

LOYALIST SETTLEMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA

HALIFAX

At the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776, two-thirds of the people of Nova Scotia were of Yankee birth or parentage. Halifax soon became an armed camp; most of the British troops destined to fight in New England went there or to New York. When General Howe abandoned Boston in 1776, he sailed to Halifax with many of the King's supporters.

They arrived in crowded ships "with health and strength almost exhausted." Profit-hungry local inhabitants charged the refugees six times the usual rent for "miserable lodgings," and double for food and clothing. By May, many of them had sailed for England. Between 1772 and 1781, the population of Nova Scotia dropped from 19,000 to 12,000, but by 1784, after the continued arrival of new Loyalists, the population soared to 32,000.

Troops and Loyalists vied for proper food and accommodations. Landlords, brewers and madames of the bawdy houses filled their pockets while ordinary townspeople had to compete for overpriced food and lodging. Halifax enthusiastically supported the British cause by equipping loyal privateers; the pro-American sentiments of pre-Loyalists soon changed when they learned that Lunenburg, Annapolis and Canso had been raided and completely sacked by Yankee privateers without regard to the previous connections of the citizens. From 1778 to 1781, a brigade of Scottish troops, as well as many regiments of Hessians, were stationed in Halifax.

Upon arriving, refugees lived in tents on Citadel Hill and Point Pleasant and in St. Paul's and Mathers churches. People were fed in the streets near Granville and Hollis; even as late as 1783, many refugees endured the unsanitary conditions and other miseries of an overcrowded town. At night, press gangs roamed the streets with cudgels to persuade new recruits to join His Majesty's Navy. Hundreds of French and American prisoners were confined in jails and ships moored near the dockyard. Escapes were common; many prisoners of war successfully fled the province to return quietly to their homes in the Thirteen Colonies.

As the war dragged on, many of the Loyalists yearned to see their old homes; their hopes were dashed when the British surrendered at Yorktown in 1781. Many Loyalists set forth from Halifax to lands that had been put aside for them along the coast and in townships throughout Nova Scotia. They adapted to the local industries: lumbering, shipbuilding and fisheries. They lived off the capital they had, or the compensation they received from the government. Their loyalty was not forgotten; 4,000 claims, amounting to £3,000,000, were paid to such Loyalists as Phillip Marchington, who escaped from New York with a large fortune. Establishing a successful mercantile business, Marchington built a church on Argyle Street in Halifax to air his sermons; eventually, squabbles with his congregation forced him to close the church. Joseph Howe, was the son of a Loyalist from Boston who printed the first issue of *Halifax Journal* which served the city from 1781 to 1870.

After 1783, discharged military personnel drifted aimlessly after eight years of war. Government officials struggled with the settlement and support of thousands of Loyalist refugees. The city adjusted to peacetime conditions, marked by a stagnant economy and declining population.

SHELBURNE

based on articles by Mary Archibald, Watson Kirkconnell and Gerald A. MacAlpine UE

Shelburne, originally known as Port Roseway, is located near the southwest corner of Nova Scotia on one of the finest natural harbours in the world. In 1765, the area had been granted to Alexander McNutt, who hoped to establish a model community there. When his plan failed, the grant

reverted to the Crown in 1783.

At the end of the American Revolution, a group of Loyalists from New York formed the Port Roseway Associates; their intention was to obtain a grant in that area. Charles Morris, Surveyor-General for Nova Scotia, had recently appointed Benjamin Marston as Deputy Surveyor, and had ordered him to meet the Loyalists at Port Roseway to lay out a township for them. Marston was a Loyalist and graduate of Harvard who had fled to Halifax after losing all his property during the Revolution.

The first fleet, carrying about 400 families, arrived on May 4, 1783. After some early disagreements, the passengers were soon ashore, clearing the town site and erecting tents and log huts for protection. Despite their inexperience, they built nearly 1,500 houses the following summer. A list of the disbanded Loyalist soldiers in the fall of 1783 shows that the majority were from the British Legion, the Duke of Cumberland's Regiment and the New Jersey Volunteers.

Black regiments also came to Port Roseway, but they settled by themselves across the bay, in an area they called Birchtown, named for Brigadier-General Samuel Birch, who had befriended them in New York.

As the year progressed, hundreds more refugees and disbanded soldiers sought shelter in Port Roseway, swelling the population by year's end to between 9,000 and 10,000. Before the last refugees turned up, however, some of the early arrivals had already left for other parts. This underlines the problem created by dumping the remnants of New York's Loyalist population on the township after the peace: it turned the community into a refugee camp. Because there were few good reasons to stay, a great majority of the refugees remained only briefly before moving on to greener pastures.

On July 22, 1783, Governor Parr, on his first visit to the community, named the town Shelburne in honour of William Petty Fitzmaurice, Earl of Shelburne. During the peace negotiations, Fitzmaurice was Secretary of State for Home, Colonial and Irish Affairs. Although Parr revered him, Lord Shelburne was not popular with many Loyalists; they blamed him for the terms of peace, which granted full independence to the United States.

In the summer of 1784, Marston was compelled to leave town. There had been dissatisfaction with his conduct from the start. He had been blamed for errors in running some of the survey lines, and had also been accused of favouritism in the allocation of some lots. A riot broke out on July 16, 1784, when the disbanded soldiers drove the free Blacks out of town and went searching for Marston. He took refuge in the barracks across the harbour from the town and sailed for Halifax the next day. Parr, who laid the blame for problems at Shelburne on Marston, was more than happy to have a scapegoat

In 1785, there were five sawmills providing lumber for the West Indies market. A whale fishery had been started and 10 boats were ground fishing. An energetic program of road building was also started that year, in an effort to link the farms in the surrounding area to the town. The township was not yet self-sufficient, however, and King's rations were supplied until 1786.

The decline in population continued until it stabilized around 300. There were various reasons for Shelburne's waning population, but one of the most important was that it was an unsuitable site for settlement. The sour soil, spread thinly over granite and littered with glacial boulders, was less

than ideal for farming. The marketable timber within reach of the coast soon petered out, and two of the three "instant sawmills" soon ceased to operate, owing to a lack of sawlogs. There was no habitable hinterland to be served by the stores of Shelburne. Apart from fishing, a skill few of the settlers had experience in, there was no lasting gainful occupation to maintain even a village, let alone a city. An economic base was almost non-existent.

The government at Halifax was indifferent to the plight of Shelburne. In 1784, Halifax merchants had tripled the price of their goods and then complained to the government that Americans were selling produce to the new settlers at lower prices.

The smallpox epidemic of 1788, as well as natural disasters, also contributed to the decline of the settlement. In 1786, a hurricane from the Caribbean demolished the warehouses and wharves along the shore. There was a devastating drought in 1791, but perhaps the greatest blow of all was a disastrous forest fire in 1792. From the middle of June until a substantial rain on July 9, fires raged through the tinder-dry woodlands in the southern end of the province. Fifty houses are said to have been burned, but a list of the poorest and most distressed includes the names of 84 settlers in the area from Birchtown to Port Herbert. Birchtown was particularly hard hit, with 17 families requiring aid.

Besides the loss of houses, outbuildings and crops, the forest, which had provided one of the few industries, had been destroyed. Most of the roads extending from town had been rendered impassable because their bridges were burned.

There were, however, some hardy pioneers who decided that Shelburne was still a good place to live; these became permanent settlers. They were a mixture of true Loyalists, disbanded soldiers and those who preferred the British form of government. Many Loyalist surnames are still represented in modern Shelburne and the surrounding area, and such Loyalist homes as the Ross-Thomson house, built about 1785, have been restored and renovated.

DIGBY

based on the MA thesis of Taunya Dawson,

The Church of England's Role in Settling the Loyalists in the Town of Digby, 1783-1810, Acadia University, 1991

Digby was a Loyalist settlement in Nova Scotia, second only in size to Shelburne (Port Roseway). Its location — directly across the Bay of Fundy from Saint John, near the entrance to the Annapolis Basin on a body of water known as the Digby Gut — was a major attraction for Amos Botsford, agent for the New York Refugee Association in 1782. He had been dispatched to find a suitable location for a sizeable group of Loyalists who expected to be refugees at the end of the war. The area had been named Conway Township when the first white settlers moved into the area from Annapolis in the 1760s.

On April 27, 1783, 44 ships departed for Nova Scotia from Long Island with close to 6,000 Loyalists, most of whom went to Port Roseway because Botsford had not yet been able to decide whether to send his people to Saint John or to the Annapolis Basin. By May 2, another convoy of nine ships left for Saint John, Annapolis and Digby with 2,434 Loyalists, 1,000 of whom would go to Digby. Another group, including 51 heads of families, arrived on October 18. Some of them stayed on the ship until spring, while others camped on shore.

Botsford obtained 65,000 acres in Conway Township for 201 settlers on February 20, 1784, and secured land for a town plot. The town, named Digby after the admiral responsible for the Loyalists' transportation to Nova Scotia, was designed on a grid but had more character than most

towns, owing to its location on a peninsula. Land was reserved for a glebe (clergy reserve) and school in the town.

After taking the Oath of Allegiance, Loyalists were able to purchase a town lot. These had to be purchased because they were considered to have been "improved." Grants in the township were free, with the size depending on the military rank of the head of the household and 50 additional acres for each family member and servant. The average size of the rural lots was 200 acres.

Of those Loyalists who could be traced, originally 50 percent were from New York, 20 percent from New Jersey, with additional representation from New Hampshire, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Massachusetts, Georgia and the Carolinas. The regiments included the New Jersey Volunteers, the Royal Garrison Battalion and the Loyal American Battalion. Black Pioneers, including Thomas Peters, who settled near Annapolis, and Joseph Leonard, along with 200 Black veterans settled in Brindley Town, now Acaciaville, were shortchanged with land and rations in the same way as Blacks who settled elsewhere.

Digby prospered from the West Indian trade with merchants exporting cod, timber, beer, dairy and farm produce, and especially herring. Enough herring was caught to provide employment for 400 workers. Many occupations were associated with the sea. Daniel and James Leonard were sail makers. In 1785, Digby was designated a Port Town and Captain James Baseley was appointed Harbour Master. A post office opened in the home of Andrew Snodgrass in 1784, and daily ferry service to Saint John began that same year.

Loyalists were occupied in various businesses. Henry Rutherford and George Nash operated a general store. James Reid and Robert Ray were hotelkeepers, and Fleming Pinckston was one of the town physicians. Loyalists also held public office. Isaac Bonnell was the first Justice of the Peace and was later appointed Puisne Judge of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas. Andrew Kysh was another Justice of the Peace. James Wilmot was Collector of Duties for the port and Deputy Registrar of Deeds and Conveyances.

Reverend Jacob Bailey, rector at Annapolis Royal, visited Digby often and assisted in the establishment of the parish, which the Loyalists named "Trinity," after one that many of them had been forced to leave in New York. Anglicans did not constitute the majority of the population, however, and both Presbyterians and Methodists were active in the community. The Methodists, in particular, appealed to the Black population and the efforts of Methodist missionaries were met with enthusiasm in that community.

By 1786, a small town existed in Conway Township, but its growth did not fulfil its potential. Botsford's indecision about the site caused considerable confusion, and many Loyalists decided to follow the Port Roseway Associates to what became Shelburne. There, Loyalists did not have to pay for their town lots. Botsford was not meticulous about legalities; records and legal titles to land were questionable. Poor distribution of food and supplies also hindered successful settlement. Nor did Digby have a wealthy agricultural hinterland. Many of the town's first settlers stayed for only a short time and then moved on to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

GUYSBOROUGH

from articles by Roy Stanley-Chisholm

One of the largest concentrations of Loyalists was at East Country of Guysborough. The Loyalists came from Halifax to a place now known as Country Harbour Mines, at the upper end of Country

Harbour. They arrived late in the year and endured a horrible first winter in primitive, improperly roofed log cabins. Many died from exposure and sickness.

Some 150 Blacks came with them, and it must be concluded that although some were slaves, many more were not, and had served as bondsmen, servants and pioneers in both the British Army and Loyalist Provincial Corps. The lot of the Black Loyalist was a hard one. Compared to the 150 acre land grants of whites, the Blacks' grant of one acre for service rendered to Crown and Country was a poor reward for seeing service in very arduous times. Black provincial units, which did not participate directly in combat were recruited for garrison and other duties in North America. These were: the Jamaica Rangers, all Blacks but including independent companies, which were partly black and partly white, and the Jamaica Volunteers, made up of mixed races. Another black unit, the Negro Horse, was raised in New York in 1782 and performed provost duty picking up deserters. They also fought at Dorchester in what is now New York County.

The Loyalists at East Country Harbour were initially under the jurisdiction of a Georgian officer, Major James Wright. They were principally from three regiments: the Royal North Carolina Regiment, the King's (Carolina) Rangers and the South Carolina Royalists. All of them had experienced heavy fighting in Southern campaigns. The Royal North Carolina Regiment had absorbed a militia unit, the North Carolina Highlanders, composed of Scots who had seen action at Moore's Creek Bridge. Some extant Scottish names in Guysborough County are those of people descended from Loyalist Scotsmen.

CAPE BRETON ISLAND (ILE ROYALE)

The Treaty of Utrecht allowed the French to retain Île Royale, and it was there that they built the fortress of Louisbourg. It also became a haven for Acadians after the British deportation in 1755. When the British captured Louisbourg in 1758, they totally destroyed the fort. Although they received the island through the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, they paid little attention to it, beyond having an official survey conducted by Captain Samuel Holland between 1765 and 1767. He identified the coal deposits, which were to be of value later on.

The last troops left the island in 1768. The population consisted of approximately 300 Acadians on Isle Madame, and about 400 Newfoundlanders, Irish and "American" fishermen.

Interest in the island grew in 1784 when Abraham Cuyler, a former mayor of Albany, New York, informed the British authorities that he had 3,100 Loyalists, then living in Quebec, who would be pleased to settle on Cape Breton Island (as the British called it). In anticipation of this influx, the British separated Cape Breton Island from Nova Scotia at the same time as they created the separate colony of New Brunswick. Major Joseph Frederic Wallet Des Barres, an engineer of French-Swiss descent who had migrated to England as a young man and had spent 20 years surveying northeastern North America, was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the colony — partly because his compensation for service as a surveyor had been woefully inadequate.

In the autumn of 1784, Cuyler found 140 "Associated Loyalists" in Quebec who were willing to go to Cape Breton. They used three ships to make the move. Two shiploads landed at St. Peter's, where one stayed and the other went on to the Badeck River the next spring. The third went to Louisbourg. Jonathan Jones of the King's Rangers of New York was named magistrate for Baddeck and granted 200 acres. John Leaver and the sons of Hezekiah Ingraham also settled at Baddeck. John D. Meloney of Long Island was the head of the first family at Sydney, the town

that grew near the ruins of Louisbourg. In February 1785, Des Barres brought settlers from England to Spanish Bay (now Sydney Harbour), and in the summer of 1785, six companies of the 33rd Regiment arrived. Some families, like those of Henry Lewis from Virginia and William Watson from New York, left Sydney and settled on farms previously held by Acadians. William Hood and his family settled at Bras d'Or, while Hezekiah Ingraham, who had come from Hartford, Connecticut in 1783, settled at Margaree Harbour along with James Ross and Irad Hart. A group of Loyalists from New York, who had arrived at Shelburne with the Spring Fleet of 1783 and had become disillusioned with life there, arrived in Upper North Sydney in 1788. Among them was Peter Sparling's family.

Cape Breton did not have an elected assembly, but rather was ruled by the Lieutenant Governor and his Executive Council, which was made up of Loyalists and English. Almost from the beginning there was dissension among the Loyalists, the military, the English and members of the council. For example, problems with the distribution of food to Loyalists — being carried out by the military rather than the Lieutenant Governor — became so heated that Des Barres was removed from office. David Mathews, former mayor of New York City, led one faction that was opposed by The Rev. Ranna Cossit, the minister of St. George Anglican Church, organized as the garrison church for the troops stationed in Sydney.

Other Loyalists crucial in developing the economy on Cape Breton included William Brown, who came from New Jersey and operated a retail business along with his sons, and Samuel Plant, from New York City, who opened North Sydney's first general store. Other Loyalists went to sea to fish and trade. Some Blacks came as slaves, married and were eventually buried in the cemetery at St. George Church.

Despite a sizeable migration of Scots beginning around 1800, the population grew slowly and remained isolated in the remote glens in the interior of the Island, quite unaware of the administrative chaos at Sydney. Matters came to a head in 1819; judgment concerning a court case regarding the charging of a duty on imported rum implied that all government on the island since 1784 had been irregular, if not illegal, because of the absence of an elected assembly. Rather than grant an assembly, the British government decided to rejoin Cape Breton to Nova Scotia. The change took effect in 1821, without a great outcry from the islanders. Part of the reason for the minimal opposition may have been the prosperity that followed the General Mining Association of London's acquisition of the Duke of York's mineral rights. Markets were found for coal in the United States, and Sydney became a coaling station of considerable importance for new steamships crossing the Atlantic.