



Illustration of the Habitation of Port Royal by CW Jeffrey

Like the ocean that surrounds our sea-bound province, Nova Scotians are never far from history and the shores that witnessed the arrival of early settlers from across the Atlantic.

In the spring of 1605, Pierre Dugua Sieur de Mons (de Monts), with Samuel de Champlain and crew, sailed into what is now known as the Annapolis Basin where they established Port Royal - the first permanent French settlement in what later became known as Canada. There they constructed a French Norman-styled fort called *The Habitation*.

At Port Royal the French also established close relationships with the Mi'kmaq. As a branch of the Eastern Algonquians, the Mi'kmaq were members of the Wabanaki Confederacy which included the Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki and the Penobscot. Together they inhabited a large area of northeastern North America including today's Atlantic Provinces.

Throughout the 17th century, the settlement at Port Royal would go through many changes. For example, by 1621, Sir William Alexander, the 1st Earl of Stirling, Scotland, was granted a royal charter from King James I to establish Scottish settlements in New Scotland (so named *Nova Scotia* in Latin). Though Alexander was unsuccessful, by 1671 there were more than 300 European French settlers - who became known as Acadians, residing in the Port Royal and surrounding area known as *l'Acadie* or *Acadia*, which included the lands and coastline on both sides of what we now call the Bay of Fundy.

Many of the Acadians worked as small-scale farmers, often residing near tidally flooded lands. From Port Royal they would expand into the upper Annapolis River area, as well as the Minas region of the Annapolis Valley up to Pisiquid (Windsor), across to the Noel Shore and Cobequid (Truro), as well as the Beaubassin area (current day border area between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick).

The arrival of settlers to the shores of Nova Scotia through the 1600s and 1700s presented challenges to the Mi'kmaq. It is recorded that as a result of the frequent contact with Europeans, disease became widespread, such that their population diminished significantly to 2,000-to-3,000 by 1749. At the same time, the French Acadian population would grow from 2,500 in 1713, to more than 10,800 by 1749.

British efforts in settling the New England Colonies in the late 17th century/18th century brought them into conflict with their long-time rivals the French who were supported by their Indigenous allies. Between 1688 and 1763, seven major wars would impact settler and Indigenous peoples throughout northeastern North America. In Nova Scotia, two major conflicts would have far-reaching consequences for the Mi'kmaq:

- Father Le Loutre's War (1749-1755 – Including deportation of Acadian settlers)
- French and Indian War (1754-1763 – Treaty of Paris)

The return of Fortress Louisbourg to the French in 1748 renewed the threat it had previously presented to the British on mainland Nova Scotia and the New England Colonies. A strategic counterweight was needed and the harbour at K'jipuktuk (Mi'kmaq) /Chebuctou (French) was determined ideally located to serve that purpose. Thus, near the end of June 1749, after making their passage across the ocean in 13 transports, 2,547 settlers arrived at K'jipuktuk/Chebuctou under the leadership of the new British Governor of mainland Nova Scotia, Colonel Edward Cornwallis.

Most of the settlers who arrived were English, primarily Londoners, but also some were from the European continent. All were volunteers who were promised free land, rations for a year, and some semblance of law, order and security.

Cornwallis named the settlement Halifax in honour of George Montagu Dunk, Earl of Halifax and President of the Board of Trade and Plantations, who had coordinated the planning for establishing the settlement.

As archivist Thomas Beamish Atkins noted in his book, *History of Halifax City* (1895), by mid-August 1749, settlers had drawn for their lots, but building their dwellings was not an easy task given their inexperience with erecting frame houses. Those settlers who did not complete their dwellings before the cold weather set in (about 350 were completed by October) were faced with a winter under canvas tents or in crude huts. It is estimated a third of the settlers did not survive the winter due to an epidemic that struck that first winter.

In August a number of Wabanaki Indigenous chiefs and representatives arrived to greet Cornwallis - three of whom were deputy chiefs - two Maliseet from the Saint John River area, and one from the Passamaquoddy, as well as Maliseet chiefs from Aucpec, (above what is now Fredericton) and Meductic, and one Mi'kmaq chief from Chignecto. They agreed to reaffirm the Peace and Friendship Treaty that had been ratified with the Wabanaki Confederacy in Annapolis Royal in 1726. However, in early September, following Mi'kmaq attacks in Canso (19 Aug.) and Chignecto (6 Sept.), Cornwallis also learned that Mi'kmaq from Ile Royale (now Cape Breton) were planning to join Wabanaki forces at Chignecto and attack the Halifax settlement. As a result, he ordered the construction of five blockhouses connected by a palisade to protect the settlement – as seen in Moses Harris's 1750 illustration View from the Topmasthead.



A View of Halifax Drawn from Ye Topmasthead, by Moses Harris and D'Anville; printed for Thomas Jeffery, showing the Halifax settlement within the palisades in 1750. N. S. Archives Map Collection.

EARLY SETTLEMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA 1605-1749

SETTLERS AND THEIR CHALLENGES



REFLECTING ON HISTORICAL EVENTS AND FIGURES

First in a series of general interest folders on the early settlement and defence of Halifax and other communities.

construction of a governor's residence, St. Paul's Church and an orphanage. The 1750s would also be one of the most turbulent periods in Nova Scotia history, including the much-debated Deportation of the Acadians directed by Governor Charles Lawrence that began in 1755.

In May 1759, ten years after the Halifax settlement was established, British Naval officer Richard Short made the first sketches of the settlement. It is evident the town was firmly rooted.



Governor's House, Halifax, 1759, by Richard Short, N.S. Archives.

As residents reflect on our collective past, 2019 is the 270th anniversary of the arrival of settlers in 1749 and the naming of Halifax for their new settlement by Governor Edward Cornwallis.



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The first Mi'kmaq raids occurred 30 September 1749, when a raiding party of about 40 warriors attacked a wood-cutting crew of six men in Dartmouth, with two of the men scalped, two decapitated, one captured and one escaped to sound the alarm (it would be the first of eight Mi'kmaq raids on Dartmouth up until 1759).

As the French authorities at Fortress Louisbourg were already paying bounties to the Mi'kmaq for British prisoners and scalps, on 2 October 1749 Cornwallis issued a Proclamation offering a similar bounty for Mi'kmaq warriors "...to be paid upon producing such Savage taken or his scalp." Women and children were to be taken prisoner; it was not a mandate to exterminate the Mi'kmaq population in the mainland region.. The proclamation targeted anyone who supported or participated in the raids, whether the person was indigenous or of European descent. Before returning to England in October 1752, and in an attempt to secure a peace, Cornwallis rescinded the bounty. There is no direct evidence that payments for scalps of Mi'kmaq warriors were issued by the British

	22.	James Matthews	40
May.	10.	John George Bronteiller.	7
June.	18.	Catherine Bronteiller.	4
July.	9.	George Charles Turple.	7
		Ann Elizabeth Wolph.	7
Aug.	27.	Joseph Hye.	7
		Conrad Hally.	Scalp'd.
		Rosena, his wife.	7
1759. Jan'y.	3.	John Highley.	7

As noted in the 1758 burial records at the St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg, the early settler families were often caught up in surrounding conflicts - sometimes with tragic consequences. N.S. Archives.

Between 1750-1752, another 2,300 settlers arrived in Nova Scotia primarily from the European Continent. By early June 1753 more than 1,400 of them sailed 60 miles south to Merliguesch/Merligash Bay to establish the Lunenburg settlement. They too would face challenges and endure a number of attacks by Indigenous forces.

Within a year of their arrival, the Halifax settlers witnessed the

EARLY SETTLEMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA
1605-1759: Settlers and their Challenges,
authored by Leo J. Deveau M.Ed., MLIS,
this is one of several general interest

folders on the early settlement and
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