

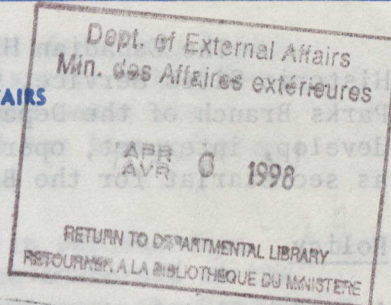
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REFERENCE PAPERS

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA



CANADA

No. 130
(July 1972)

THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARKS AND SITES OF CANADA

The national historic parks and sites of Canada commemorate the persons, places and events that have been declared of major significance in the historical development of Canada.

History

The passage of the Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act in 1911 was a significant milestone in the Federal Government's commemorative program. Previous Government involvement had been through financial contributions to commemorative activities. The 1911 act created within the Department of the Interior a Dominion Parks Board to administer national and historic parks. In 1917, Fort Anne at Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, was transferred from the Department of the Militia and declared Canada's first national park of historic significance.

Upon the recommendation of the Commissioner of the Dominion Parks Board, the seven-member Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada was formed to advise the Minister on the matter of sites of national historical interest. The Board met for the first time at Ottawa on October 28, 1919.

The second national historic park was established in 1927, and by 1950 there were nine such parks, receiving over 150,000 visitors annually.

Until 1953, the Board operated under Order-in-Council authority and no provision was made for Parliament's formal review of its decisions. The Historic Sites and Monuments Act of 1953 provided the statutory base for the operation of the Board for the first time. The significant change brought about by this act was the definition of the role of the Board as adviser to the Minister, whose statutory responsibility it became to develop and implement a national program of commemorating historical sites.

The intent of this act and of the National Parks Act is the commemoration, preservation and restoration of sites and artifacts of national historic, prehistoric and scientific interest.

The Canadian Historic Sites Division, later renamed the National Historic Sites Service, was created in 1955 within the National and Historic Parks Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources to develop, interpret, operate and maintain historic parks and sites and to act as secretariat for the Board.

Policy

A policy statement on national historic sites was tabled for the first time in the House of Commons in 1968 by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Among other things, the policy elaborated the criteria for the designation of national historic sites for the benefit of Parliament and the public.

For commemoration, a site or structure must be closely associated with a person, place or event of national historical importance, or it must illustrate the cultural, social, political, economic or military patterns of history or of a prehistoric people or of archaeological discovery, or be valuable as an example of architecture.

The policy statement also included guidelines for the provision of visitor services, interpretative programs and the promotion of information to the public at large. Standards for the preservation, restoration and reconstruction of structures were established that stressed authenticity in the materials used and in furnishings and artifacts. The policy also recognized the need for a comprehensive program to give full thematic and geographical representation and to establish a long-range planning program to facilitate the development of parks based on such themes as exploration and social, cultural, economic and prehistoric events.

Advisers

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has 15 members: two representatives each from the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec and one from each of the eight other provinces; a representative from the National Museums of Canada; a representative of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development; and the Dominion Archivist (*ex officio*).

In advising the Minister on the commemoration of places, persons and events of national historical importance, the Board may recommend that sites, buildings and other structures of national importance be developed as national historic parks or historic sites or that commemoration be carried out by the erection of national historic plaques, or, in exceptional circumstances, of distinctive monuments.

Suggestions for the establishment of historic sites and parks come from many sources -- the general public, Members of Parliament, historical societies and other groups, department staff and members of the Board themselves.

Before a site is referred to the Board for consideration, a background paper is prepared by the research staff of the Historic Sites Service. The Board then determines the significance of the site and makes its recommendation to the Minister. If ministerial approval has been granted to a project, a development plan is prepared.

Land for historic parks and sites is acquired in various ways. Normally it is transferred free of charge by the province concerned to the Federal Government, but occasionally, in special circumstances, the Department itself acquires the land through purchase or private donation.

Administration

The National Historic Sites Service is part of the National and Historic Parks Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Its Ottawa office consists of two divisions -- Research and Operations Policy. Operational responsibility for the development and maintenance of new and existing parks has been decentralized to three regional offices in Halifax (Atlantic Provinces), Cornwall (Quebec and Ontario) and Calgary (four Western provinces and the two territories).

The Historical Research Section of the Research Division carries out documentary research as a basis for the interpretation of parks and sites and for the guidance of archaeological activities. The Archaeological Research Section produces information for site development on the basis of field investigation and laboratory analysis and an underwater-research program.

The Canadian Inventory of Historic Building is the main program of the Architectural History Section. The Inventory, begun in 1970, is a computerized screening program to survey, analyse and categorize the surviving old buildings in Canada.

The Operations Policy Division is responsible for implementing and co-ordinating projects selected for commemoration and preservation. Some of its responsibilities include the planning of existing and potential national historic parks and sites, the designing of exhibits and displays, the acquisition, restoration and conservation of military and domestic furnishings for use in parks and sites, and the provision of visitor services.

Parks and Sites

Since its establishment, the Board has been instrumental in the creation of some 90 historic parks and major sites and in the commemoration of over 600 persons and events of national (as opposed to local or regional) significance. Of the 90 parks and sites, 38 are open to the public, and the remainder are in various stages of development or awaiting development.

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Atlantic Provinces

Three national historic parks and sites are located in Newfoundland. At Castle Hill are the ruins of harbour fortifications built by the French in the 1660s. Signal Hill at the entrance to the harbour of St. John's is the site of numerous early fortifications and the last battle during the Seven Years' War. Cape Spear is the first major lighthouse built in Newfoundland. Negotiations are nearing completion with the province for the transfer of L'Anse aux Meadows, the site of an early Viking settlement, and Port-au-Choix, a 4,000-year-old prehistoric burial-ground in Gros Morne National Park, to the Department for development as national historic parks.

Across the harbour from Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, is Fort Amherst, site of a French settlement of 1720 that was captured by the British in 1758. Pope House, the home of William Henry Pope, one of the Fathers of Confederation, is in Charlottetown.

In 1961, the Federal Government embarked on a \$19.7-million program to reconstruct and restore the Fortress of Louisbourg on the rugged coast of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. By the late 1970s, restoration of 30 to 40 buildings and a series of defences to their appearance before the first British seige of the French fortress in 1745 will be completed. The Governor's wing of the King's Bastion Barracks was opened to the public in 1969, since when further areas have been made available to visitors.

Also in Nova Scotia are the Halifax defences, consisting of the Citadel, York Redoubt, Fort Charlotte and the Prince of Wales Martello Tower. The remains of Fort Anne, built by the French between 1695 and 1708 and later enlarged by the British, was the first national historical park. Near Granville Ferry is the reconstruction of Port Royal, site of a settlement established in 1605 by Sieur de Monts and Samuel de Champlain, and occupied by a fur-trading colony of several dozen Frenchmen until 1613, when it was destroyed by raiders from Virginia.

Preserved as a historic site since 1908 by the Nova Scotia government, Grand Pré was deeded to the Federal Government in 1957. This park, which is adjacent to the site of a former Acadian village, illustrates the life of the descendants of early French colonists before their expulsion in 1775.

The Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Park at Baddeck commemorates a man best known to the world as the inventor of the telephone. But the museum in the park illustrates his work in other fields, such as communications, medical science and aeronautics, and his research in marine navigation. For example, a hydrofoil Bell helped develop reached a speed of 62 knots in 1919, a record that was to stand for 50 years.

In New Brunswick are four national historic parks and sites -- Fort Beauséjour, the Carleton Martello Tower, St. Andrews Blockhouse and the site of Fort Gaspereau.

Fort Beauséjour, constructed after the Treaty of Utrecht, was an attempt by the French to consolidate their claim to the territory west of the Missaguash River on the Isthmus of Chignecto. The fort is a pentagonal earthworks with five bastions, each containing several barracks and smaller buildings. The National Historic Sites Service has conducted extensive archaeological investigation as well as stabilization of the ruins within the fort proper.

St. Andrews Blockhouse harks back to a time when Canada was at war with the nation that was to become its closest ally. A series of blockhouses and batteries was built late in 1812 to defend against American privateers. The blockhouse at the West Point, the sole survivor of these defences, has been leased by the Service to the Town of St. Andrews for operation as a national historic site.

Carleton Martello Tower on Lancaster Heights was also constructed during the War of 1812. It was completed in 1814 by the Royal Engineers and served as a defence for the harbour of Saint John. The Tower is now operated under contract by the New Brunswick Museum for the National Historic Sites Service.

Ontario and Quebec

In 1971, the Federal Government announced a program to develop and upgrade some 20 historic parks and sites in Quebec, including the Cartier-Brébeuf National Historic Park, which commemorates the wintering of Jacques Cartier in 1535-36 and the seventeenth-century Jesuit missionaries and, in Quebec City, the walls and gates of the City fortifications, three martello towers, the Governor's Walk, Montmorency Park and the National Battlefields Park, site of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.

Other sites included in the program are Fort Lennox, Fort Chambly, Fort Lévis No. 1, Fort Temiscamingue, the Chateauguay battlefield, Coteau-du-Lac, Carillon Barracks, Laurier House at St. Lin des Laurentides, birthplace of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and the Sir George Etienne Cartier House in Montreal.

Archaeological research is being carried out in the Baie des Chaleurs to investigate the remains of vessels sunk in the Battle of the Restigouche (1760), an event that has been declared of national historical significance.

On Ile Perrot near Montreal, a national historic park is planned at the site of a stone-mill and miller's house built during the eighteenth century.

Three properties were transferred from Ontario to the Federal Government in 1969 for the development of the Historic Niagara Frontier Park -- Fort George and Navy Hall at Niagara-on-the-Lake and part of the Queenston Heights area, including the Brock Monument, which commemorates the Battle of Queenston Heights with the Americans and the British commander, Sir Isaac Brock, who was killed in the battle. Other plans include the development of the Rainbow Bridge Interpretation Centre, Fort Mississauga and Butler's Barracks. Much of the interpretation will be centred on the War of 1812.

Woodside National Historic Park has been restored to depict the early family life of Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King as it could have been in the 1890s; it is typical of the homes of this period in Ontario.

Fort Wellington was constructed when, at the outbreak of war with the United States in 1812, British authorities decided to fortify Prescott, Ontario, as the main base for the defence of communications between Montreal and Kingston. The restoration and refurnishing under way at Fort Wellington are being carried out to restore the fort to its appearance during the 1840s, when a unit of the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment was stationed there.

Bellevue House, Kingston, was the home in 1848-49 of Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. It is also architecturally important as an example of the "Tuscan Villa" style prevalent in that period. Furnishings in the Regency style have been purchased for the house to illustrate the particular period. Besides highlighting the occupancy of Sir John A. Macdonald, the house will bring to life the spirit of that period in Canada's history.

Fort Malden, constructed on the banks of the Detroit River between 1797 and 1799 by Royal Canadian Volunteers, played a conspicuous part in the War of 1812-14 and was the rallying point for the British forces that captured Detroit in 1812. The officers quarters and office have been refurnished in 1835 style.

Western Provinces and Yukon and Northwest Territories

Construction of Lower Fort Garry near Winnipeg, Manitoba, was begun by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1831. The stone fort served as the chief post and headquarters of the Assiniboine District for several years and was later occupied by troops.

Of the 13 structures now at Lower Fort Garry, six have been restored: Fraser House as a Red River homestead of the 1830s, moved from its original site in Winnipeg; the Big House, or Governor's residence, where women can be seen baking bread, spinning and dyeing material; a blacksmith shop typical of the nineteenth century, where a smith works at the forge; two bastions and the saleshop and fur-loft building, opened in June 1971.

The fort's activity in the 1860s revolved round the sales shop and fur-loft building. The shop was stocked with every kind of item required by farmers, housewives, artisans and trappers of the frontier settlement; upstairs were thousands of fur pelts for bailing and shipment. In 1968, the curators of the National Historic Sites Service began a search for thousands of articles -- either originals or faithful reproductions -- required to duplicate the clutter of the Company store as it was in 1865.

Fort Prince of Wales near Churchill was built by the Hudson's Bay Company between 1733 and 1771. It is the most northerly fortress on the North American continent.

The Riel House at St. Vital, Manitoba, will be developed as a centre to interpret the story of the Métis leader Louis Riel. York Factory, the Hudson's Bay Company's principal depot on the Bay, is being stabilized and protected for restoration at a later date.

Both Battleford and Fort Walsh in Saskatchewan were North West Mounted Police posts. The Northwest Rebellion of 1885 is commemorated at Batoche National Historic Park in Saskatchewan. Batoche was the headquarters of the Métis during that uprising.

Also in the early stages of development in Saskatchewan is the Motherwell Homestead near Abernethy, the home of W.H. Motherwell, a leader of the Co-operative Movement on the Prairies and the originator of large-scale scientific wheat-farming practices.

A newly-established park, Rocky Mountain House in Alberta, commemorates the fur trade in the Northwest during the nineteenth century. In 1799, the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies built competing posts here to trade with the Peigan; and from here in 1808-10 David Thompson began his search for a route through the Rockies. Over the years at least three forts were built in this vicinity.

The NHSS is currently negotiating with Alberta for two sites: Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump, which is the largest and oldest buffalo-jump site excavated in the Northern Plains area, and the Cochrane Ranch, the oldest ranch in Alberta.

Fort Rodd Hill on Vancouver Island is a nineteenth-century British coastal fortification. Fort St. James, to be restored in co-operation with the British Columbia government, was founded by the North West Company in 1806, later becoming a headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Fort Langley on the banks of the Fraser River was built in 1827 by the Hudson's Bay Company. The original post not only served the fur trade but was the country's first exporter of salmon and a supplier of foodstuffs to other Pacific forts and coastal vessels.

The first ship to navigate the Northwest Passage in a west-east direction and return was the Royal Canadian Mounted Police patrol vessel *St. Roch*, now on display in Vancouver.

Nootka Island National Historic Park will be developed to commemorate the cultural history and way of life of the Nootka Indians, Spanish and British coastal exploration and the Spanish occupation of Friendly Cove from 1789 to 1795. Archaeological research indicates the island has been occupied for 3,000 years.

A joint project of the United States and Canada, the Klondike Gold Rush International Historic Park is being developed to commemorate the famous Klondike Gold Rush of the late 1890s.

Dawson City in the Yukon will be the centre of visitor orientation. Exhibits are also planned in the Bonanza Creek area and at Seattle, Skagway and Dyea in the United States and Bennett and Whitehorse in Canada.

Negotiations with several provinces for the establishment of new historic sites and parks are currently under way as the National Historic Sites Service works toward the goal of a more complete and representative picture of the Canadian past.

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