PROGRESS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY PROJECT
FORTRESS OF LOUISBOURG NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK, 1987-88

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Introduction

The second field season of the Louisbourg Archaeological Survey began in June, 1987. The immediate objective was to complete the recording of features on the North Shore and to initiate the survey in other regions of the Park. Minimal testing was proposed for the north side of Rochefort Point to determine the extent of erosion loss relative to historic cemeteries in the area. This work was undertaken in October. At the end of the 1987 season, 433 features were recorded.

This summary outlines the progress of the Survey Project in its second year. The features are discussed within the geographical context of site numbers (Fig. 1).

54L

This designation refers to the area south of Kennington Cove Road, east of Freshwater Brook and west of the Fortress enceinte (Fig. 1). We recorded 14 sites in 54L. Features previously excavated in the Fauxbourg are not included in this study.

The most significant features identified in 54L are the siege positions at Green Hill (6A-6G). Currently, terraced levels and stone-lined depressions on its surface are evidence of its military function in both sieges.

From the southeast side of Green Hill, vestiges of trenches can be traced to a second knoll on the landward front of the King’s Bastion. These and other features of the 1745/1758 sieges, located between the Fortress and the present roads, are scheduled for 1988. Consequently, only 19th/20th-century sites are reported from the Fauxbourg (4A, 5A, 5B, 9A).

We did not have time to record completely the sites on the coastal strip between Black Rock and Freshwater Brook, but we did note and flag features during our preliminary inspection of the area. These sites are associated with 1758 French defensive functions and consist of the Black Rock entrenchment, several “redan flèche” works on low hills west of Black Rock and a small earthwork in the first cove east of Freshwater Brook. The French entrenchment extending across White Point is the most obvious feature on this coastline. Erosion, however, is damaging the west side of this position.
Figure 1 Map of the Fortress of Louisbourg N.H.P. showing the historic locations and the archaeological site boundaries.
In the 19th century fishermen occupied White Point on a seasonal basis and their small huts are represented as landmarks on coastal survey charts (1857-1, 1897-1). The "foundations" located by Graham (1961: np) are conceivably ruins of these features. One of these, excavated in 1967, is reported to be a 19th-century fisherman’s summer dwelling (Schuyler 1967). It was assigned site number 53L.

A season of record low rainfall and high temperatures contributed to the drying up of ponds within the Park. In one of these, northeast of White Point, 22 cannonballs and a large mortar fragment were observed. These artifacts were photographed and left in place. The low hills surrounding the pond were thoroughly examined, but no visible remains of military works were located.

In the early 20th-century a talc mine was operated on the east bank of Freshwater Brook Cove in the location of 1758 French defensive works. The quarry pits (7A-B, 8A) destroyed any surface evidence of the earlier sites, but a mid-18th-century artifact horizon is evident on the eroded face.

We located and flagged the 1758 British right redoubt for inclusion in the 1988 schedule.

55L

This site designation includes all of Rochefort Point east of the "nouvelle enceinte" (Fig. 1). Twenty-four features were identified and six test units were excavated (1A-1D, 10A-10B).

Since 1713 a number of historic and natural activities have changed the physical configuration of Rochefort Point. The initial fishery and civilian occupation ended in 1738 when construction began on the seaward-facing fortifications. When these were completed, Rochefort Point was effectively abandoned beyond the Maurepas Gate. Large areas of rock were blasted and fill was brought from other locations during the construction phase. Three sites are associated (17A-17C) with these earth removal activities.

After 1744 Rochefort Point was primarily used as a cemetery. The initial date of use is unknown, but a cemetery is illustrated on 1744 maps (1744-5) and on a New England map of 1746 (1746-4). It is contiguous to the south edge of Rue D’Orléans occupying land between the 1729 Carrerot and 1723 Ste. Marie concessions (1720-2, 1730-2, 1745-11). The historical record suggests the cemetery was utilized by the French in 1744-45 and by the New Englanders during their occupation to 1749 (Moore 1974:11). Another cemetery, situated on the south side of the Point, is illustrated on maps of the second French occupation (1751-10, 1758-28). A 1759 British document indicates the graves were very shallow (Moore 1976:11).

The test excavations at Rochefort Point were conducted adjacent to the shoreline at a location where skeletal remains are visible and erosion is measured at .67 feet (20.42 cm) per year (Public Works 1985:7). In four test units (1A-1D), five undisturbed burials were located. This confirmed our assumption that the 1744-49 cemetery is actively eroding. If erosion continues at this location, dozens of bodies will be exposed.

Other extant features located on Rochefort Point include seven earth depressions associated with various 18th-century French activities (55L2, 4, 8, 9A, 11, 14, 16A), two stone-lined wells (9B, 20A), possible remains of a lime kiln (55L6), and a number of stone-lined features. The largest is a 55 m long rectangular stone-filled depression that we interpret as the De Salvert Battery (15A). This 12-gun position was used effectively against the British following the abandonment of the Island Battery in 1758 (Fry 1984:145). The second lime kiln at Rochefort Point (1745-8, 1758-28) is presumed lost to erosion.

Preliminary results of tests conducted on a feature previously identified as the lime kiln indicate the feature is an 18th-century building of unknown use.

56L

Battery Island is scheduled for a one-day reconnaissance in 1988. In the 1960s two minor survey and salvage projects were undertaken there but no attempt was made to establish benchmarks for monitoring erosion. Viewed from the Lighthouse, erosion is quite severe on the northeast side of the Island.

57L

This site number applies to the area defined by the southeastern Louisbourg town boundary and the Big Lorraine Road (Fig. 1). Forty-nine sites were located in this area.

Big Lorraine, located on the coast northeast of Louisbourg is the sole 18th-century French dependent community within the Park. At the time of the French occupation, Grand Lorembec supported a fishing economy. The small permanent population was usually enlarged by a seasonal work force bringing the population up to 240 in 1734 (Schmeisser 1976:8). During our initial walking survey of Big Lorraine the majority of surface features appeared to be of 19th- and 20th-century origin. Recording of the area is scheduled for 1988.
Southeast of Big Lorraine is the sheltered beach of Landing Cove. Before 1758 the French erected two batteries connected by an earth entrenchment in this location (1757-4).

A more recent feature in the cove is the mortared stone foundation of a late 19th-century submarine telegraph cable station. Although this identification is at present not supported by documents, former residents of the area defend the assertion.

Anse à Gautier is the French name for three small coves between Lorraine Head and the Lighthouse (Fig. 1). Currently they are mapped as Mackerel, Brook Landing and Gun Landing Coves. In anticipation that a British landing might be attempted on this coast, the French constructed a series of entrenchments around each cove and manned the artillery positions (Fig. 2). After the French withdrew from Anse à Gautier, Wolfe, accompanied by troops and supplies, went to this "Landing Cove" to begin the right attack. Evidence of these activities is visible today.

The French coastal entrenchments (12A-12F) are clearly discernible as shallow depressions on the shore edge. In the eastern coves, erosion threatens to completely destroy several sections of these. The features on the western cove are currently below a storm beach built up since the French occupation.

North of Brook Landing Cove (middle) there is a large earthwork (11A). This feature is 41.0 by 70.0 metres with a 3 m wide earth wall rising 1.0 metre above ground and encircling the site. On the surface of a 5.0 m high knoll, north of the feature, there is evidence of stone coursing and ditching. The 1758 siege plans indicate a British encampment at this location, but it is probable that French troops are responsible for at least the initial construction activities. We did not locate the Ranger’s Post illustrated on 1758 plans (1758-13).

On the high, treeless ridge between Anse à Gautier and the lighthouse, camps were established by the attackers in both sieges. At the lighthouse, large siege batteries were erected. These features are not detectable on the current surface.

West of the present lighthouse there are the remains of two historic lighthouses (1A, 2A), ruins of a 20th-century home, associated domestic structures and foundations of lighthouse outbuildings.

Numerous other sites are located throughout 57L, dating from the French occupation to 1941. At Careening Cove (5A-5K) there are traces of a substantial French ship repair complex. East of Careening Cove are the foundations of an 1870s railroad terminus (4A-4U) containing several residential structures and railroad facilities. The abandoned rail line is still part of the southeast Louisbourg landscape.

On the high ground, northeast of Careening Cove, at a location commanding a view of the coastline, there is structural debris relating to an early 20th-century pilot’s camp and semaphore station (6A-6B). At Kennelly’s Point there is surface evidence of the home and dance hall constructed by D.J. Kennelly in the late 19th century (7A-B). Nearby are the platform remains of two anti-submarine guns (7F, 7G), established in 1941 by the 16th Coastal Artillery, Wolfe Battery (Moogk 1985:157). An irregular trench (7C), a concrete anchor block (7E), and coils of barbed wire entanglements are associated with the gun positions.

On a wooded hillside north of the lighthouse is a 28 m long flanked earthwork with two forward trenches and a sentry position. This is Wolfe’s Great Bomb Battery (9A) rising 2 m above the ground surface and angled perpendicular to the northwest harbour. The mortar and howitzer battery illustrated on 1758 plans was not located. On a hill above the northeast harbour the Double Crown Redoubt is hidden by dense tree growth, a consequence of earlier forest clear cutting. The site was located in 1963 by a Park survey team.

58L

The Royal Battery is included on all base maps and is recorded on the site inventory.

59L

This site number incorporates the north shore of the harbour between the Royal Battery and the original Fauxbourg causeway, and is bounded north and west by the Compound Road and Route 22, and on the east by the Louisbourg Town boundary (Fig. 1). The history of the North Shore is discussed in a previous report (Burke 1987). Since then, research has been site specific and, where applicable, is appended to the site inventory.

A total of 191 sites are recorded in 59L. These represent 55 18th-century sites, 125 19- and 20th century features, and 11 excavated test units on the North Shore.

This year we undertook a thorough walking survey of the area between the treeline and the harbour. The 19th- and 20th-century settlement of West Louisbourg is now fully documented with regard to observable features in the landscape. Working primarily with land grant maps, 1931 aerial photos and oral histories, we were able to correlate most field data to a specific occupancy. The range of site types associated with the 19th- and 20th-century tenure is diverse. There are 16 wells, 42 outbuildings, 37 house
Figure 2 1758 Plan of Louisbourg showing the French defensive works (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris).
sites, two cemeteries, several piled-stone property boundaries, and numerous other features. It is significant, too, that as properties were abandoned, structural debris was removed and wells were filled by the Park's maintenance crew.

This segment of the survey was time-consuming, yet we felt strongly that an effective resource inventory and evaluation must document the recent landscape as well. The identification of 19/20th-century surface features allows managers of historical resources to exclude these sites from the "unknown" category (where they could potentially pass as 18th-century sites) and to evaluate their impact on 18th-century features.

The 18th-century features on the North Shore represent French fishery-related activities (3D-E, 5D, 7C-E, 10N, 63D, 64D, 75A, 76A), British military sites (11K, 57A), and indeterminate features associated with the French occupation of Louisbourg.

Historical documents indicate the construction of numerous siege positions within 59L. Excepting the 1758 Mortar and Howitzer Battery (57A), and the main redoubt of Wolfe's Camp (11K), there are no detectable signs of other sites. We did, however, interpret the geographical position of these works from cartographic documents and record their potential locations in the site inventory.

The fortified central position of Wolfe's Camp, located immediately north of the current Reception Centre, was recorded in 1961 (Graham 1961). Today it is obscured by a dense stand of fir, a consequence of forest clear-cutting in 1966.

60L

This site number comprises the area north of Kennington Cove Road/Route 22, east of Freshwater Brook and west of the Compound Road (Fig. 1). We recorded 62 sites in this area, of which 48 are 19th/20th century, 10 are 18th century, and four are unknown. Test units (23A, 23B) were excavated at the location of a military feature (23C) with the hope of verifying the site's date.

The Grenadier Redoubt (9A) is currently the best example of British military siege construction in the Park. This feature is a 30.0 m wide semi-circular stone-lined position with a traverse. Constructed in two days by 2200 men, "it was capable of holding 4000 or 500 men and the parapet [was] cannon shot proof."

Southeast of the redoubt is the smaller Grenadier Redan, a "V"-shaped work with associated trenching (6A-6B). The documents also indicate a Grenadier Camp northwest of these positions, though it could not be located.

On the east bank of Barachois Brook, and 30.0 m north of the bridge, are three circular stone-lined depressions (7A, 7B, 7C) and one "L"-shaped stone foundation (7D). These features may be associated with 1758 British brewery or washing activities.

In 1913 Marconi established a wireless receiving station in Louisbourg which was guarded by a regiment of the Argyll Highlanders during the First World War (MacLeod 1985). The Marconi installation is represented by nine features (20A-20I), including homes, outbuildings, a tenement, and the work stations. In 1964 portions of the Marconi site were changed when the Park developed it as a picnic site.

The activities of the Argyll Highlanders are represented by 11 sites (8A-8L). These include barrel-lined wells, mounded gun positions, trenches and foxholes. It is possible they modified the central portions of both the Grenadier Redoubt and the "Blockhouse" (23C).

The blockhouse structure cannot be associated with either of Louisbourg's sieges, yet a 1751 French map illustrates a blockhouse in this location (Figs. 3 and 4). It indicates the work was constructed "en charpente" by New Englanders as a post for monitoring the "sauvages." In 1751 the engineer Franquet suggested that the two-storey blockhouse be sold for its timber. Datable artifacts were not obtained in either test unit.

The 1758 siege plans indicate that several offensive positions were located on the north side of the North Shore Road. These include the Admiral's Battery (14C), the Redoubt and Battery of two guns (22B), and the Two Gun Battery (22C). Two hundred years of land use have obliterated the surface evidence of these sites.

Work on the following 60L sites is scheduled for 1988:
1) The Épaulement, located immediately north of Green Hill and cut by the modern Kennington Cove Road;
2) The Left, Centre and Advance Redoubts of 1758. The latter site has been located;
Figure 3 1751 Plan of Louisbourg indicating the New England blockhouses (Archives du Genie, Paris).

Figure 4 Oblique aerial view of the New England blockhouse (60L23C) remains, facing northeast.
This site number refers to the area between Freshwater and Kennington Cove Brooks (Fig. 1).

The majority of sites are clustered west of Freshwater Brook where, in the 18th century, intensive military activities occurred. These include the 1745 New England encampment, nine 1758 British Regimental Camps, numerous redans, redoubts, invasion roads and the French coastal entrenchments at Freshwater Brook Cove. In addition, the region contains a number of 19th-century farm sites. A human skeleton excavated from the bank of Freshwater Brook Cove in 1967 (Westbury 1967) was assigned site number 53L.

The recognition of features associated with the British Regimental Camps was the most significant discovery of the 1987 season. Even though plans of the siege camps were drawn in 1758 (1758-13, 1758-14, 1758-32), the actual scale of the construction and the degree of preservation had been previously underestimated (Figs. 5 and 6). This bias emerged partly as a consequence of the 1961 survey. It reported the location of several extant features, but fostered an impression that only a few survived (Graham 1961). This mistaken impression influenced our approach as well, until we distinguished other features in proximity to the 1961 sites. We soon realized that a rectangular block on a 1758 plan did not necessarily equate to a single structure, another misrepresentation we had not initially questioned. By the end of the field season we had recorded 78 structures associated with six Regimental Camps.

The total area of these structures alone is 2500 square metres and they are located within a 250 m wide strip, on either side of the road west of Freshwater Brook. Sixty-nine sites are constructed of, or include, stone in their foundations. The average size of the structures is 4.50 by 6.50 metres. There are generally 3 to 4 courses of dry laid stone visible. We have identified three powder magazines (1A-C), one redan (4J), five sentry posts (4K, 8F, 11F, 13D, 13K), one redoubt (12D), and two large stone foundations with fireplaces (9D, 10A) (Figs. 7 and 8). Identification of the remaining features is part of the project’s on-going research.

The scale and ordered regularity of construction during the second siege is a consequence of several factors. First, the siege was conducted by experienced British troops and officers familiar with the standardized army procedure of encampment. Secondly, it should be noted that the land force of 14,000 could be supplemented at any time from the naval contingent of 13,000 men. In addition to combat, troops were burdened with construction activities on roads, camps, batteries, stores, hospitals, trenches and other posts. The volume of work undertaken by soldiers is documented in their journals. One anonymous officer recorded that “thousands of workmen were [employed] at an epaulement,” “every soul in Wolfe’s Corps wrought day and night” and finally that “in general, from the time of landing to July 18th ... the men were scarce ever one night in three in their tents.” This is in contrast to activities during the first siege. The New England encampment at Freshwater Brook Cove developed over the course of the siege and does not appear to be finished until 21 June, 41 days after the landing (11 May). The journal and document accounts clearly indicate this lack of organization. After 11 days on shore, the Council of War proposed moving the encampment to the northeast harbour. On 8 and 15 June, a diarist wrote that entrenchments had begun and the tents were moved closer together (De Forest 1932:24). Seth Pomeroy records that “this day we removed our tents: This was ye third time ... we have mov’d; we not being in proper form of a campaign” (De Forest 1926:32).

This final form and location of the camp is probably close to that indicated on the New England maps (1745-2, 1745-5, 1745-25). During the survey only two features were located in this area (5B-5C). It is likely, however, that evidence of New England land use was obliterated by subsequent French and British activities.

The French coastal entrenchments at Freshwater Brook Cove are the best preserved example of their type in the Park (Figs. 9 and 10). The work extended around the cove and included a redan, two artillery batteries, a ditched earth entrenchment with parapet, and an abbatis on the beach (1757-5). In 1757 more than 1000 men were stationed there. When the British landed at Kennington Cove in 1758 there were 620 men positioned at Freshwater Brook. In both years, the French were quartered in the location of the New England encampment (1757-5).

The main ditched earthwork (7A) measures approximately 500 m in length and is 13 m wide. Three mounded stone-lined depressions (7A-7C) are associated with the entrenchment.

In addition to the post at Freshwater Brook, the French erected earthworks and a mortar battery on the west side of Flat Point. Although they were recorded in 1961 (Graham 1961: n.p.), they are not visible today. T.M. Smith, former archaeological researcher and illustrator who was familiar with these sites, reports that they were lost to erosion (Pers. com.).

Between Freshwater and Kennington Cove Brooks the coastline is mostly cliff or till bank. The area was thoroughly surveyed and a 19th-century farmstead was located (14A-14C).
Figure 5 1758 Plan of Louisbourg and the British attack (National Archives of Canada, Ottawa).

Figure 6 1758 Plan of the siege of Louisbourg (National Archives of Canada, Ottawa).
Figure 7 Stone foundation remains of a 3.30 m square structure associated with a 1758 British Regimental Camp.

Figure 8 Mounded, semi-circular stone feature interpreted as a sentry post and associated with a 1758 British
Figure 9 1757 Plan of the French defensive works at Flat Point, site of the major British landing in 1758 (Archives Nationales, Paris).
Figure 10 Oblique aerial view showing the trench and glacis remains of the 1757 French works at Flat Point.

Figure 11 1757 Plan of the French defensive works at Kennington Cove (Archives Nationale, Paris).
Kennington Cove is the most significant area within this designation (Fig. 1). By 1758 the French had completed an extensive work around the cove similar in design to the Freshwater Cove defenses. It consisted of an abbatiss beach barrier, ditched entrenchments, two artillery batteries, a storehouse and camps for the Bourgogne and Artois Regiments, as well as Troupes de la Marine detachments (Fig. 11). When the British landed at Kennington Cove the French position was abandoned. The construction of a star-shaped redoubt by British marines was the final military activity in the cove (1758-14).

There are few traces of these sites today. It is probable, however, that construction and land use patterns of the subsequent 19th-century Scottish settlement obscured the surface evidence of the earlier occupation. In the 1950s, for example, one landowner levelled a hill in which he found cannon balls (Harper 1959:340). The survey of Kennington Cove is scheduled for 1988.

Conclusion

In 1961 members of the preliminary survey team located a “badly overgrown” feature from which they removed all the trees and groomed the foundation (Graham 1961:np). When we returned to the site in 1987, we found a well-defined 17 by 8 m dry-laid stone foundation .60 m above ground and incorporating a hearth (61L9D). At that time we were beginning the forest stage of the survey and our perception of features associated with the sieges was based for the most part on that type of foundation or on illustrations from 18th-century military manuals. So, initially we looked for squared stone foundations and overlooked ambiguous or indistinct forms. In time, though, our knowledge of historical and natural events improved, as did our ability to recognize features. Furthermore, when one site in the form of an indefinite surface outline is distinguished the recognition of features with similar characteristics becomes easier.

On a forested terrace north of the beach at Freshwater Brook Cove we located remains of stone footings and rock-lined depressions. At the time of the second siege of Louisbourg the artilllery “train,” thousands of men and all logistical support for the “left attack” passed through this point. In 1758, 550 men of Major General Sir Thomas Hopson’s 40th Regiment occupied the terrace. Their huts, sheds, entrenchments, sentry posts, ovens and roads were built according to established procedure.

When the siege of Louisbourg ended these sites were abandoned, the structures and military works destroyed. In time a forest developed and the natural transformation of the landscape proceeded.

Today, in the encampment of Hopson’s 40th Regiment, most features are obscured by moss, lichen and forest. In the 230 years since the siege of Louisbourg, these and other sites have, in varying degrees, been subject to natural and cultural forces. Consequently, undisturbed features surviving above their contemporary surface are well-represented in the site inventory. The infrequent recording of non-structural or disturbed and obscured remains is a result of the survey bias toward surface observation and is not an indication of absence. The historical record which details the numerous activities associated with the occupation, defense and conquest of Louisbourg is certainly represented below the current landscape.

The final season of the Archaeological Survey Project begins in 1988. Our goal is to complete the archaeological resource inventory of all extant surface remains within the Park.

Notes

10. These include the Two Mortar Battery: 11A; Battery of Five Guns: 11B; Light Infantry Redoubt: 11D; Rangers Post: 11M; and Titcomb’s Battery: 12A. They are illustrated on various 1745/1758 siege plans and discussed in the historical documents.

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