

Canada Weekly

Ottawa
Canada

Volume 11, No. 26
June 29, 1983

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Reconstructed Fort Louisbourg drops defences, takes in tourists

In the summer of 1744, the imposing fortress city of Louisbourg, Nova Scotia thrived as the French centre of the New World.

Troops manned cannons on great stone ramparts. Fishermen unloaded cod and haddock on a busy quay. White-wigged potentates issued decrees from brocade chairs. Snuff-sniffing merchants traded with Micmac Indians.

With 5 000 residents, Louisbourg was the largest French fortress and naval base in North America, as well as its chief fishing and trading port, until British "Redcoats" tore down the great stone walls in 1758 and burned the town that symbolized the hated Bourbon monarchs in Versailles.

Reconstruction

For two centuries, the once-mighty fortress of Louisbourg lay in ruins, shrouded by fog and mostly forgotten, on the eastern shore of Nova Scotia. Then in 1961, the Canadian government began a \$25 million project to encour-

age local employment by rebuilding the fortress.

That reconstruction is nearly done, and the results are remarkable. Louisbourg is alive and thriving again.

More than 60 homes, barracks, gardens and storehouses — nearly one-fifth of the original town and fortifications — have been faithfully rebuilt from hundreds of original maps and plans found in archives in France, England, Scotland, Canada and the United States.

In addition, more than 100 "inhabitants" of Louisbourg not only wear eighteenth century costumes but have assumed the identities of sailors, soldiers, merchants, slaves or other residents who actually lived and worked there in 1744.

Details authentic

Other details are similarly authentic. Because Louisbourg was both a military and a government centre, administrators, priests and clerks inventoried every barracks bunk and alehouse schooner, every musket and sabre, every barrel of salt



Today, Fort Louisbourg appears just as it did in 1744, with one exception — rather than repelling invaders, the once-mighty stronghold welcomes them.



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