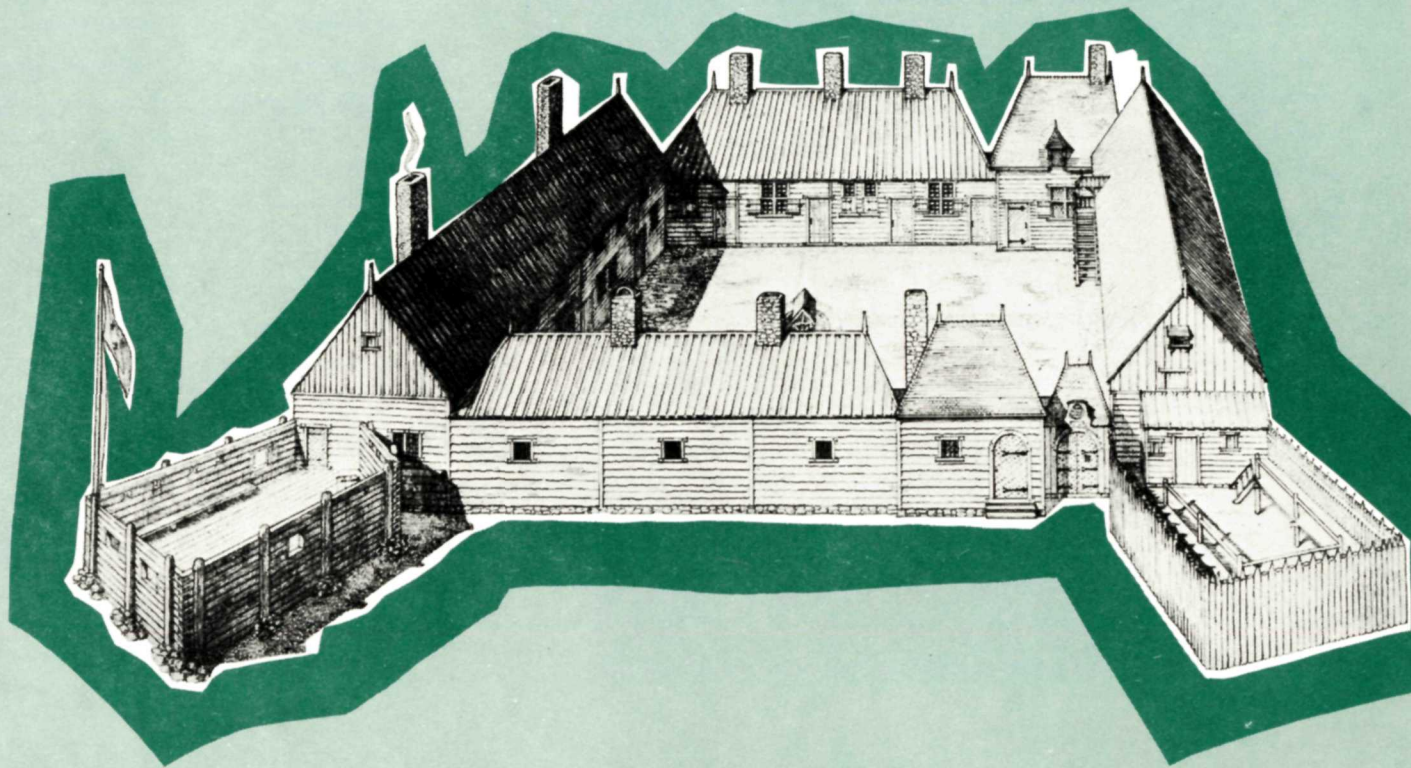
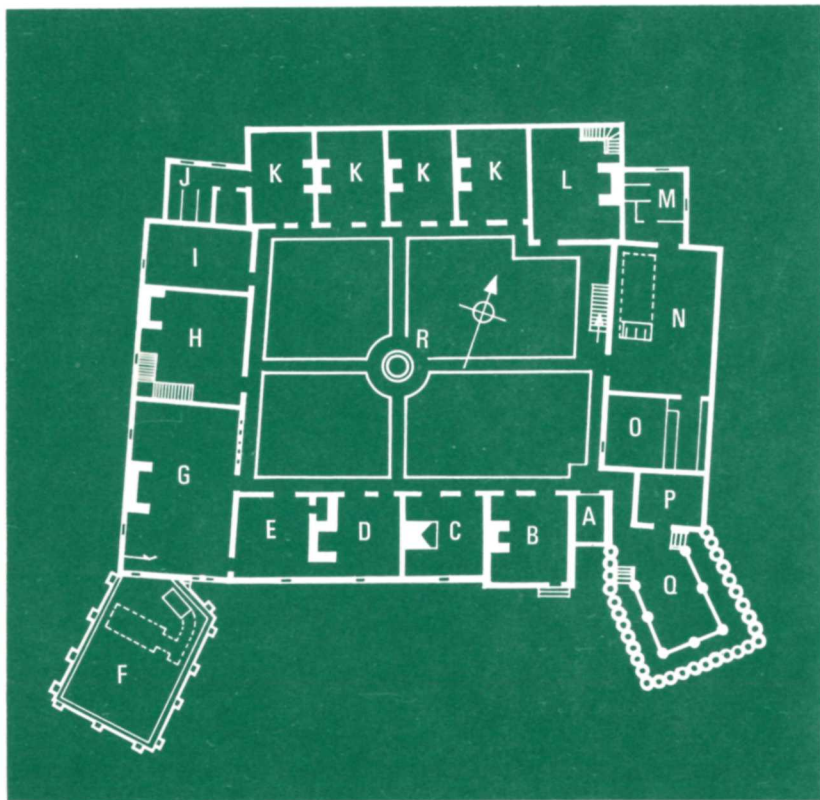


PORT ROYAL HABITATION

NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK, NOVA SCOTIA





PLAN

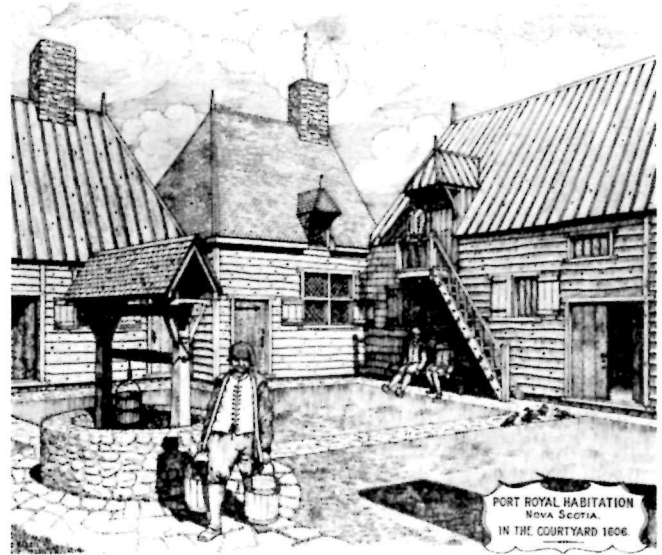
Reference

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| A - Entrance Gateway | J - Modern toilet |
| B - Boulaye Dwelling | K - Gentlemen's Dwellings |
| C - Blacksmiths' Shop | L - de Monts Dwellings |
| D - Kitchen | M - Modern toilet |
| E - Bakeshop | N - Store House |
| F - Cannon Platform | O - Trading Room |
| G - Community Hall | P - Guardroom |
| H - Artisans' Quarters | Q - Palisade |
| I - Chapel | R - Well |

the colony collapsed in 1543.

Another unsuccessful attempt at colonization was made by the Marquis de la Roche in 1598. La Roche collected his colonists from the streets of Rouen and landed them on Sable Island, the same island off the Nova Scotia coast that Léry had tried to settle in 1518. Sable Island was intended to provide only a temporary haven for the colonists while La Roche sailed in search of a site for the colony but his ship was driven away by a gale and the paupers were stranded on Sable Island. It was 1603 before he was able to return to rescue the colonists and by this time only 11 were left alive. In this same year, attempts were made to establish a fur-trading post at Tadoussac at the mouth of the Saguenay River by François Gravé, Sieur du Pont, a St. Malo merchant, and Chauvin, a naval captain, but the enterprise was unsuccessful.

In 1603, Sieur de Monts, a nobleman, was given royal permission to colonize Canada. The economic base for the colony was to be the rich fur-trade of which De Monts was assured a monopoly. The composition of De Monts' expedition was mixed: some were criminals and thugs impressed to serve as colonists to purge France of their disreputable presence, others were noblemen of good character who volunteered to serve in a noble adventure. The expedition included Catholic priests and Huguenot ministers.



The first ship of the expedition sailed from Havre de Grace on April 7, 1604. De Monts, the leader of the expedition, was on board and the captain was Samuel de Champlain, a soldier who had explored the West Indies and made one voyage to Canada. The second ship of the expedition, commanded by Du Pont-Gravé, was to follow later with supplies for the colony.

De Monts, who had experienced the cruel winters of the St. Lawrence shore, ordered a course to a more southerly landfall. The ship reached Nova Scotia's southern coast and sailed west. De Monts seized a French fur-trading ship that was competing against his monopoly and waited at Port Mouton, so named because a sheep jumped overboard, for Du Pont-Gravé. After almost a month, Du Pont-Gravé arrived, delivered his supplies, and sailed to Tadoussac to trade with the Indians.

Champlain passed around Cape Sable and entered St. Mary's Bay which he used as an anchorage for two weeks while boat crews explored the coasts. He explored the Bay of Fundy discovering the pleasant harbor of Annapolis Basin. The Baron de Poutrincourt, one of the colonists, was impressed with this harbor and asked De Monts if he could be granted the region as a future estate for his family. De Monts agreed and Poutrincourt took formal possession of the place, which he named Port Royal.

From Port Royal, the expedition sailed around the Bay of Fundy, Champlain charting all the main navigational features of the coast. An island at the mouth of the River St. Croix on the present Maine—New Brunswick border, was chosen as the site of the new colony. The site had little to commend it for human habitation. It was a good military position only, but the optimistic colonists ignored its shortcomings as they prepared energetically for the winter. A square of buildings was built, providing lodgings, storehouses, workshops, a magazine, and a barrack for the soldiers. When the colony had been built and enclosed with a palisade, Poutrincourt returned to France to collect resources for the occupation of Port Royal. The savage winter of 1604-1605 brought great suffering to the men at St. Croix. The island lay open to storms and was often cut off from the mainland by masses of ice. Fuel was difficult to obtain and the men could not protect themselves from the cold. The dreaded scurvy claimed almost half the colony before Du Pont-Gravé arrived in the spring.

De Monts decided to seek a better site for his colony and set out with Champlain to explore the shores of Maine and Massachusetts. During their voyage, they discovered many harbors including Plymouth and Boston and met new tribes of Indians but found no location they considered suitable for a colony. On his return to St. Croix, De Monts

collected the entire expedition, loaded the stores, utensils, and even parts of the St. Croix buildings on the ships, and sailed for Port Royal. There on the north shore of the Basin, slightly below the mouth of the Annapolis River, De Monts and Champlain established Port Royal in 1605. News of plots in France by opponents of his monopoly made it advisable for De Monts to return home, and Du Pont-Gravé and Champlain were left to occupy Port Royal during the winter.

After De Monts left, Du Pont-Gravé completed the construction of the Habitation at Port Royal. The plan of the settlement, drawn up by Champlain, provided for a group of buildings arranged around a central courtyard. It was to this colony that Poutrincourt returned in 1606, accompanied by Marc Lescarbot, a lawyer in the parliament of Paris and a man of literary skill and erudition, and a party of mechanics and labourers. Du Pont-Gravé sailed for France shortly after Poutrincourt's arrival and the latter with Champlain set out again to explore alternative settlement sites, leaving Lescarbot in command of Port Royal.

Lescarbot busied himself with many projects while Poutrincourt and Champlain were away. He burned the grass and sowed crops of wheat, rye, and barley. He planted seeds and carefully tended the garden that was the first experimental seed plot in North America. And, when the

explorers returned, weary after a voyage that had brought them much danger, hardship, and misfortune, Lescarbot greeted them with a tableau which Neptune and his consorts performed on the waters opposite the Habitation. When the battered explorers entered Port Royal, they were further heartened by the sight of the arms of France mounted over the gateway.

The winter of 1606-1607 was spent happily by the men of the Port Royal Habitation. De Monts had provided ample food and wine for his colony and the rations were supplemented with fish and game. As a diversion, Champlain organized "The Order of Good Cheer," the first social club in America. The charter members of this club, which Champlain entitled "L'Ordre de Bon-Temps," were the 15 principal members of the colony who sat at Poutrincourt's table. Each of the members served in turn as Grand Master, holding his exalted office for a day. The Grand Master was responsible for catering to the Order and to serve with credit occupied himself for several days before his appointment hunting, fishing, and trading with the Indians. When he took office, the wild bounty of the forests and rivers was prepared into delicious dishes under his direction and served to the gourmets of the Order. On the last stroke of noon, the Grand Master entered the community room, a napkin on his shoulder, the staff of his office in his hand, and the

collar of the Order around his neck. Behind him followed the members of the Order each carrying a dish.

The noon meal was usually the banquet of the day but the Order fared well at breakfast and supper as well. Indian



chiefs were frequently present at these repasts and Membertou, the old warrior who had been a faithful ally of the French since their arrival at Port Royal, never missed a meal. At the evening meal, before Grace, the Grand Master relinquished to his successor the collar of the Order and pledged him in a cup of wine.

In the spring, the colony returned to agricultural pursuits. On a stream now known as Allen's River, the first grist mill in Canada was built. More gardens were laid out and Poutrincourt collected turpentine from the woods and converted it into tar by a process he had invented.

The hopes of the colony were disappointed, for in late spring word was received that De Mont's trading monopoly had been revoked. The prosperous colony with its Habitation, grain fields and gardens had to be abandoned and on July 30, 1607, Lescarbot and the colonists sailed away and were joined a month later at the Strait of Canso by Poutrincourt and Champlain who had stayed at Port Royal to collect samples of the grain grown in the fields. The colonists arrived at France early in October.

In 1610 Poutrincourt, having received royal confirmation of the grant of Port Royal, returned to Port Royal and found

the Habitation intact and undisturbed. To assure the French court that he was sincerely interested in converting the Indians, Poutrincourt had brought a priest who began missionary work. The old friend, Membertou, and his family, 21 persons in all, were received into the Church, acquiring the baptismal names of French nobility. Other Indians eagerly followed the example of Membertou and his clan and soon Poutrincourt had an impressive list of converts to send to France with his son, Biencourt, in 1610.

The news aroused great interest in France and attracted the attention of Madame de Guercheville, a lady-of-honour to the Queen. Madame de Guercheville raised funds among the court which the Jesuits used to buy the interests in Port Royal held by the merchants of St. Malo. Biencourt returned to Port Royal with two Jesuit priests and took command of the Habitation when his father went to France.

By 1612, Poutrincourt's resources were so depleted that he willingly accepted an offer of financial assistance from Madame de Guercheville. The noblewoman also obtained from De Monts the transfer of all his claims to Acadia and in addition was granted by King Louis XIII all North America from Florida to the St. Lawrence River. Only Port Royal, which was still a seigniory of Poutrincourt, re-

mained outside her influence.

Madame de Guercheville's grant conflicted with the claims of the British who claimed all North America north



of Florida because of Cabot's voyage of discovery in 1497. By patents of 1606, King James I of England had granted all North America to two merchant companies, one of London and the other of Plymouth. In 1607 the London company had established the colony of Jamestown in Virginia but the Plymouth company had not yet settled its grant of Maine and Acadia.

Madame de Guercheville prepared to take possession of her domain by establishing a colony at Mount Desert on the Maine coast in 1613. The French colonists had barely landed when an English ship commanded by Samuel Argall, who was acting under orders of the Governor of Virginia, overcame them, seizing their ship and supplies and carrying off the survivors of the battle as prisoners.

Later, Argall with three ships set out to destroy all French settlements in North America. At St. Croix, they obliterated the ruins of De Monts' colony, and then crossed the Bay of Fundy to Port Royal. The Habitation was undefended, as Biencourt and some of his men were visiting Indians and the rest of the French working the fields above the fort. Argall butchered or carried away all the livestock, plundered the Habitation, and then put it to the torch. Biencourt and his men survived in the Port Royal region after the destruction of the Habitation and eventually partially rebuilt Port Royal; but the Habitation of Champlain,

Lescarbot, Poutrincourt, and l'Ordre de Bon-Temps ended in the smouldering ashes left by Argall.

The Port Royal Habitation was the earliest European settlement of any permanence established in North America north of Florida. It was established two years before Jamestown, three years before Quebec, and 15 years before the arrival of the Plymouth Brethren at Plymouth. It was a portent that this first French settlement should be destroyed in the first clash of arms in North America between Great Britain and France.

The Reconstruction of the Port Royal Habitation

The Habitation at Port Royal was reconstructed by the Canadian Government in 1938-1939. Champlain's engraving or picture plan of the Habitation and his descriptions in the "Voyages" of 1613 provided the basic data for the reconstruction. Other details of life in the Habitation were found in Lescarbot's *History of New France* and the *Jesuit Relations*.

The idea of reconstructing the Habitation was presented in 1927 and forwarded by the interest of L. M. Fortier, honorary curator of Fort Anne National Historic Park, and Mrs. Harriette Taber Richardson, an American woman who had spent her summers in Annapolis Royal since 1923 and had made an intense study of the Habitation and its site. Mrs. Richardson organized The Associates of Port Royal, a number of distinguished citizens of Massachusetts

and Virginia who pledged their support to a reconstruction of the Habitation.

In 1938, the property on which the site of the Habitation is located was offered for sale and the Historical Association of Annapolis Royal obtained an option on it. The option was taken up by the Nova Scotia Government at the request of the Canadian Government and later the Canadian Government completed the purchase. Five acres adjacent to the site were purchased from the Historical Association and a small property on the waterfront purchased from its owner.

After consulting historians and archaeologists, the National and Historic Parks Branch decided to undertake the reconstruction. The American Associates of Port Royal provided the services of C. C. Pinckney, of Boston, an archaeological excavator who had been associated with the restorations of Williamsburg, Stratford, and Mount Vernon.

During the winter of 1938-1939, a great amount of architectural research was carried out with particular attention to building practice of the 17th century in North America and France. Excavation, which had started in September, 1938, was concluded in 1939. Most of the foundations of the original Habitation were found at an average depth of 21 inches. All soil removed from the site was screened carefully but most of the material found was of later dates than 1605-1613.

Every detail of the reconstruction was carried out with scrupulous fidelity. Workmen of the Annapolis Royal district—several of them with experience as ship's carpenters—were employed and carried out their craftsmanship with great skill.

The reconstruction of the Habitation sheds a true light on the history of building in North America as well as faithfully recreating the atmosphere and surroundings of the original buildings. Indians living along the coasts used logs for buildings and Europeans copied their techniques but historical evidence at Port Royal and the later English colonies along the Atlantic coast shows that frame construction and European building traditions were followed in the early settlements.

The following is a brief description of the various units of the Habitation which, unless otherwise mentioned, are shown on Champlain's picture plan.

The Entrance Gateway — This small building is framed up of hewn oak with walls of contemporary French construction, known as "en colombage" and is roofed with oak shingles of the same size as those used on small buildings of the period in Picardy. The studded oak doors are handmade and hung and fitted with wrought ironware of period design. The peep-hole in the outer door was known as a "Judas". The coat of arms painted on the oak standard over the



Gateway is derived from that shown on Lescarbot's map of Port Royal and on several other contemporary documents. The arms are those of France (left) and Navarre (right)—of which countries Henry IV was King.

Small Building Immediately West of the Entrance Gateway — This building is described on the legend accompanying Champlain's picture plan as "a small building in which was kept the rigging for our pinnaces. This the Sieur de Poutrincourt had later rebuilt, and there the Sieur de Boulay lodged when the Sieur du Pont returned to France". The interior wall boarding of the building is of spruce, moulded in the manner of some of the earliest French-Canadian houses of which there is a record. The fireplace is of local stone, lined with bricks of authentic size made of clay dug at the site. The leaded glass windows are of contemporary French pattern, as are also the handwrought ironware of doors and windows and the candle sconces, which would have been made by the blacksmiths at the Habitation. The roof is covered with hand-split pine shingles.

The Blacksmith Shop — It is probable that malleable iron was brought from France and that most of the ironware used throughout the Habitation for doors, windows and fireplaces was hand-wrought at the forge. The iron-workers also made tools, utensils, and arrowheads for trading with the Indians in exchange for furs and pelts. Repairs to muskets

and other military equipment would be made by an armourer or locksmith here. The forge is of authentic French pattern, built of handmade bricks and local stone. The casement windows are handmade of oak, showing the square block bar intersections peculiar to the period in Normandy. They are filled in with oiled parchment, which probably was used in the original structure and now fills most of the Habitation's windows.

The Cannon Platform — Champlain describes the cannon platform thus: "At one corner, on the western side, is a platform whereon were placed four pieces of cannon." The platform is protected by a wall formed of heavy timbers, hewn roughly square and pierced by cannon embrasures and musketry loopholes. The deck is made of heavy puncheon flooring (logs hewn flat on top and two sides) laid on timber beams, which in turn are carried on a boulder fill which was found in place on the site. The powder magazine where the ammunition for the fort was stored is located beneath the cannon platform. This dark dungeon-like room is enclosed by stone walls and roof and secured with a massive oak door. Access is gained through a trap door in the platform deck and a flight of winding stone stairs which lead downward to the magazine vestibule.

The Kitchen — The cooking for the settlement generally would have been carried out here. It is recorded by Lescarbot



that for their rations the company had peas, beans, rice, prunes, dried cod, and salt meat, besides oil and butter, and that in due season they procured mussels, lobsters, crabs, and cockles. He also states that sturgeon, herrings, and sardines were plentiful and that "of all their meats none is so tender as moose-meat (whereof were also made excellent pasties) and none so delicate as beaver's tail".

The Bake Shop — As an indication of the amount of baking that must have been done here, it is recorded that at one time there were 84 people living at the settlement. The wheat for baking was at first ground by hand, but was later gristed at the mill built by Poutrincourt. The bake-oven is heated by a firebox underneath, which has a flue at the back connecting with the kitchen chimney; this is distinctive of French bake-ovens of the period.

The Community Room — This room, which is not shown on Champlain's picture plan, would have been used for general assemblies and meals, it being in close proximity to the bake shop and kitchen. The celebration and festivities in connection with the Order of Good Cheer, which was instituted by Champlain in the winter of 1606-1607, were observed here.

The construction of the room follows contemporary French practice. The massive posts and beams and the knee braces are wane edged, as a result of being hand hewn out

of round timbers in the old manner. The oak steps and landing which lead to the cannon platform have hand-moulded newel posts and balusters of contemporary design. The fireplace is modelled on that of a large contemporary French farmhouse.

The Artisans' Quarters — The West building as a whole is indicated on the Champlain picture plan as the artisans' lodgings or quarters. The ground floor was probably originally divided into two rooms, each having a fireplace about the middle of the west wall. The community room at the south end would be used for dining purposes and the room at the north end as the artisans' living quarters.

The Artisans' Dormitory — This room, at second floor level in the west wing and reached by means of a winding staircase from the artisans' quarters, is 21 feet by 66 feet in size, and was used as sleeping quarters by the craftsmen and workmen in the settlement. The roof framing in this room, and in the store room on the second floor of the east wing, is notable for the massive hand hewn timbers, which are joined by pegged mortise and tenon joints to form the roof trusses. These roof trusses, eleven in number, are roughly similar to the modern king post truss, with the upper chord elongated to bear on the wall plate, and the lower chord set at an elevation to provide head room in the dormitory. Massive "Ship Knees" timbers have been so

placed as to stiffen the elongated sections of the lower chord. There are no nails or spikes used in the assembly of these trusses, which are placed on about five foot six inch centres and carry the roof boarding, which spans between trusses and so eliminated the need for rafters such as we see in modern construction.

The Chapel — There is no evidence that a chapel was ever built, but such rooms as were available at the time were used for holding religious services. It is here placed in the artisans' building in accordance with reasonable probability and to commemorate the fact that the missionaries held religious services at the Habitation.

The Priests' Dwelling — There is no documentary evidence of the position of the priests' quarters, but it is assumed to have been one of the north line of dwellings.

Gentlemen's Dwellings — Each building has an entrance from the courtyard, a fireplace, and a mullion window with transom lights. The doors, made of wide pine boards with battens and braces, are hand planed and painted blue as this was one of the most prevalent colours in contemporary Normandy farm buildings.

The Governor's House — De Monts did not occupy the Governor's dwelling here, for having seen the new settlement nearly completed, he left the finishing of the buildings in charge of Du Pont-Gravé and returned to France.

Du Pont-Gravé was commander of the fort during the winter of 1605-1606 and returned to France in August, 1606, about the time that Poutrincourt took up residence in the Governor's house.

Samuel de Champlain, the great French explorer who occupied this house with Du Pont-Gravé, is the most famous member of the colony. He was a captain in the French Navy as well as Geographer Royal. Born in Brouage, Normandy, he died in Quebec in 1636. In this dwelling he prepared the first detailed charts and maps of the Atlantic coastline and here also, he doubtless wrote the notes for his "Voyages 1613".

Champlain records that the house was built of "fair sawn timber by good workmen who built steadily and vigorously," and Lescarbot refers to the building as made of well-finished carpentry. The floors and interior wall siding of the ground floor are of oak. The siding is moulded in the manner of that of some of the earliest French houses in Quebec. The staircase is of birch with hand-moulded newel caps and pendants. The fireplace mantel shelf and over-mantel are of characteristic period design, handmade with pinned joints. The shields portray the arms of the two governors of Port Royal, the Sieur de Monts on the left, the Sieur de Poutrincourt on the right, and between them the Arms of France.

The roof of the Governor's House (exposed to view in

the attic) is constructed with main trusses supporting purlins and rafters, in which respect it differs from the roof construction of the other buildings designed to carry lapped roof boarding. The slopes of the roof are covered with hand-split pine shingles, which might well have been used as a substitute for earthenware tiles covering a building of this character in Normandy.

The Storehouse—Champlain records that “on the eastern side is a Storehouse of the full width (of the courtyard) with a very fine cellar some five to six feet high”. The storehouse is of framed construction, with posts, beams with knee braces, and roof trusses of contemporary French type.

The position of the cellar was identified by the archaeological survey of the site. It was found to be about a toise (6 feet 3 inches) wide, three toises long, and of a depth (5 feet to 6 feet) stated by Champlain.

The Trading Room—There is no evidence of the position of the trading room, but the south end of the storehouse should be the logical place, close to the Entrance Gateway where Indians could conveniently bring their wares to trade, and connecting directly with the storehouse by a doorway behind the counter. In this connection, Lescarbot records as follows: “When winter came the savages of the country assembled at Port Royal from far and near to barter what they had with the French, some bringing beaver and



other skins . . . and also moose skins, of which excellent buff jackets may be made, others bringing fresh meat, of which they made many a banquet.”

The Guard Room—Champlain’s picture plan shows a lean-to roofed building at the south end of the storehouse opening onto the palisade. This is assumed to be a guard room or sentry shelter.

The Palisade—The palisade is evidently incorrectly portrayed on Champlain’s picture plan, for it would be useless for defensive purposes as shown. Champlain’s text reads: “At one corner . . . is a platform . . . and at the other corner towards the east is a palisade fashioned like a platform”. A firing platform as constructed around three of the inner sides of the palisade upon which musketeers could stand to fire between alternately pointed poles and thus enfilade the east and south fronts of the Habitation is probably the logical solution.

The Well—(vide *Jesuit Relations* . . . “as the spring was some little distance from there, they dug a well in the

fort and found the water very good.”) The site of this well was identified by an exploratory survey when disturbed soil was discovered with surface field stones down to a depth of 18 feet, at which depth a good supply of water was encountered. The well was rebuilt with field stones and the oak shingled cover, with the windlass and bucket, all made by hand, are of contemporary Normandy type.

Other National Historic Parks related to the French occupation of Canada are located in the Atlantic Provinces. They are Fort Anne at Annapolis Royal, Fort Beausejour about midway between Sackville, New Brunswick, and Amherst, Nova Scotia, the Fortress of Louisbourg, near Sydney on Cape Breton Island, and Grand Pré National Historic Park.



NATIONAL AND HISTORIC PARKS BRANCH,
Department of Indian Affairs and
Northern Development

Issued under the authority of
HONOURABLE ARTHUR LAING, P.C., M.P., B.S.A.,
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

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