Nova Scotia Historical Review

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Cover Photo:
The Founding of Sydney, 1785
Watercolour by Lieutenant William Booth;
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ETHNICITY
ORAL TESTIMONY and the
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A conference,
Ethnicity, Oral Testimony and the World of Work,
will take place at Baddeck, Nova Scotia,
October 8, 9, 10 and 11, 1986.

The conference will be sponsored jointly by the
Society for the Study of Ethnicity in Nova Scotia (SSENS)
Canadian Oral History Association (COHA), and
Atlantic Oral History History Association (AOHA).

Papers from the disciplines of history, folklore, sociology, political science, anthropology, economics, etc. will be presented.

Interested individuals should contact:
John deRoche,
Sociology Department,
University College of Cape Breton,
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University College of Cape Breton

Editorial

Two hundred years ago, Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres landed at Spanish Bay to found the town of Sydney, named by him after the then Secretary of State, Lord Sydney. DesBarres was in many ways one of the most extraordinary individuals of his time. Soldier, hydrographic surveyor of world renown, mathematician, the builder of the first optically-equipped astronomical observatory in the Western Hemisphere, town planner, twice a governor, and father of two separate families, he came first to Nova Scotia with Wolfe to capture Louisbourg in 1758 and died in Halifax sixty-six years later, aged almost 103 years. He is best known for his *Atlantic Neptune*, one of the finest hydrographic charting and map-making feats of the eighteenth century.

In this issue we look at this remarkable man as a town planner, an hydrographer and map-maker, an administrator, and a private individual. Some of these views of DesBarres began as papers given to the DesBarres Conference, sponsored by the Beaton Institute of the University College of Cape Breton, in Sydney in May of this year. Our manuscript contribution in this issue is a letter by one of DesBarres's daughters, Isabella, describing a trip she took to the Elysian Fields near Amherst, serving to remind us of the hardships of travel nearly two hundred years ago.

We have excluded from this issue our book review section, in order to include extra articles on DesBarres.

Our spring issue will have as its theme another bicentenary, that of the Charitable Irish Society of Halifax. Robert Harvey, a past contributor to the *Review* and historian of the C.I.S., is writing on the history of the Society as the leading article for this issue.

For future issues we are planning one on shipping and transportation and for another are seeking articles on the history of Nova Scotian law and medicine. Please send all submissions and suggestions to Mrs. Lois Kernaghan, c/o Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 6016 University Avenue, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 1W4.

Our subscription list continues to grow with an increase of eighty new readers this past summer, the result of a special campaign conducted by Trevor Leech, a second-year Dalhousie Law student.

Of interest to many readers, another volume of the *Collections* of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society is being published this winter. A completely new cover and format has been designed; the paper and copy editing follows that of the *Review*, so that it will not seem unfamiliar to readers.

This issue of the *Review* has been made possible by a generous grant from the Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness.

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Mr. Punch has had articles published in many Canadian, American and overseas journals. His books include *Genealogical Research in Nova Scotia* (1978; 1983) and *Irish Halifax: The Immigrant Generation, 1815-1859* (1981). The article featured here is a product of his current research into the origins and demographics of the eighteenth-century population of Lunenburg County.

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DesBarres the Founder

R.J. Morgan

People have great expectations of their founders: they must be brilliant, wise, saintly and preferably handsome. Various countries have insured that their national founders should fit into this mould. Hence, we have Simon Bolivar, the dashing and handsome founder of Venezuela; El Cid, the romantic leader of Spain; Augustus Caesar, founder of Imperial Rome; and, of course, George Washington who *never* told a lie.

Canada, unlike other countries, seems to take a delight in cutting her heroes down to size, so that they end up being anti-heroes -- or worse still, clowns. Poor Sir John A. MacDonald would likely be honoured as a saint or a mighty hero, had he been a Mexican or an Italian. In Canada, there seem to be only a few statues in his honour. I remember when I was studying in Kingston, Ontario, that there was a statue of him in a park I used to pass through on my way to the university. There seemed to be a contest as to who could desecrate the statue most effectively, either by planting a gin bottle in the granite hand, or by painting the nose red. Poor MacKenzie King has suffered a similar fate at the hands of various debunkers.

In Cape Breton, we have had numerous heroes in politics, learning and labour. Perhaps unfortunately, for most of them, the cold eyes of historians have not yet turned on them and they remain heroes. I am thinking of people like Angus L. Macdonald, J.B. MacLachlan, or even Moses Coady. We do, however, have a long-standing Cape Breton personality who is falling more and more under the microscope of history; this year, the magnification will increase as never before. I am speaking, of course, of Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres.

DesBarres has always had a special place in the hearts of Cape Bretoners. As founder of Sydney and the colony of Cape Breton, his memory has been honoured by plaques in the city, and this year, a statue is being raised in his honour. Dr. John Clarence Webster's 1933 biography, the *Life of Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres*, painted a sympathetic portrait of the man, while Will R. Bird's largely fictional *An Earl Must Have a Wife*, in 1969, portrayed our hero as a Don Juan in conflict with his mortal enemy in the Colonial Office, Lord Sydney. G.N.D. Evans, also in 1969, steered a middle, but largely sympathetic course, in *Uncommon Obdurate: The Several Public Careers of J.F.W. DesBarres*.

This article was originally presented at the DesBarres Conference, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 22 May 1985.

It has been my task to examine DesBarres in the light of his actions as founder of Sydney and the colony of Cape Breton. Evans, who took the first serious look at DesBarres's Cape Breton career, considered him a failure. Evans, however, was dealing only with DesBarres's own brief term as lieutenant-governor of the island, and had neither the time nor the space to examine DesBarres in relation to other administrators of the early colony. How did their terms of office compare with respect to DesBarres's? Were they successes or failures? And, perhaps more importantly, just what constituted success or failure in the colony of Cape Breton?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to look briefly at the early history and administrative weaknesses of the island. Cape Breton was quite unlike the other Maritime colonies; in fact, it had very little going for it. When the British assumed control of the island in 1763 they refused to allow any permanent settlement during the time of Samuel Holland's survey. When he completed his work, his report confirmed official suspicions: the island contained rich coal resources which might attract local industry, or serve as an export to fuel industry in the Thirteen Colonies. In either case, Britain did not want competition with her own coal resources and industries; she therefore annexed the island to Nova Scotia and continued the ban on land settlement.

As a result, Cape Breton languished, while settlers were moved from New England into mainland Nova Scotia and present-day New Brunswick. With the outbreak of the American Revolution, loyalists began pouring into the entire Maritime region except, again, Cape Breton. The population pressure, however, was mounting, and by 1784 the Colonial Office was forced to declare Cape Breton a colony open to settlement. The only difficulty was that by this time, most of the loyalists had already established themselves in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Cape Breton received no more than five hundred colonists, and the majority of these came not from New England, but from backwoods New York via Montreal and the St. Lawrence. The rest straggled in from colonies stretching from Florida to New Hampshire. The vast majority were, moreover, poor late arrivals, many of whom had failed in their first attempts at settlement elsewhere.

Another significant handicap was in the organization of the colony. Since the island had a small population of less than 2000 when the decision was made to organize it as a colony, and since most of these were French, or illiterate English-speaking fishermen, the Colonial Office worried that the

infant colony would not be able to survive by itself or support a house of assembly. As a result, it was made an adjunct colony of Nova Scotia and, although granted a representative assembly, that body was not to be called until the population of the island warranted it.[1] In theory, the lieutenant-governor of Cape Breton was subordinate to the lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia. Should the lieutenant-governor of the latter be physically present in Cape Breton, he could assume control of the island's government. In reality this never happened, but it did give the lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia leave to interfere in and report to the Colonial Office on events in Cape Breton. This, in turn, seriously weakened the power of the island government.

The purpose behind making Cape Breton an adjunct colony may have been to compensate for the delayed house of assembly, since, with no elected body to act as a break on the appointed council, there might be a danger of executive dictatorship. In effect, quite the opposite happened. The executive council became, instead, a battleground of factions contending for power. Since there was no elected house of assembly where debate would normally occur, the executive council filled that job. This tended to stymie the work of the council, and furthermore, to pull the various lieutenant-governors into the on-going fights of the council members.

When the lieutenant-governors took sides, as they all eventually did, the opposing group had two options: resign, or complain to outside sources. The opposition generally chose the latter, approaching the lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia, asking him to obtain redress on their behalf from the Colonial Office. If the lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia was convinced of their arguments, or felt any enmity toward the lieutenant-governor of Cape Breton, the former's interference might indeed help precipitate the latter's dismissal. The power of the lieutenant-governor in Cape Breton was thus considerably weakened.

There was yet another outstanding weakness in the colony's organization. First, since Cape Breton had no house of assembly, taxes could not be collected. Without taxes, public improvements could not be made. Roads, bridges and public buildings were therefore bound to be neglected, which in turn held back settlement and acted as a source of frustration to administrators.

1 For a fuller discussion of the organization of the colony of Cape Breton, see R.J. Morgan, "Orphan Outpost: Cape Breton Colony 1784-1820," Ph.D. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1972.

The economic development of the colony was further retarded by a lack of capital. The chief taxable resource of the island was the government-owned coalfields, but Great Britain could hardly be expected to invest money in a resource which might compete with her own assets. As a result, the coal-mines were not developed efficiently. Scarce private capital was pressed into service when possible, but it was always too little.

In any case, one could hardly expect private capital to invest in government-owned coalfields whose markets, due to the Navigation Laws, were restricted, in effect, to Halifax, still a small town.[2] Even there, coal could be imported more cheaply from Britain than from Cape Breton. Consequently, the colonial government usually operated the mines, while the shipping fees and small profits occuring from the export venture were used to develop the coalfields and to help with public improvements. The only other sources of income for the colony were the salaries paid to officials, plus a small contingency allowance of between £500 and £1,000, voted annually by Parliament.

Let us recall that Cape Breton was organized as a separate colony because of a need to settle loyalists. The same, of course, held true for New Brunswick, but the latter differed from Cape Breton in that when the decision to organize into a separate colony was made, New Brunswick already had some 20,000 to 30,000 settlers in place. There was no doubt that they would demand and receive a house of assembly, which would permit taxation and local improvements. Even Prince Edward Island, with a smaller population but powerful allies in London, received a representative assembly. Cape Breton had neither the population nor the allies to protect her interests.

Yet a government was set up in Cape Breton, and loyalists came looking for land, government jobs and largesse to compensate for their considerable losses in the Thirteen Colonies. Refugees like Abraham Cuyler, former mayor of Albany, New York, and David Mathews, former mayor of New York City, to name only two of the most influential, considered power and remuneration their right when they arrived in Cape Breton. Although only a small number of loyalists came, there were too many of them seeking too few jobs for themselves and their friends, complaining in frustration

2 The Navigation Laws were passed to confine British commerce to that nation's vessels and colonial possessions. Certain strategic commoditities, such as coal, could not be shipped to foreign countries. The purpose of the laws was the aggrandizement of Britain's economy.

to Halifax and London, and threatening to grind the poor colony's development to a halt.

Any lieutenant-governor or administrator involved in this situation was entering a minefield laid with booby traps at every step. Of the ten lieutenant-governors or administrators between 1785 and 1820, four were dismissed, two resigned, one served eight months, another only 2½ years. The last lieutenant-governor, George Robert Ainslie, was asking for a transfer when the colony was reannexed to Nova Scotia. Lieutenant-Governor William Macarmick survived the longest -- eight years -- using his government connections, and those of his aristocratic wife, to shelter him from the attacks of his enemies in Sydney and Halifax.

It is against this background that we must assess the career of J.F.W. DesBarres in Cape Breton. Since he was the founder and first lieutenant-governor of the colony, his successors, forewarned of the problems inherent in the local organization had, perhaps, an advantage over him. On the other hand, his attitudes only worsened the situation.

Briefly, when the Colonial Office decided to set up the colony of Cape Breton, DesBarres was considered as lieutenant-governor because of his knowledge of the place: he had served at the fall of Louisbourg, and had just completed a coastal survey of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia which had been published as *The Atlantic Neptune*. More importantly, since the Admiralty, for whom DesBarres had produced the charts, was slow in remunerating him, the appointment may be seen as compensation, rather than reward for true administrative abilities.

Apart from this, DesBarres, who was convinced of the great importance of the Maritimes in general, was particularly enthusiastic about the new colony's potential as a loyalist refuge and as a fishing and mining area. He felt that the revenue resulting from these resources could easily cover the costs of governing and developing the island,[3] but failed to take into account the strangling effect of the Navigation Laws, as well as the plans to defer an elected assembly in Cape Breton.

The British government was culpable in both its slow payment for *The*

3 DesBarres had a small book published justifying his policies in Cape Breton, in answer to Dr. William Smith, an executive councillor who wrote a pamphlet attacking him. The book gives an excellent insight into DesBarres's character and is entitled *Letters to Lord . . . on a Caveat against Emigration to America, 1804*. In North America, copies are available at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia; the Public Archives of Canada; the Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton; and Harvard University.

Atlantic Neptune and its failure to provide sufficient stimulus to the development of the Cape Breton economy. However, DesBarres's personality exacerbated the situation and imperilled the colony even further. DesBarres was a man of vision, one who was able to see the potential of any person or situation. As such, he was single-minded and pursued his vision in the most direct way possible. This often meant brushing aside institutions, bureaucracies and people's feelings, in the pursuit of his goal. Like a terrier, he ferreted out his object and hung on till he achieved success.

In the case of *The Atlantic Neptune*, for example, he worked like a man possessed, with a staff of usually seven assistants and from twenty to thirty labourers. He pushed himself and his men to the limit, through uncharted and dangerous waters -- and almost drowned on Sable Island -- all because he was determined to complete an accurate survey of the coasts and harbours of Nova Scotia. When his superiors noticed the bills piling up and tried to limit the survey to the Atlantic coasts alone, DesBarres fought and won permission to complete not only the entire Nova Scotian and Cape Breton shorelines, but also the coast down to New York. The final expenses, as we have seen, resulted in late payment for the *Neptune*, and even when DesBarres's demands for complete compensation were eventually fulfilled in 1794, he was never happy with the settlement. A less single-minded person would have followed the line of least resistance, produced the charts, and received payment, with much less furor.

We see similarities in DesBarres's behaviour in Cape Breton. It has already been noted that the economic potential of the island was handicapped by a faulty constitution and the Navigation Laws. On the other hand, the new lieutenant-governor saw only the great potential of his colony "to be considered by the rivals of our country [*sic*] with an envious eye."[4] and was determined to be the prime instrument to this end. He acted as if his executive council and the Navigation Laws did not exist.

In order to get buildings erected and streets cleared in Sydney as quickly as possible, DesBarres issued supplies as payment to both loyalists and non-loyalists alike. There was doubt whether non-loyalists were entitled to this bounty, but even worse, he did this without government permission.[5] Worse still, he did not consult the loyalist members of his executive council, like

4 Colonial Office Papers (hereafter C.O.), Series 216, "B" 1, 25 July 1785, pp. 3-12.

5 Sydney to DesBarres, 30 November 1786, C.O. 218, vol. 12, ff. 10-12.

Cuyler and Mathews. The latter, seeing their power slipping, complained to the commander of the garrison, Lieutenant-Colonel John Yorke, who insisted that, *ex officio*, he too had a right to issue supplies. According to instructions, supplies were to be issued by the local troop commander, but DesBarres, as lieutenant-governor, was described as "commanding his Majesty's Forces in Cape Breton and its Dependencies," and he was not about to allow the military to interfere with his civil authority.[6] The colony was divided between those supporting DesBarres and those supporting Cuyler, Mathews and Yorke.

Meanwhile, the supplies were being depleted and there was danger of starvation during the coming winter. Since Britain had failed to send adequate provisions to Halifax, the hope of assistance from that quarter was growing dimmer.[7] Yorke finally agreed to a compromise, but DesBarres refused unless Yorke gave him complete control over supplies. The lieutenant-governor even went so far as to buy supplies on his own account, for which he did not obtain final compensation until 1802. In the end, the town averted starvation when DesBarres, hearing of a shipwreck off Arichat, sent a party there to seize supplies found aboard the ship. However, the damage had been done and the colony's chief loyalists were soon writing to Lieutenant-Governor John Parr of Nova Scotia, who quickly conveyed their complaints to Lord Sydney.

Still another incident reveals DesBarres's impetuousness and consequent determination to act on his own. Obviously disappointed that so few loyalists had come and stayed in Cape Breton, he decided to recruit new settlers. Like Holland, he realized the potential value of the fishery, and on his own, he therefore decided to send a Cape Breton merchant, Captain Thomas Venture, to Nantucket with a proclamation promising land and good anchorage to whalers who were thinking of moving to British territory. The difficulty was that both Halifax -- and more importantly, the British -- wanted whalers to settle in their jurisdictions. DesBarres typically ignored this and informed the Colonial Office of his intentions only after he had sent Venture on his journey. Of course, he not only failed to acquire the

6 Sydney to DesBarres, 20 February 1785, DesBarres Papers, MG 23, f, vol. 4, pp. 772-773, Public Archives of Canada; Sydney to DesBarres, 25 March 1784, *ibid.*, pp. 782-785.

7 G.N.D. Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate: The Several Public Careers of J.F.W. DesBarres* (Salem, Mass. and Toronto, 1969), pp. 49-51.

whalers, but also received a black mark from Lord Sydney for his independent and impudent actions.[8]

The very characteristics of imagination, courage and independent action that spelt success for *The Atlantic Neptune*, led to DesBarres's failures as a lieutenant-governor. In the light of his successors' careers, however, DesBarres did not fare badly. As already noted, the British government's colonial policy, the organization of the colony itself, and the power-hungry Cape Breton loyalists all conspired to cripple later governors as well.

For all his failures, moreover, DesBarres had various successes in his colony. Having chosen a site for his capital, he planned it with great foresight; one town planner has called Sydney "the only imaginative planned project in 18th century Nova Scotia."[9] By the end of the first year of the colony's existence, DesBarres could boast that he and his little band of no more than two hundred settlers had erected a barracks, hospital, mess house, carpenter's shop, governor's quarters, bake house, provision store, jail, and teacher's house in Sydney. He had also attracted the colony's first minister, Ranna Cossit, who eventually began the first church and school in English Cape Breton.

The coal-mines were a great challenge, since the British government, as we have noted, was totally uninterested in their development. As proof, DesBarres was given no instructions concerning them; accordingly, he ran them on his own account and hired a collier, Thomas Moxley. With no capital, Moxley simply dug pits to remove surface coal, and actually damaged the coal seams. DesBarres made very little money from the venture and, indeed, he tackled the project more in hopes of attracting interest and revenue to the colony, than in anticipation of personal gain.

This is not to say that DesBarres did not stand to prosper from the development of Cape Breton; like other governors, he expected to make a profit from his appointment. His particular interest, however, was land speculation and management in mainland Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In Cape Breton, he confined himself to a large tract of land in Point Edward, which he wanted to develop as a model farm for future profit. It was therefore in his own self-interest that the colony he founded should prosper. In real-

8 The issue of the location of the whale fishery is discussed more completely in C.B. Fergusson, "The Southern Whale Fishery 1775-1804," *Collections* of the Nova Scotia Historical Society, XXXII (1959), 79, 124.

9 Michael H. Burnt, "The Origin of Colonial Settlements in the Maritimes," *Plan* 1 (1960), 103.

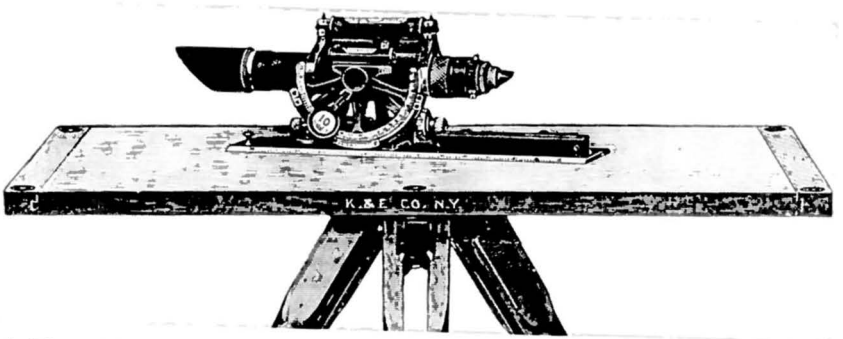
ity, he eventually sold the model farm and made very little money from it.

Before we make our final assessment of DesBarres as lieutenant-governor of Cape Breton and founder of Sydney, we must quickly place the colony in context. DesBarres may have seen Cape Breton as the hope of the British Empire but the Colonial Office was hardly aware of its existence. Neither the island's fish, coal, nor timber were of any importance to the Mother Country. The colony was only convenient as a place to deposit loyalists clamouring for office. Only the smallest amounts of money were ever spent there, and when Cape Breton was reannexed to Nova Scotia in 1820, the island's roads, public buildings and facilities were so far behind those of the mainland that it took almost half a century to overcome the neglect. All Britain asked was that the colony exist quietly and ask for nothing. However, by granting her an absurd constitution and appointing as lieutenant-governor a man of DesBarres's vitality, the Colonial Office received a rude awakening.

In the end, DesBarres was dismissed because he disturbed the peace of Whitehall. Formally he was accused of causing friction between Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, between the civil and military authorities on the island, and of wasting money by distributing supplies to people unentitled to them.[10] It is poetic justice that his dismissal did not result in a subdued Cape Breton, but served instead as a prelude to continued unrest in the disadvantaged colony.

When we examine all these factors, we cannot claim that DesBarres was either a magnificent hero or an utter failure in Cape Breton. He faced the problems we still face today: restrictive trade policies, distance from markets, a low priority in the development schemes of government, rivalry with a more powerful Halifax, and the internal squabbling of too many people seeking too few jobs. He tried to deal with these problems directly, but treaded on too many toes. The vision that led to the masterpiece of *The Atlantic Neptune* resulted ultimately in his downfall as an administrator in Cape Breton.

10 Sydney to DesBarres, 30 November 1786, C.O. 218, vol. 12, ff. 1012.



A Plane Table (Courtesy of Keuffel and Esser Canada, Inc.)

DesBarres and His Contemporaries as Mapmakers

Stephen B. MacPhee

Before discussing Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres and his contemporaries as mapmakers, it is worthwhile to consider their period in history and, in particular, their period in the history of North America. DesBarres was born in 1721 and lived for almost 103 years. The surveyors with whom DesBarres will be compared are Samuel Holland (1728-1801) and James Cook (1728-1778). Others could have been chosen, such as Lane, Gilbert, Durell, Vancouver and those from the French Régime, but in the space available the examples selected should be sufficient to provide a comparison.

The DesBarres period was really a second wave of exploration in Canada. Giovanni Caboto, known more familiarly as John Cabot, made landfall in Atlantic Canada 224 years before DesBarres was born. Jacques Cartier made his first voyage of discovery in 1534, while searching for a sea route to the Orient, and Samuel de Champlain set up his colony at Port Royal in 1604. Champlain was really the first of the explorers to bring some sense of order and system to the mapping of Canada's wilderness and to the charting of her rivers and lakes.

The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 altered the colonial possessions of Britain and France in Atlantic Canada. France lost mainland Nova Scotia and her possession of the south coast and Placentia Bay in Newfoundland, but retained the right to catch and dry fish on Newfoundland's northern coast. France also retained Cape Breton and there after 1713, with many former settlers of Placentia, began to build the great fortress city of Louisbourg.

The change in ownership in Newfoundland meant that the English now acquired a vast and unknown coastal area along Newfoundland's south coast. One of their first actions was to appoint Captain William Taverner to carry out a hydrographic survey. The next surveyors on the south coast of Newfoundland were Thomas Durell and his assistant John Gaudy. Two maps of their 1716 survey still exist in the Hydrographic Library at Taunton, England.

In July 1758, Cook and DesBarres both played significant roles in the second siege of Louisbourg and in 1759, DesBarres, Cook and Holland all served under General Sir James Wolfe at the fall of Quebec. DesBarres

This article was originally presented at the DesBarres Conference, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 22 May 1985.

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*All maps are "Courtesy of the National Map Collection, Public Archives of Canada".

claimed to have been at Wolfe's side at his death, and Holland claimed to have been holding Wolfe's hand. However, as one scholar has noted, if the crowds who claimed to have been with Wolfe at his death had actually been there, no one would have been left to fight the battle.[1]

After the fall of Louisbourg, DesBarres obtained from French officers a number of documents and plans for the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, which he used to compile a chart of the river that was of great service to the British fleet in its expedition against the French in Quebec. Cook, Holland and DesBarres all participated in the hydrographic surveys required by the expeditionary forces and Cook's survey of the "Traverse" below Quebec City is well known.

Two more important dates in North American history, and in the careers of DesBarres, Holland and Cook, are 1763 and 1776. The former is the year in which the Treaty of Paris was signed to end the Seven Years' War. This treaty ceded to Great Britain all the French possessions in North America, with the exception of Louisiana, although the French were to recover the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon and to retain their rights under the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht to catch and dry fish on the coasts of Newfoundland. This new acquisition of territory also impressed on the British Admiralty the need to have accurate coastal surveys and charts of North American waters.

As a result of this treaty, the province of Quebec was created and Samuel Holland was made surveyor-general of the northern district of North America, while William DeBrahm assumed those responsibilities in the southern district.[2] In between the two, DesBarres was charged with a survey of the eastern Atlantic seaboard for the British Admiralty.

The year 1776, the year of independence for the thirteen American colonies, is important too, as it was the unrest there that caused the Board of Trade to charge DesBarres with the final production of a new set of charts for the eastern seaboard of North America. DesBarres quickly assembled his surveys, and those of Holland, DeBrahm and others, and supervised the compilation and drafting of the charts. They were published under

1 Cited in G.N.D. Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate: The Several Public Careers of J.F.W. DesBarres* (Salem and Toronto, 1969), p. 11.

2 DeBrahm was a German military engineer who, because of religious persecution, had emigrated in 1751 to Georgia, where he became provincial surveyor in 1755.

the title *The Atlantic Neptune*, and serve as the real legacy of DesBarres the hydrographer.

In this discussion of mapmaking and chartmaking, it is useful to have certain types of surveying clarified. Hydrography can be defined as that branch of applied science which deals with the measurement and description of the physical features of the navigable or water-covered portions of the earth's surface and adjoining coastal areas, with special reference to their use for the purpose of navigation. It includes the measurement of water depths, tides and currents, and high-water and low-water lines, the positioning of navigation aids and conspicuous cultural features, as well as mapping of topographic features that may be of interest to mariners. It also includes the compilation of collected information and the promulgation of the same as nautical or navigation charts, sailing directions, tide and current tables, and other publications of interest to mariners. Topographic surveying is different, in that the topographer surveys and produces maps of the earth's natural and cultural features in areas that are not covered by water.

In early times, hydrographers and topographers, in addition to collecting data, compiled their own charts and maps. In modern times, the compilation work is done by cartographers. However, both topographic surveyors and hydrographic surveyors are often called mapmakers, as the map or chart is still the most important product of their work.

Before comparing DesBarres with his mapmaking contemporaries, Holland and Cook, a few more biographical notes on each provide the setting for their careers. J.F.W. DesBarres is reputed to have been pigheaded, irascible, quarrelsome and to many of his contemporaries a "damned nuisance[3]" nevertheless, he was an excellent hydrographer and mapmaker.

Very little is known of his early years or of his private life, but his character is reflected in his professional and business dealings. It is uncertain where DesBarres was born, but his early education was an excellent foundation for his careers in surveying and cartography. He was a student of the great mathematician-scientists Jean and Daniel Bernouilli at the University in Basle, Switzerland. In addition to studying theoretical and applied mathematics, he studied art, which proved to be the perfect combination for bridging the gap between surveying and cartography.

For uncertain reasons, DesBarres enrolled in the Royal Military Academy

3 Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate*, vii.

at Woolwich, England, in 1753 and when he graduated in 1756 became a lieutenant in the Royal American Regiment of Foot, a unit designed to protect the British colonies in North America against the French. He sailed for North America in the spring of 1756 as an engineering officer.

After the British armada arrived at Gabarus Bay in June 1758 and Wolfe's men landed at Kennington Cove, Lieutenant DesBarres, with the second battalion of the Royal Americans, was one of the first of the invading forces to land and on the first rush, he captured a French entrenchment. Brigadier Wolfe was suitably impressed and saw that the enterprising lieutenant accompanied him as an engineer to the siege of Quebec the following year.

Samuel Holland was born near Nijmegen, Holland in 1728 and after service in the Dutch army went to England in 1754. Through connections he obtained a commission in the 60th Regiment of Foot, which DesBarres would join two years later. He was employed for a time as a map draftsman and came to Canada in July 1756.

Holland was an excellent draftsman, trained in military engineering and intensely ambitious. He was attached in due time to Wolfe's command as an army engineer qualified to make surveys, prepare maps and take soundings of the waters in the Louisbourg vicinity, for the purpose of besieging that fortress. Brigadier Wolfe deferred to Major Holland in engineering matters despite Wolfe's general antipathy to engineers and engineering. At Louisbourg, Holland was entrusted with the leadership of an initial attack on the northeastern part of the harbour. While DesBarres was intemperate and impetuous in manner, Holland made friends easily and seldom had problems in impressing his superiors.

The third personality in our comparison, James Cook, was born to a lowland Scottish labourer and a Yorkshire village girl in 1728 at the small Yorkshire village of Marton-in-Cleveland and received the rudiments of his education in return for services on a farm. Eventually he became apprenticed to a ship owner and coal shipper and learned his trade as a navigator transiting the treacherous east coast of England. Cook completed his practical apprenticeship, worked his way up to employment as a mate and was offered his own command. He turned down this offer and in 1755 joined the Royal Navy as a rating.

Although promotion to officer ranks from the lower deck was almost negligible at this time, Cook's abilities were soon recognized and in the remarkably short period of two years he was awarded his warrant from the

naval examiners at Trinity House. During these two years he also learned the rudiments of hydrography and was appointed master (chief professional sailor) of HMS *Pembroke*, which was one of the blockading vessels during the siege of Louisbourg; the captain of HMS *Pembroke* was John Simcoe.

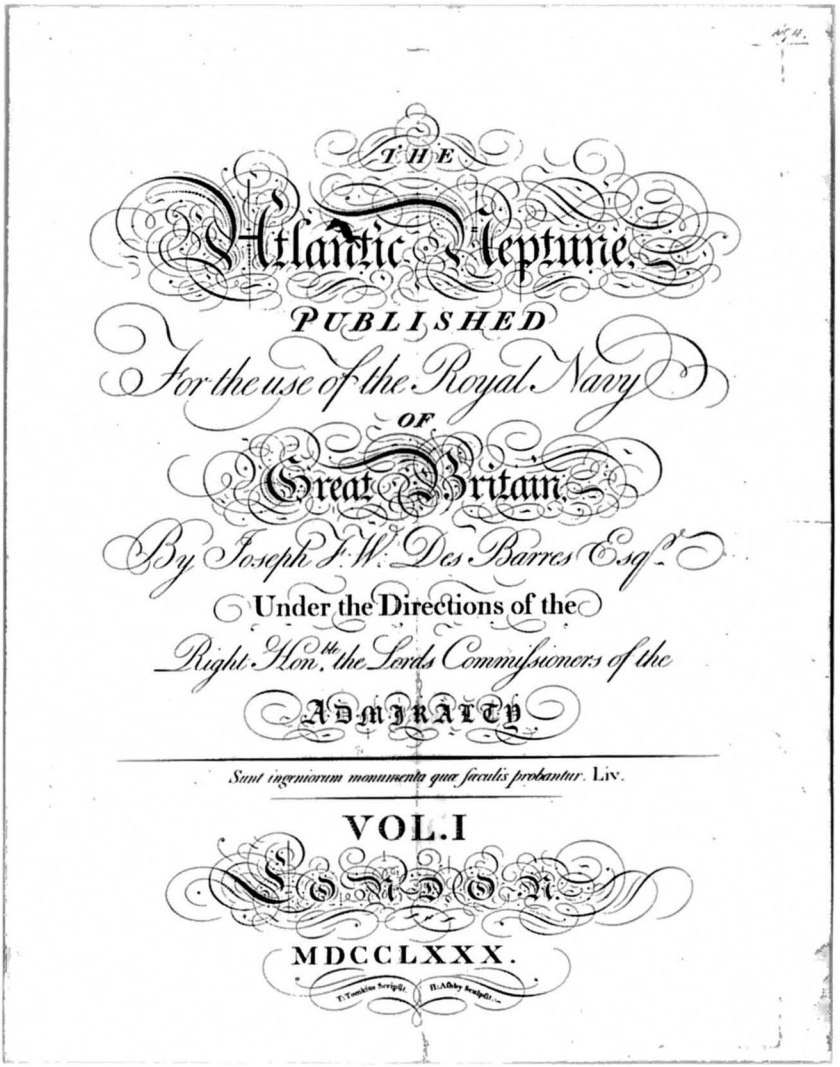
Louisbourg surrendered on 27 July 1758 and the fateful meeting between Cook and Holland took place on the following day at Kennington Cove. Cook had gone ashore and his curiosity was aroused by an officer carrying a small square table mounted on a tripod. The officer would set the table down, sight along the top in many directions, and then write in a notebook. The two men struck up a conversation and Cook discovered that his chance companion was Captain Samuel Holland, engaged in making a plane-table survey of the encampment. Cook expressed a desire to learn more about surveying and Holland acquainted him with the plane-table process.

With the onset of winter the fleet returned to Halifax, and whenever Holland could spare the time he worked with Captain Simcoe and James Cook in the compilation of a chart of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, as well as a second chart of the St. Lawrence River. The opportunity to work with both Simcoe, one of the most intellectual officers in the navy, and Holland, a surveyor and cartographer, greatly enhanced Cook's ability.

It is interesting to note that soon Cook was once again in the right place at the right time. When the French seized St. John's in 1762 and a British squadron was dispatched to recapture the port, Cook met Joseph DesBarres and together they charted Conception Bay. In 1763, Cook was appointed King's Surveyor and with a small vessel, the *Grenville*, spent the next four years working on the Newfoundland coast, where he produced some of his finest hydrographic surveys.

In general, hydrographers of the eighteenth century did not record a great deal as to how they went about their work. Procedures were still being handed down on a personal basis, and although there were several manuals on land surveying, no complementary literature for the chartmaker had yet been written.

The standard method of marine surveying, however, was the running traverse of the coastline, also referred to as the running survey method. This entailed the careful noting and plotting of the ship's course as it sailed along a coast, and the fixing of prominent shoreline features from cross-bearings taken from the vessel. In *The Practical Navigator and Seaman's Daily*


THE
Atlantic Neptune
PUBLISHED
For the use of the Royal Navy
OF
Great Britain
By Joseph F. W. Des Barres Esq.r
Under the Directions of the
Right Hon.ble the Lords Commissioners of the
ADMIRALTY
Sunt ingeniorum monumenta quæ facilè probantur. Liv.
VOL. I
LONDON
MDCCLXXX.

The title page of the 1780 edition of *The Atlantic Neptune*.

One of J.F.W. DesBarres's charts from *The Atlantic Neptune*.
Courtesy Map Department, Public Archives of Nova Scotia.

Assistant, published in 1772, the instructions for such a survey were:

> . . . take with the azimuth compass, the Bearings, in Degrees, of such Points of the coast as form the most material Projections or Hollows; write down these Bearings and make a rough sketch of the coasts. . . . Then let the ship run in a direct line, which must be carefully measured by the Log or otherwise for one, two or three miles.

According to this method, the compass bearings of the same land features were then to be recorded again. When the bearings of a given feature were plotted from successive positions of the ship, the point at which the bearing lines intersected fixed the position of the land feature with respect to the ship's track. While this was repeated down the coast, an experienced draftsman would sketch in the outline of the shore, particularly noting inlets, islands and harbours. At the same time, a member of the crew would take occasional depth soundings.

Depth sounding, although time-consuming, is as simple as it is ancient. The Apostle Paul even described the use of a sounding line in Acts 27: 27, 28:

> . . .when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near some country; and sounded, and found it twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors set out of the stern, and wished for the day.

As practiced in the 1700s, it involved lowering a hemp line with a lead weight attached to the end. When the weight was felt to hit the bottom, the depth could be roughly determined by the length of line that had been paid out.

Surveyors using the traditional method took it for granted that there would be errors: it was difficult to log the ship's track or to fix positions with real precision. These errors, in turn, threw off all other calculations, whether they were the sounding of the submarine landscape or the positioning of coastal features. From a distance offshore, it was not always possible to be certain if an inlet was a bay, a strait, or a river, or to know always if some stretch of shore was the mainland, or an island masking the mainland.

It was the triumvirate of Cook, Holland and DesBarres who combined their understanding of land and sea surveying to make the basic change from positioning from a rolling ship, to going ashore and making position

observations from a stable land base. A better appreciation of the sinuous coastline was obtained by observing from hills; then, using accurately-observed shore points, the coastline was surveyed and the ship and boats positioned from ashore as they carried out their sounding operations. This was a complete reversal from the previous methodology.

During the ten years that DesBarres conducted his surveys of Nova Scotia, he based himself at Castle Frederick in Falmouth, and there, over the winter months, drafted his field surveys into charts. He hired local Acadians to man his shallops, and he felt that his duty was "to avail myself of the ability of every person I met who could assist me in carrying on the surveys."[4] To DesBarres, the Acadians were the best for the job, since they were familiar with both shallops and inshore waters. But bureaucracy interceded: the expenditures for the Acadians had not been approved, and DesBarres ended up paying their wages out of his own pocket. This was the first of many such financial disputes with their lordships in England that would plague much of DesBarres's long life.

Though in the eyes of his superiors, DesBarres was somewhat lacking in administrative talents, the charts he produced were clear evidence of his skill as an hydrographer and cartographer. His charts of Sable Island, the graveyard of so many ships, are regarded as his ultimate hydrographic achievement. Although Sable had no economic value, DesBarres realized the navigational importance of a detailed survey of the island and its sand-bars, which extend over fifteen miles from each end into the main shipping lanes. He was also aware of the dangers due to fog and strong currents. After two years of surveying, he not only produced charts and sailing directions for the shoreline and soundings, but also provided information on wind direction and speed, climate, vegetation and the speed and direction of ocean currents.

Although survey methods of the time can now be judged as primitive, the eighteenth century was a period of rapid progress in hydrography and in navigation. The French statesman Colbert had the vision to recognize the importance of navigational charting and succeeded in making it a function of the state; England quickly followed suit. The biggest problem facing surveyors at this time was the determination of longitude. In 1731 this problem was partially rectified when the octant was developed by Hadley.

4 DesBarres to Philip Stephens, 13 Nov. 1769, DesBarres Papers, Series V, MG 23, Vol. 2, p. 52. Public Archives of Canada.

Using this instrument, a surveyor could observe lunar distances. This was done by observing the motion of the moon across the heavens in relation to fixed stars, and by measuring the angular travel over a fixed time interval. The early nautical almanacs then provided the mariner with tables of predicted lunar distance -- the angles between the moon and certain fixed stars, as well as the sun -- against Greenwich time.

The theodolite, used to measure horizontal and vertical angles, was developed and refined in the 1730s. In addition, both the quadrant -- the forerunner of the sextant -- and the chronometer were invented and then quickly improved. In fact, it was in 1773 that John Harrison's "Number Four Time Piece" won him the £20,000 prize from the Board of Longitude for developing a method capable of determining ship's longitude within one half of one degree. The technique of triangulation had already been well established by such prominent surveyors as Murdoch McKenzie Sr. in his 1742 survey of the Orkney Islands. These developments meant that for the first time, latitude and longitude could be determined accurately and shoreline and soundings could be positioned properly.

Today's instrumentation and techniques in hydrographic surveying are quite different from those used by DesBarres and his contemporaries; the principles, however, are identical. In the present era, horizontal control is the basic framework from which all surveys originate. In modern times, in contrast to the eighteenth century, accurate latitude and longitude values are available for most areas of Canada. Even in those locations where it may be necessary to establish new survey stations, astronomic observations are no longer used. A satellite receiver left in position for 24 hours will give a more precise determination than even the most stringent observations of the sun, or Pole Star; moreover, one does not have to be concerned with the problems of cloudcover. Probably the only astronomic observation taken today by hydrographers is that for determining azimuth, and this is done only as a checking procedure.[5]

There is no longer a requirement to pace the coastline methodically, recording topographic detail. Precise aerial photography provides all the necessary data in a much shorter time frame. Highly accurate electronic positioning systems have been developed to give positional accuracies well

5 Azimuth: arc of horizon between north or south point and point where the great circle passing through a heavenly body and the zenith cuts the horizon.

out of sight of land and regardless of visibility -- accuracies undreamt of by the early surveyors such as DesBarres. Automatic guages record the rise and fall of the tide, and sophisticated echo sounders and sidescan sonar systems feed water depth information into computers for editing and processing. In addition, the science of remote sensing is well advanced, and shoreline detail and shallow water bathymetry can be obtained from video cameras and laser sounding systems carried in an aircraft. Nevertheless, in 1985, the least depths over shoals are still verified by leadline, probably indicating our closest link with our predecessors.

The modern surveyor no longer compiles the final chart as DesBarres did, either. Today, hydrographers only assemble the field survey data; cartographers, using automated techniques and refined colour processing, produce the modern nautical chart.

In comparing DesBarres, Cook and Holland as hydrographers, certain points should be remembered. All three benefitted greatly by the synergism created through their relationships. DesBarres instructed Cook in mathematics and astronomy. Holland provided DesBarres with astronomic observations and topographic detail that the latter could use on his navigation charts. Holland also instructed Cook in plane-table surveying, astronomy and cartography. Cook was the least educated of the three, but the most experienced as a navigator and mariner. He was able, therefore, to complement the knowledge of the other two and to ensure that his charts truly met mariners' needs.

Cook spent his lifetime as a mariner, hydrographer and explorer. He surveyed in the Atlantic and Pacific, from latitude 71° S. to 71° N. His contribution to hydrography can be simply stated from the following quote: "By the application of rigid standards of accuracy, he converted hydrography from an art to a science."[6] Cook's charts included far more inland topography than was customary on hydrographic guides of the day. His charts were oriented to magnetic north, had generous numbers of soundings, and were dressed up with the use of brushwork in brown and green to show relief. In addition, somewhere on the document was always inserted that statement which many of his contemporary chartmakers could not make: *Based on actual surveys.*

Holland devoted his lifetime to surveying, but not more than ten years

6 Stanley Filmore and R.W. Sandilands, *The Chartmakers* (Toronto, 1983), p. 24.

to hydrography. His style was that of a military engineer, with much attention to detail. His greatest contribution was in the meticulous parcelling of the lands he surveyed, and in his excellent descriptions of their features and potential.

DesBarres was not an innovator in survey techniques or chart design. It was the attention he gave to accuracy and detail, as well as his skill as an artist, that set his work above that of others. DesBarres could place no great reliance on extant materials: only a few of the maps available to him had even the latitudes marked. Charles Morris had made fairly accurate maps of Nova Scotia in 1748-49, with indications of soundings, tides and currents, yet he had misplaced Annapolis Royal by eighteen minutes. In comparison, DesBarres's charts of Sable Island were of such quality that the island was not resurveyed until 1851.

DesBarres's *Atlantic Neptune* won high praise for its excellence. The contemporary review of the 1784 edition called it "A Superb Atlas -- Indispensable for the Navy... superior to anything that has heretofore been published."[7] Particularly noteworthy were the aquatint shoreline views, which were used to illustrate the approaches to harbours and to help the navigator locate his position. Each rendering was an example of DesBarres's artistic talent; they have been rated as "classics of the minor arts."[8]

It is difficult to make a comparison between the eighteenth-century chartmakers and those of today, as the entire methodology of chart production and navigation has changed. Today's charts are normally five or more colours, and the navigator relies heavily on navigation aids and electronic positioning systems. In addition, ship's draughts and shipping patterns have changed, necessitating many alterations in the product. The biggest change, however, is that modern hydrographers seldom work alone: the Hollands, the DesBarres and the Cooks of the 1980s will therefore not be as well remembered as their predecessors.

Although the working conditions and operating techniques of the eighteenth-century surveyor were quite different from those of his modern counterpart, principles governing the conduct of the hydrographer's work remain unchanged. Accuracy and attention to detail remain as elements

7 Quoted in John C. Webster, *The Life of Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres* (Shediac, N.B., 1933), p. 13.

8 Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate*, vii.

of paramount importance then, now, and will remain so in the future. The hydrographer has changed his methodology with changing technology, but has not altered his purpose. The greatest legacy passed on to us from these early surveyors and chartmakers is the obvious dedication they displayed for their work.

This dedication has been rewarded, to some extent, by naming physical features in their honour, and thus placing their names in the annals of history. Today in Canada, we have more than six features called after James Cook, three called after Samuel Holland, and four named in honour of J.F.W. DesBarres. The latest feature to be called after the last-named is DesBarres Spur, a 42-metre-deep protrusion of the East Bar of Sable Island. The Advisory Committee on Names for Undersea and Maritime Features (ACNUMF), a subcommittee of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographic Names (CPCGN), recommended the approval of this name in 1984 and final approval came early in 1985. It is one more guarantee that DesBarres the hydrographer will not be forgotten.

DesBarres the Town Planner

Douglas B. Foster

Town planning as a distinct profession did not exist in the time of J.F.W. DesBarres. Indeed, the professional organization known as the Town Planning Institute of Canada was formed only in 1924, and borrowed its name from the Town Planning Institute, or T.P.I., which had evolved in Great Britain during the late nineteenth century. Because of continuous branching in the profession in Canada, the term "town planner" was dropped in 1974. The old designation connotes more of an urban design specialist, and today this is only one of many specialties within the planning profession, which now includes resource planning, rural and regional planning, as well as specialized areas such as housing and recreation planning.

Although the profession did not exist in his time, J.F.W. DesBarres was, nevertheless, what we would call a town planner. In this capacity he is perhaps best remembered for his urban designs, but he was also a planner in the broader contemporary sense, because in his various activities he displayed the full range of skills we now know of as planning.

Like so much about DesBarres's life, his role as a planner has been shrouded in doubt and mystery. When he arrived in Cape Breton in the spring of 1785, however, he brought with him a legacy of apparent potential as an organizer, administrator and planner. He had spent ten years surveying the Atlantic coastline, and the resulting charts, *The Atlantic Neptune*, had been hailed as a cartographic and artistic success. While surveying the coast, he had acquired immense property holdings through grants and purchases, and was one of the largest landholders in the Maritimes. He was interested in property development, and had used rudimentary planning skills to settle tenant farmers on his holdings, and to assume responsibility for their basic welfare.

Settlement problems, and general political upheaval in the Maritime colonies during and after the American Revolution, had jeopardized his dreams of acquiring a fortune through land. When he encountered bureaucratic delays in receiving payment for *The Atlantic Neptune*, his financial situation became precarious. After hearing of the British Colonial Office's plan to

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The four map reductions were provided by Jim Gunn, N.S.L.S., Land Registration Information Service, Sydney, N.S.

govern Cape Breton separately from Nova Scotia, DesBarres asked to be appointed governor of the new island colony. His experience as a military officer, engineer and chartmaker may not have made him the most qualified man for the job, but few people could claim a greater geographical knowledge of the area. As far as DesBarres was concerned, the appointment was a fair return for his services, offered ample scope for his talents, and -- perhaps most importantly -- gave him an opportunity to recoup his financial losses. The British government, seeing an opportunity to rid themselves of DesBarres, appointed him lieutenant-governor in 1784.

Although DesBarres was officially in charge of the new colony, a past mayor of Schenectady, New York, Abraham Cuyler, was the first to land permanent settlers in the area. Cuyler had promised to bring 3000 loyalists, but in fact was able to land only a few hundred, at Louisbourg. DesBarres also sent a small group of his own settlers from England. They preceded his arrival by several months and joined Cuyler's loyalists, who were still at Louisbourg, living in misery.

It was immediately decided to move north to Spanish Bay. In heavy seas, the settlers put to shore from foundering ships and wintered at a site near present-day Sydney Mines. Were it not for a few existing structures and an abundant supply of coal nearby, the settlers might have frozen to death before DesBarres ever reached them. In the spring of 1785, the governor finally arrived and the business of founding a community could begin.

Planners then, as now, were necessarily preoccupied with the basics of water supply, sewage facilities and road transportation. DesBarres was not satisfied with the volume of water in the brook known as Crawley's Creek, on the north side of Spanish Bay; he decided to move the settlers across to the present location of Sydney, named in honour of the Colonial Office secretary, Lord Sydney.

The decision to move the town site was based on two factors: first, an adequate supply of fresh water was available in what came to be known as Muggah's Creek, and second, the peninsular shape of the new site could be easily defended. It made an ideal location for a city destined for great importance.

Sydney, as DesBarres envisaged it, would be the capital of the colony, and a key port and centre for the triangular trade between Britain, the Maritimes and the Caribbean colonies. Coal was to be the principal export, with fish being another source of wealth. Since Sydney was to be a city

of some stature, a grand and impressive community plan was called for. Already trained in cartography and military engineering, DesBarres was now ready to address his considerable artistic talent to urban design.[1]

At that time, the plans of most major cities were based on geometric shapes, whether circles or squares. Each of these patterns had several common features, most notably a focus located in the geographic centre, where a park, church, government office or other such structure would be located to provide a source of identity for the residents. Radiating outwards from this centre would be offices and shops, followed by houses, and finally, along the periphery, by open space and commons.

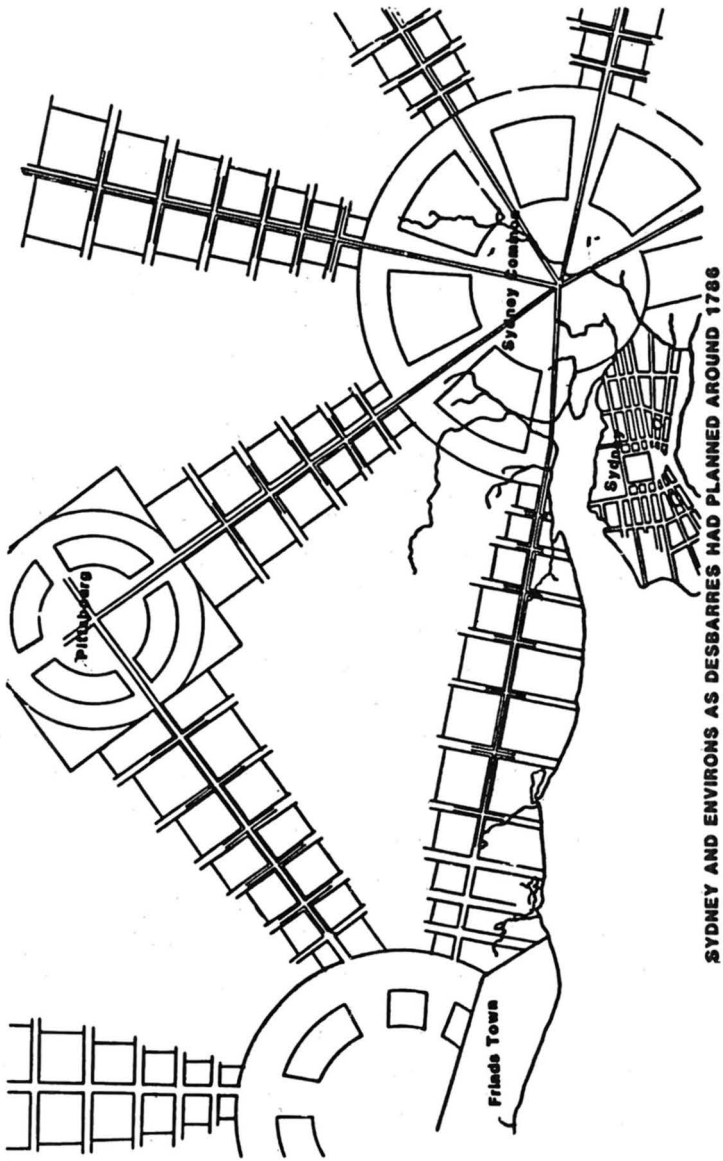
DesBarres's original plan for Sydney was similar to that for the city of Bath, England.[2] His vision was grandiose, but perhaps understandable, since he expected to see the settlement grow quickly into an important and elegant city. Although planners today see grid patterns for city streets as wasteful, because more of the city must be covered by roadway, DesBarres's grid system for Sydney was popular among surveyors of his day. The pattern was simple, and until the recent age of electronic instruments, plotting the tangents and radii of curving streets was a surveyor's mathematical nightmare.

The community was to have broad avenues and much open space. Many of the streets and their names are today exactly as DesBarres envisaged them two hundred years ago. Great George, as it was then known, was to be a main road, wider than most of the other streets. The city blocks were quite large, and had sizeable amounts of open land laid out in the middle of each.

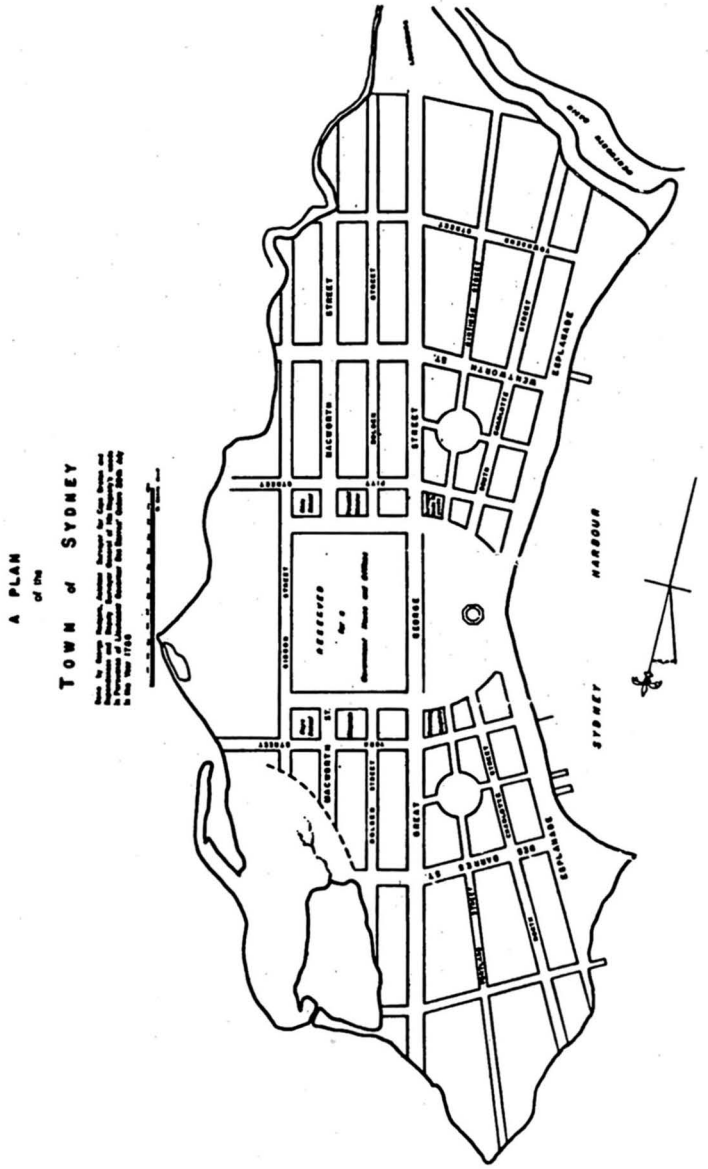
There was also an emphasis upon commons and park areas. The site of present-day Victoria Park was laid out by DesBarres for military use, and is now under the jurisdiction of the Department of National Defence. DesBarres also planned to have Sydney surrounded by a large open space, or common, which would be five or six times the size of the city itself. This area would be adjacent to the community, and would have several main arterial roads radiating outwards from the centre.

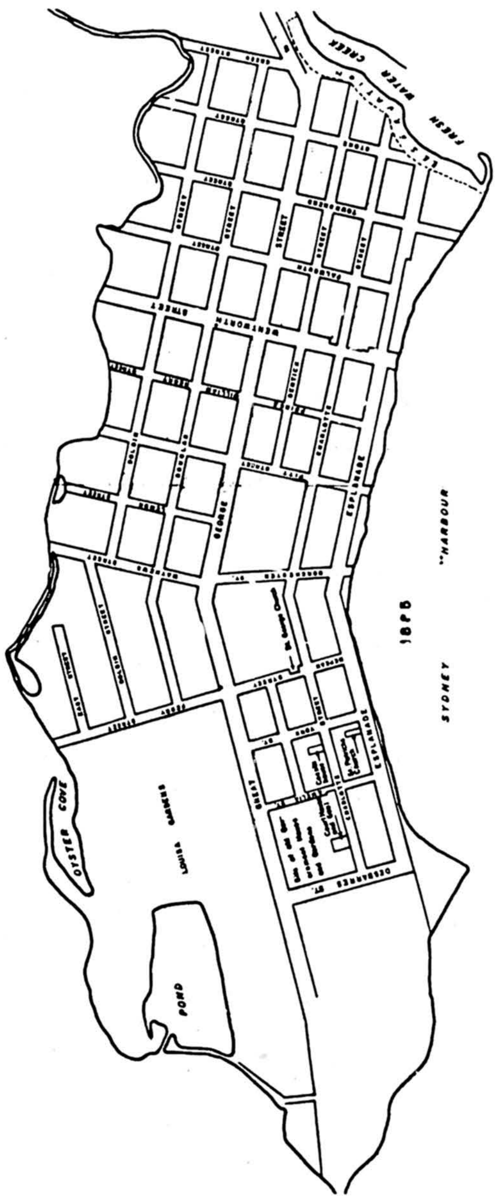
1 *The Atlantic Neptune* included a town plan for Newport, Rhode Island, as early evidence of DesBarres's interest in urban design. See G.N.D. Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate: The Several Public Careers of J.F.W. DesBarres* (Salem, Mass. and Toronto, 1969), p. 25.

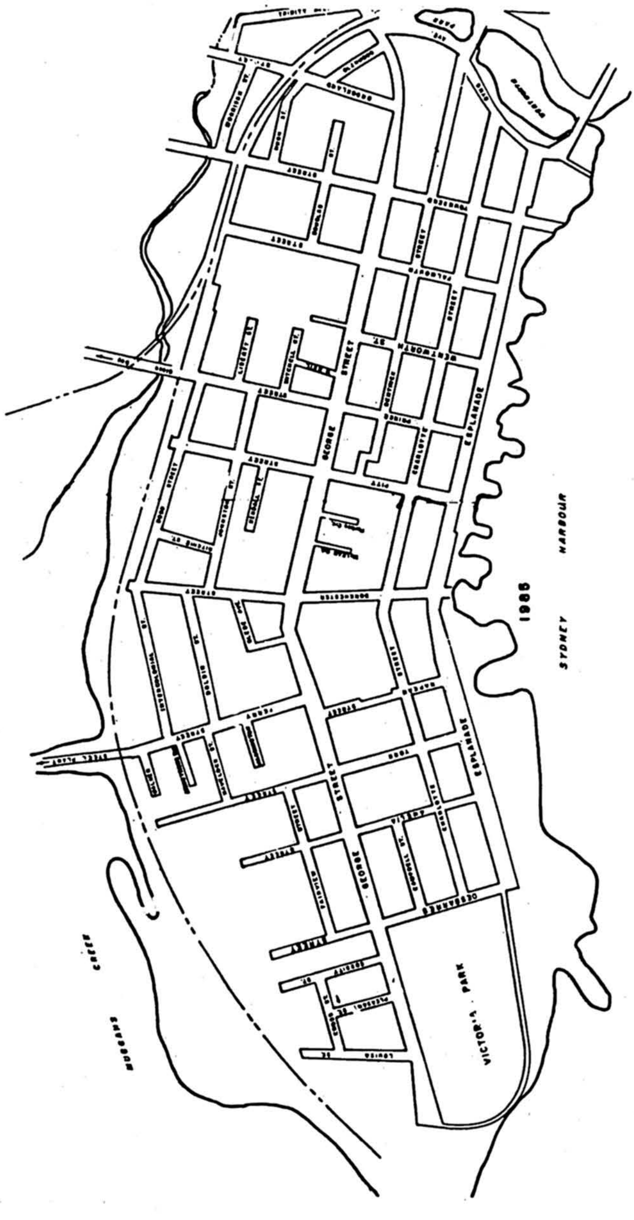
2 Bath evolved as a Palladian masterpiece under the architects John Wood Sr. and Jr., beginning ca. 1727.



SYDNEY AND ENVIRONS AS DESBARRES HAD PLANNED AROUND 1786


A PLAN
of the
TOWN of SYDNEY
SYDNEY HARBOUR


FRESH WATER CREEK
WENTWORTH STREET
GEORGE
ESPLANADE
CHARLOTTE
GREAT
ESPLANADE
DESBARRES ST
OYSTER COVE
LOUISA GARDENS
POND
SYDNEY "HARBOUR


SYDNEY HARBOUR
GEORGE STREET
ESPLANADE
VICTORIA PARK
WENTWORTH ST.

Although Sydney was to be the capital, DesBarres envisaged the need for additional nearby town sites, which would also be of some importance. Some of his ideas here were new for his day. The way in which the sites were linked by wide streets and grouped on a circular basis around Sydney is very similar to the plans later drawn up by Ebenezer Howard for his garden cities,[3] and to the wheel patterns formed by linking modern satellite towns to major cities.

In DesBarres's time, little or no concern was given to topography, or to the suitability of a location for various uses. DesBarres's scheme for a complex of satellite communities was drawn up in 1786, and is no exception to this general rule. It illustrates a rigid geometric plan, which may indicate either a disregard for the topography, or simply a lack of knowledge concerning the rugged Cape Breton interior.

It is impossible to determine if these early concepts were the basis for Thomas Crawley's later provision for a system of reserved land between divisions of surveyed lots. In doing so, the early surveyor-general of Cape Breton created a survey pattern notable for its regularity, as well as its disregard for topography. The St. Peter's Road Reserve, for instance, was a 198-foot-wide strip that went straight from Sydney to St. Peter's, with absolutely no regard for slope, soil type, rocks, trees, drainage, or any other geographical feature. The corridor of designated land still remains largely intact, a reminder of good intentions, but naive planning.

Having drawn up a design for the city, and having started construction, DesBarres soon ran into trouble. His plans made assumptions about the potential of Cape Breton and the numbers of Loyalists anxious to settle there. When the British government failed to act on his proposals, and few settlers materialized, DesBarres found himself with a shortage of labour for his ambitious capital city. Few of his projects could be realized, and the problem was worsened by his misuse and mismanagement of the available labour. The 33rd Regiment, for example, helped construct most of the roads and principal buildings in the new community. A falling out and a series of violent confrontations between DesBarres and Colonel Yorke, the garrison commander, alienated the military; with their support, it is likely that the governor's projects would have progressed much further.

3 Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) was a pioneer British town planner who rejected the suburban expansion of towns in favour of garden cities -- new communities within green belts.

The financial troubles that had plagued his previous ventures soon appeared in Cape Breton as well. DesBarres was never known for his diplomacy, and his heavy-handed ways won him many enemies amongst the colonists. Jealousy, ignorance and rumour soon led to his recall to London, and to the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor Macarmick as his successor.

Planning, as we understand it today, is a three-step process: identifying the problem, offering several possible solutions, and then, through public consultation, allowing the people to select the optimum choice. The process that DesBarres used in his Cape Breton adventures, could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be said to resemble these modern procedures. His planning problems did not get solved using any particular process. Often, they did not get solved at all. And once his methods were shown to be unsuccessful, he made no attempt to change his way of doing things. In other words, while he paid attention to the details, DesBarres seemed to miss seeing the larger picture.

In his next appointment, however, he achieved a certain maturity of administrative purpose and style not evident in his earlier efforts. After languishing in England for some seventeen years after his recall from Sydney, DesBarres was sent out in 1804 as the new lieutenant-governor of Prince Edward Island. Although there is no record of him doing any major municipal design work there, it was in that colony that he performed his greatest role as a planner.

Upon his arrival in Prince Edward Island, DesBarres was faced with many of the same problems that had plagued him in Cape Breton: dealing with a chronic labour shortage, improving transportation and basic services, providing adequate food supplies, and heading off potential enemies. This time, his approach to the solution of his problems was different, and by remaining neutral in areas where he had no jurisdiction, he avoided some of the conflict that had led to his downfall in Cape Breton.

One of DesBarres's first tasks on Prince Edward Island was to establish exactly where he stood in terms of the island's resources -- which corresponds to the first step in the planning process: identifying the size of the problem before coming up with a solution. His effort was centred on a census of the colony, a massive task for anyone, but particularly grand when one considers his age at the time. Over eighty years old, the new governor set out to take an inventory of the ages and numbers of people in each

island household. This, in itself, would have given him a good start, but he went on to note the size of each livestock herd, the number of acres of farmland dedicated to each crop, and even an estimate of the yield per acre -- all without a personal computer.

The census return was duly reported to the Colonial Office. By showing exactly what he had to work with, and exactly what the situation was, DesBarres had performed the first important step near and dear to the planner's heart: he had identified the problems and their magnitude. Furthermore, by showing the Colonial Office where he stood upon his arrival, he was in a better position to defend himself should the need arise.

DesBarres then proceeded to tackle the colony's more outstanding difficulties. Land on Prince Edward Island was largely controlled by non-resident proprietors, a system which contributed to underdevelopment and a chronic labour shortage. DesBarres attempted to facilitate the procedure by which homesteaders could increase the size of their farms, to encourage settlement and food production. In an effort to provide better transportation and basic services, he began to do accurate, detailed estimates of the materials and labour required for each road section and principal building. This gave him the ability to control the resources required, and allowed him to use these resources to their maximum benefit.

By assessing the size of the problems on Prince Edward Island before coming up with the solutions, DesBarres was considerably more successful, and managed to avoid many of the difficulties that had plagued his earlier work. He was more of a planner in this colony, because of his attitudes and methods of operation, and less of an urban designer than he had been in Cape Breton, where his energies had been concentrated on the city plan for Sydney.

Hindsight is perfect, and it is true that in Cape Breton DesBarres laboured under official disinterest and local antipathy. Nevertheless, had he used his Prince Edward Island techniques in Sydney, he might have been able to solve more of his problems there.

The work of a planner often has nothing to do with good design, and it is in this light that DesBarres practiced. His artistic talent led him to design a city, but by modern -- or even early twentieth-century standards -- his designs were grandiose, prone to geometric oversimplification, and both socially and environmentally insensitive. Modern-day planning incorporates the design of a city with economics, physical geography, the social

needs of people, and environmental concerns. DesBarres ignored some of these determinants, and furthermore, was not concerned with public participation. Given what we know of his personality, he would also fall far short of the conciliatory attitudes required in today's planning profession.

DesBarres also enjoyed far more authority than the modern planner. As governor, he held a virtual monopoly on land, information, and the public purse strings. While he used his advantage to the best of his abilities, his scope was severely limited by the magnitude of the problems he encountered, both in Cape Breton and on Prince Edward Island.

It was through his later activities on Prince Edward Island, rather than in his grand urban design for Sydney, that he showed himself to be most thoughtful, careful and forward-looking. DesBarres's legacy as a planner, as in his other roles, has been mixed, but many of his ideas for Sydney have influenced how Cape Breton looks today, and thus we must surely admire his tenacity, his organization, and particularly his vision.

"A most eccentric genius": The Private Life of J.F.W. DesBarres

Lois K. Kernaghan

In October 1787, Sydney, Cape Breton, welcomed its most illustrious early visitor. Prince William Henry, a notable rake and later (1830-37) King William IV, spent six days in the area, not on a state visit, but as a brief diversion from life at sea.

Among the prince's entourage was a young army officer, William Dyott, whose diary has provided some rather intriguing glimpses of those few days ashore: "a very pleasant week," Dyott noted, marked by "rather more wine than was good for our constitutions." Dyott was not impressed, however, by his surroundings, nor by the prospects of the new community, founded only two years previously:

> The entrance into the harbour has nothing very striking. . .we went on shore to the coal-mines. . .We all went down by the bucket into the pit, and to be sure a most infernal hole it was. . .The town of Sydney consists of about fifty houses situated on the banks of Spanish River, and surrounded to the very sides of the buildings by an almost inpenetrable wood. . .I am sorry to say that their improvements have not a very propitious appearance at present.

On the other hand, Dyott was considerably more impressed with the lavish reception tendered the visitors; he especially noted an evening when "We dined at a Mr. Cayler's [*sic*], who has a small house. . .and about an acre of cleared land. . . . We had a good dinner, and got outrageously drunk, Prince and subject."

One wonders what they had to eat, and whether Dyott was aware that eighteen months' previously, the community had been down to only two days' supply of bread. One wonders also what Dyott thought of the colony's controversial lieutenant-governor, J.F.W. DesBarres, but we are permitted only one brief observation: "The governor [is] a great surveyor. . .but a most eccentric genius."[1]

Oddly enough, Dyott's observation stands as one of the few contemporary assessments of DesBarres known to us today. There is, of course, a wealth of official material concerning him, but the scarcity of personal documentation has guaranteed that his private life is obscure, and will prob-

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1 All quoted material here has been taken from *Dyott's Diary, 1781-1845: A Selection from the Journal of William Dyott*, ed. Reginald W. Jeffery (London, 1907), I, 57-59, *passim*.

ably remain so. Instead, thanks to at least one fictional study, and any number of purported biographical articles, DesBarres has assumed a larger-than-life role as folk villain in our Maritime historiography. There are, nevertheless, some valuable clues and pieces of curcumstantial evidence remaining among his official papers and in a wide range of contemporary documents. As a result, it is possible for a careful researcher to reconstruct, at least in part, the private life and passions of this enigmatic and eccentric man.

Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres was born either in Basle or Paris, presumably in November 1721, and into a Huguenot family which had originated in the Montbéliard region of southeastern France.[2] He was educated in Basle, where he received a brilliant scientific and intellectual schooling under the Bernouilli family, leaders in the new Age of Reason. His training was such that later, DesBarres would meet few equals on this side of the Atlantic.

Europe apparently did not offer sufficient opportunity for either his interests or his ambitions, and so by 1752/53, DesBarres was a cadet at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, near London. Here he was transformed from a mathematician into a military engineer, skilled in surveying, land drainage, the construction of fortifications and similar techniques. His ambitions were carried a step further when he was commissioned a lieutenant in the Royal American Regiment, 23 February 1756. He was off to America, the land of opportunity.

The Royal American, later designated the 60th Regiment of Foot, was raised specifically to attract into its ranks European mercenaries and Swiss/German colonials, for North American service during the Seven Years' War. DesBarres did not rise quickly within the regiment, reaching full colonel only in 1798, at the age of 77.[3] However, his public career took several lengthy non-military tangents, while his strong temperament and impatience with bureaucracy would hardly have endeared him to his superiors.

What he did derive from the 60th Regiment was invaluable experience,

2 Information on DesBarres's early career is taken from G.N.D. Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate: The Several Public Careers of J.F.W. DesBarres* (Salem, Mass. and Toronto, 1969), pp. 3-6. Professor Jean-Marc Debard, Professor of History, Université de Besançon, France, has stated recently that he believes DesBarres was the son of Jean Joseph Vallet des Barres, a merchant at Blamont, Montbéliard, and of Anne Catherine Cuvier, his wife.(Jean-Marc Debard to Terrence M. Punch, 17 July 1985).

3 Lieutenant in 1756; captain in 1775; major in 1783; lieutenant-colonel in 1794; colonel in 1798.

as well as a network of influential contacts. DesBarres served at Louisbourg, and then at Quebec, where he claimed to have instructed the young James Cook, and where he was standing in conversation with Major- General James Wolfe when the latter fell.[4] DesBarres next went to Halifax, and then served in Amherst's expedition to recapture Newfoundland. Along the way, he became known for his technical expertise in surveying and preparing charts. In an occupation and an age governed by patronage and influence, he was also careful to cultivate his connections: fellow emigré officers like Frederick Hardimand and Samuel Holland; the famous and soon-to-be-famous, such as Wolfe and Cook; and, on both sides of the Atlantic, the beginnings of an intricate network of public officials and private friends.

With the Treaty of Paris in 1763, DesBarres's abilities became somewhat superfluous. He was saved from oblivion by a naval contact, Captain Sir Richard Spry, who sent him to Halifax on an Admiralty project: to survey the coastline of the northeastern colonies as a complement to the land cartography being undertaken for the Board of Trade by Samuel Holland and William DeBrahm.

DesBarres now had a definite posting, and one which would require several years' residence in Nova Scotia, using it as a base for hydrographic work. Since he was a military veteran and held a position of some importance, he was eligible for the generous grants of land then being offered in Nova Scotia to any ex-serving officer as reward for military duty. The idea of land ownership and speculation appealed to DesBarres who, during his previous posting to Halifax, had been involved in projecting new roads for the colony, so that he knew where the valuable acreage lay.

He began with a 500-acre grant at Falmouth in 1764. Through subsequent grants and purchases, by the early 1770s he owned nearly 80,000 acres of largely undeveloped land at Falmouth, Tatamagouche, Minudie, Maccan-Nappan and Memramcook-Petitcodiac.[5] If he had felt cramped in Europe, he certainly gained room to manoeuvre in the new world.

4 Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate*, p. 11. W. Dolben, in his "Minutes of a Conversation held at Mr. Desbarres's house in Denmark Street [London], 11 Aug. 1779," noted that "He [DesBarres] was talking with Gen[l] Wolfe when he received his mortal wound at Quebec;" original in possession of Mrs. David Micklem, Great Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex, England.

5 Lois Kernaghan, "A Man and His Mistress: J.F.W. DesBarres and Mary Cannon," in *Acadiensis*, XI, 1 (1981), 25-26.

DesBarres now fancied himself as a landlord, and in a semi-feudal fashion attempted to develop his properties by the introduction of tenant farmers. It is evident from his detailed lease arrangements with French Acadians, Montbéliard immigrants and Yorkshire settlers, that DesBarres expected great financial returns from a minimum monetary investment.[6] He also chose to ignore both the abundance of freehold land, and the growing emphasis on individual liberty which had attracted these people -- and him -- to the new world.

Sometime after 1764, DesBarres elected to use the Falmouth property as his base, and to develop it into a country estate suitable for the colonial gentry. Indeed, he no doubt selected Falmouth over Halifax because of its proximity to the genteel and influential atmosphere of Windsor, the rural retreat of the colonial establishment. The location of the Falmouth property, which he modestly named Castle Frederick, was magnificent, perched high above the winding Avon River on a wide plateau backed by heavily forested mountains. Surviving sketches show the manor house to have been a large residence, impressive by colonial standards, but hardly the "fine castle" spoken of wistfully by his family in Europe.[7] Near the main house stood what has recently been identified as possibly the earliest optically-equipped astronomical observatory in the western hemisphere. This DesBarres used both to aid in his survey calibrations and to whet his appetite for star-gazing.[8]

The surrounding gardens and farm were based on the evolving principles of scientific agriculture, and for many years were regarded as among the finest grazing and fruit-growing properties in the colony. In March 1775, DesBarres wrote from London that he wished to "get from Mr. Winnets [Winniet] and others [at Annapolis Royal] as many young Damson trees as can be had to finish the Fence around both the Orchards. . . I would not begrudge any Expense whatever. . . for it."[9] And as late as 1796, he was

6 DesBarres Papers, MG23, Series V, Vol. 17, *passim*, Public Archives of Canada [hereafter PAC].

7 C.E. Binninger to DesBarres, 9 Sept. 1785. DesBarres Papers, Vol. 5, p. 875, PAC. Translation provided by Joan Dawson, Halifax.

8 Roy L. Bishop, "An Eighteenth-Century Nova Scotia Observatory," in *Journal* of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, 71, 6 (1977), 425-442.

9 DesBarres to Mary Cannon, 20 March 1775. MG1, Vol. 1725, No. 19, Public Archives of Nova Scotia [hereafter PANS].

willing to purchase 30,000 apple trees for his various colonial properties, from Joseph Gray of Windsor, at £4 per 1000.[10]

DesBarres was absent for approximately six months each year on his hydrographic surveys. These took him along the uncharted and unpopulated coastline and out to Sable Island, which alone required two summers to survey adequately. The work was difficult and dangerous. The winter months were filled with chart preparations, equipment repairs, scholarly pursuits and leisure hours. His survey crew, while small in number, was composed of well-educated and well-connected naval personnel. The atmosphere was both stimulating and cosmopolitan, and visitors were common. When DesBarres's sister later wrote of hearing that her brother was "a man of quality in every way, . . . esteemed, respected and rich," he no doubt accepted the compliment as his just due.[11]

There was a very real need for a housekeeper to manage such a domestic establishment and accordingly, as early as 1764, DesBarres made his selection: a thirteen-year-old girl of little or no education or family background. Her name was Mary Cannon, and by her own court testimony given in 1810, she stated that

> in the year 1764 she became acquainted with [DesBarres] who paid her great attention and did by great persuasion induce [her] to live with him and undertake the management of his domestic concerns. That [she] lived with [him] from . . . 1764 until his departure . . . for England in . . . 1773.[12]

Such domestic arrangements were no doubt unsettling in the cultural backwater of colonial Nova Scotia, but they were by no means uncommon in that age. In Europe, the rising middle class was eager to emulate the lifestyle of the nobility. In the colonies, a more conservative attitude prevailed, but in military circles, where officers were routinely separated from home and family by lengthy overseas postings, mistresses were an accepted alternative. Samuel Holland, DesBarres's fellow officer in the 60th Regiment, had a wife in the Netherlands and, from 1762 in the colonies,

10 John V. Duncanson, *Falmouth: A New England Township in Nova Scotia, 1760-1965* (Windsor, Ont., 1965), p. 29.

11 Binninger to DesBarres, 9 Sept. 1785, pp. 875-876.

12 Testimony of Mary Cannon, Chancery Court case 179. RG36, PANS.

a young mistress whom he subsequently married.[13] And right next door to DesBarres, Colonel Henry Denny Denson maintained a wife back in Ireland and, from 1764 in Falmouth, a "housekeeper" identified only as Martha Whitfield, a widow who, curiously enough, had two children bearing the Denson surname.[14]

According to Mary Cannon's later testimony, the years between 1764 and 1773 were happy ones, when her employer "treated her in every Respect as his Wife with great Affection and Tenderness and always placed the most unbounded Confidence in [her]."[15] The woman who emerged from these formative years was literate, articulate and sophisticated, to a degree found in few contemporaries with her background.

During this period, five of DesBarres's children by Mary Cannon were born: Amelia Louisa Matilda Lutterell, John Frederick William, Spry Ann, Martha Sophia, and an unidentified daughter who died in September 1783. Although he had no intention of legitimizing these children by marriage, he did grant them his surname; he was also careful when naming them -- as when charting unnamed waters -- to honour public officials, private friends and patrons from that growing list of influential contacts.[16]

In 1773, his survey work complete, DesBarres returned to London to supervise publication of his charts as *The Atlantic Neptune*. With the outbreak of the American Revolution, his surveys assumed a new strategic importance, but several years' work was required to complete the project and to secure payment. Initially, he professed to be -- and probably was -- homesick: "I long to be back, I do most heartily assure you," he wrote to Mary; "I am heartily wearryed [*sic*] of the Life I am obliged to lead, however pleasing envious Fools may suppose it."[17]

13 F.J. Thorpe, "Holland, Samuel Johannes," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, V (Toronto, 1983), 425-429.

14 Duncanson, *Falmouth*, pp. 30, 33-34.

15 Testimony of Mary Cannon, PANS RG36, case 179.

16 Amelia DesBarres and her half-brother, James Lutterel DesBarres, were named for James Luttrell (ca. 1751-1788), an officer in the Royal Navy and, 1775-1788, a Member of Parliament; see Alan Valentine, *The British Establishment 1760-1784: An Eighteenth-Century Biographical Dictionary* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1970), II, 556-557. Possibly Luttrell had served under DesBarres during *The Atlantic Neptune* hydrographic surveys. Spry Ann DesBarres was probably named in honour of Captain Sir Richard Spry.

17 DesBarres to Cannon, 20 March 1775.

A more urgent concern, however, was the management of his Nova Scotian properties; here, Mary Cannon was his *ad hoc* solution. She later testified that even during the earlier period from 1764 to 1773, DesBarres had entrusted her with "the sole [and] entire Management of his Affairs in this Province. . . leaving [all] his Concerns. . .entirely to her Management at all times."[18] Now, in 1774, DesBarres wrote that he wished her to act in his absence as land agent and property manager. He enticed her continued diligence and loyalty with the promise that

> whatever Property I am possessed of in any Part of the British Dominions it shall after my Death be yours and the Children's I got with you. . . In short my Dear Polly, act with all the Prudence you are capable of and I make no doubt but that I shall have reason to be satisfied.[19]

"Dear Polly" was left with little alternative. Regardless of whatever feelings she may have had for DesBarres, she was now a single parent with five children, no job prospects, and as a "kept woman," no social position. She was dependent entirely upon DesBarres's implied good will and promised return. Accordingly, in 1776 a legal document naming her as his agent and attorney in Nova Scotia sealed her fate.[20]

Her responsibilities were staggering. She was answerable for some 80,000 acres spread among four widely-separated properties, and was expected to visit each regularly -- in an age when roads were mere paths through the forest. She had to arrange leases, collect rents, supervise livestock quotas, order seeds, oversee property maintenance and plan for agricultural expansion -- all to make the properties economically viable and a sound investment for their absentee owner.

From the beginning, she encountered difficulties. The tenants were fractious and increasingly independent. Property maintenance was an unending worry, since much of the land was dyked and required constant care. Bad weather repeatedly played havoc with the crops. And even in good years, the scarcity of currency in Nova Scotia during this period made it almost impossible to convert farm produce into hard cash.

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18 Testimony of Mary Cannon, PANS RG36, case 179.

19 DesBarres to Cannon, 13 June 1774, quoted in *ibid.*

20 Registry of Deeds, Cumberland County, Vol. C, p. 341.

The few glimpses which we have of life at Castle Frederick during these years show that Mary Cannon was a capable manager. She regularly forwarded property reports to DesBarres for his approval, comment and further instructions. She dealt with sundry business visitors, presumably maintained a set of estate account books, ran the Falmouth property as a model farm and residence -- complete with Black slaves -- and showhow found time to raise her family and provide for their education.[21]

In 1779, the eldest daughter, Amelia, was boarding in Halifax at Mrs. Deborah Cottnam's school for young ladies, at a guinea per week. This establishment catered to the daughters of the colonial gentry, and provided an excellent education in everything genteel, from embroidery and French, to "Locke upon innate [*sic*] ideas."[22] Her father was no doubt gratified to learn that Amelia moved in the highest circles of Halifax society, and counted the son of the Rev. Mather Byles Jr. among her admirers. During this same period, Amelia's brother William was also in Halifax, boarding with Richard Gibbons -- another of DesBarres's friends -- and at school was studying reading, writing, arithmetic and Latin.[23]

We know nothing yet of DesBarres's life in England during these years, other than the tedious official record of the difficulties he encountered in publishing *The Atlantic Neptune*. The available evidence indicates that during this period he supported Mary Cannon's efforts as best he could, from a distance. It is also evident, from the events which soon transpired, that he was not open with her concerning his private life during these years in London.

Late in 1784, DesBarres finally returned to North America. He had used his contacts and his record of good service to obtain appointment as the first lieutenant-governor of Cape Breton. Before travelling to the island colony, he stopped off in Halifax, where "dear Polly" rushed to greet him. The result of this rendezvous was a daughter named Mary;[24] left to her own devices, Mistress Cannon pandered to no one in naming her children. She

21 Kernaghan, "A Man and His Mistress," pp. 27-28.

22 Rebecca Byles to the Misses Byles, 20 Feb. 1784. MG1, Vol. 163, PANS.

23 Cannon to DesBarres, 6 May 1779. DesBarres Papers, Vol. 18, p. 3323, PAC.

24 Circumstantial evidence in Cannon to DesBarres, 28 July 1786, in *ibid.*, p. 3340.

did, however, show herself naive in returning to Falmouth and continuing to jump at the new governor's every request.

In addition to her regular duties, she now assumed new responsibilities in facilitating DesBarres's Cape Breton career. She arranged for his personal needs in Sydney -- shipping him butter, cheese and house frames in 1785, for example -- and she assisted in recommending potential settlers and business intermediaries for the new colony.[25] Her reward was swift and unsettling.

We have only the most fleeting glimpses of DesBarres's chaotic private life in Sydney, but in September 1785, a London friend wrote the following:

> At last I find it is resolved that Patty and your children are to come out to you. . . . Patty. . . has behaved herself to the utmost of her Power. . . and for a woman of her education remarkable[?]. You know I never liked hers or your extreme indulgence of Children, and that is all the fault I have to find with her. . . she is not fitt for an Elivated situation, nor does she desire that, or anything but to be in the situation you like, let it be what it may.[26]

Obviously, DesBarres had not remained lonely in London for long. Although Mary Cannon wrote cryptically to him in November 1785 that she had considered leaving the province (i.e., Nova Scotia),[27] she was beaten to the mark by a rival who stuck like glue.

"Patty" can perhaps be identified as the mysterious Martha Hickman/Martha Williams/Martha Hickman Williams who was in Sydney by at least 27 May 1787, when Ranna Cossit recorded the private baptism of James Lutterel, "son of Gov. DesBarres and his Woman Martha Hickman."[28] On 20 September 1787, DesBarres deeded all his real and personal property in Cape Breton to the same woman, in trust for Patty, Joseph, Isabella, John Frederick and James Lutterel DesBarres, presumably their offspring.[29] It remains unknown whether and when they were legally mar-

25 Cannon to DesBarres, 28 Nov. 1785, and Tatamagouche accounts, 1787, in *ibid.*, pp. 3327-34, 3680.

26 J. Smith to DesBarres, 1 Sept. 1785, in *ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 871.

27 Cannon to DesBarres, 28 Nov. 1785.

28 St. George's Anglican Church records, Sydney.

29 Registry of Deeds, Cape Breton County, Vol. A., p. 252.

ried, but DesBarres carefully identified her in his will as his "dear wife Martha DesBarres (whose maiden name was Martha Williams of Shrewsbury, County Salop, South Britain)."[30]

The governor's household must have been the talk of the town. Although he began life in Sydney in a residence not much more than a hut,[31] he later employed a gardener, rode about in a "post chariot," and ran up local bills. Fifteen years later, Ranna Cossit Jr. itemized a list of goods left behind by the governor; there still remained "Mr. Dodd's Account against Mr. DesBarres and Mrs. Williams wherein there appears a Ballance due to Mr. Dodd of one hundred forty nine Pounds 3/9. . . ."[32] Local gossip was no doubt fueled by the arrival of Amelia and William from Castle Frederick during the summer of 1785. They remained for two years, likely because their father had promised to settle their future; indeed, there is some indication of a romance during this interval between Amelia and Thomas Ashfield, DesBarres's secretary.[33]

The inhabitants of Sydney, however, had more pressing concerns than the private life of their governor. The survival of their new community was in jeopardy, and the winter of 1785/86 brought near-starvation and bitter division over civil versus military control of the colony. DesBarres made the best of a bad situation in the food crisis, but bungled the question of administrative control. He also lost the favour of the home government by overstepping his official capacity and by inflating the potential of a marginal colony. Tempers, emotions and ambitions -- let alone appetites -- were at the flashpoint; DesBarres's misdirected zeal, rigid outlook and pompous attitudes hardly endeared him to the loyalists, the military, or the British settlers who had come with him.

A surviving letter from Amelia to "Governor" John Wentworth, dated 4 March 1786, presents a grim picture: "there is not *Bread* for more than two Days longer for the People -- what will be the End of all this God

30 DesBarres Papers, Vol. 25, p. 6521, PAC.

31 Lieut. W. Booth's Description of Sydney, August 1785, in C. Bruce Fergusson, ed., *Uniacke's Sketches of Cape Breton and Other Papers Relating to Cape Breton Island* (Halifax, 1958), Appendix A, pp. 143-144.

32 List of Papers, Accounts and Articles, 28 August 1804. MG1, Vol. 262B, PANS.

33 Ashfield/DesBarres correspondence. DesBarres Papers, Series 1, Vol. 1, pp. 73-86, *passim*, PAC.

knows." The situation was saved only by the timely requisition of supplies from a vessel which had wintered at Arichat. Amelia was an observant but verbose commentator on the Sydney scene; she stoutly defended her father to Wentworth: "I wish my Father had a few good able Men to assist him in the arduous task he has undertaken." It was her opinion that

> you never saw People go on as they do here, I realy believe there is something in the *Air* of *our Island*, or that the *Moon* has greater power here than she has on other Places. . . . Most of the People are so fond of talking of others & quarreling that they leave themselves little time for employing themselves as they ought in things more worthy of *rational Beings*.[34]

The pull of the moon was soon felt from another direction, however, and in November 1786, DesBarres was recalled to London to answer for his actions. He wrote Mary Cannon a farewell note:

> It is some Comfort to me to remove, at least for some Time, from a Situation, which has become intolerable, by being incessantly tormented by surrounding Objects of Misery and Difficulties. . . . The Poor Childern [*sic*] have had a hard Life of it here with me. I hope you will have it in your Power to make them Comfortable with you, untill I am able to attend and do what I wish for the whole of them.[35]

Despite his carefully chosen words and feeble promise, DesBarres was in a desperate situation. In addition to being in official disfavour, 1787 was a year of financial disaster for him. Two decades of property management and development in Nova Scotia had seriously drained his always shaky resources, and in Cape Breton he had used his remaining credit in a generous effort to underwrite provisions for the colony. The result was a financial nightmare best left undescribed, in which his Cape Breton creditors attempted to extract payment by issuing law suits against his mainland properties.[36]

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34 Amelia DesBarres to [Surveyor-General] John Wentworth, 25 Feb./4 Mar. 1786. MG1, Vol. 939, No. 104, PANS. (Wentworth was referred to as "Governor" in deference to his previous appointment as lieutenant-governor of New Hampshire.)

35 DesBarres to Cannon, 26 June 1787. MG1, Vol. 1725, No. 20, PANS.

36 Kernaghan, "A Man and His Mistress," pp. 29-31.

DesBarres's solution to these problems was essentially to ignore them, in hopes that they would "go away." In October 1787, he himself was off, bag and baggage, going first to Jersey, in order to avoid creditors who were awaiting him in England. As a parting gesture -- and having nothing else to give -- he granted William and Amelia farm lots on the western bank of Sydney River.[37] He took Thomas Ashfield, still unmarried, back with him. And he left Mary Cannon to clean up the mess he had created: "It is with much concern that I must entreat you to exert all Efforts to pay [my bills] without relying on any Assistance whatever from me. . . . I shall acquaint you with my progress by every opportunity."[38]

Now, for the first time, however, the flow of letters from DesBarres slackened. Despite Mary's repeated requests for assistance, his replies were few and offered little help. Whether he was being influenced by Martha Williams, or was simply absorbed in his British concerns, DesBarres remained perversely indifferent; his only concession was to make some token repayments gradually and grudgingly to the creditors. Mary Cannon was left to handle law suits, debt payments, government encroachment and routine land problems, all of which she managed with diligence, determination and ability.

By 1790 she was tiring of her work; in 1792 she wrote DesBarres that during the previous two years, her "very bad state of health. . . prevented my attendance at the estates, also the transmitting [to] you the particular accounts of [them]."[39] DesBarres, however, did not like to see such lack of attention to detail; moreover, he was suddenly becoming concerned that his Nova Scotian ventures had returned so little profit. In 1794, claiming that for years he could extract no information from Mary, he appointed Captain William MacDonald as agent in her place, and requested him to make a detailed property report.[40]

MacDonald toured the estates in 1795 and was convinced that incompetent managment and DesBarres's continued absence had resulted in the failure

37 Registry of Deeds, Cape Breton County, Vol. A, p. 211.

38 DesBarres to Cannon, 26 June 1787.

39 Cannon to DesBarres, 10 Nov. 1792. DesBarres Papers, Vol. 18, pp. 3414-3415, PAC.

40 Registry of Deeds, Cumberland County, Vol. D, p. 248.

of a potentially lucrative venture. He was particularly critical of Mary Cannon's lease arrangements, which he felt favoured the tenants rather than the landlord. MacDonald also made some interesting private discoveries during a meeting with William DesBarres, who revealed that his mother was having an affair with an Irish labourer at Castle Frederick. William had fought with the newcomer at least once, and in the aftermath, all Mary's children had either left home or been forced out. William supplied the additional information that his mother had been running up an account against DesBarres for years, that it now exceeded £4000, and that she was contemplating court action to recover it.[41]

DesBarres's reaction was typical. He was still absorbed in settling with the British government his accounts from both Cape Breton and *The Atlantic Neptune*. Accordingly, he remained in England and ignored his colonial problems; he did not even acknowledge receipt of MacDonald's report. He did, however, wreak petty revenge on Mary: for years, she had supported herself and their children on the meagre profits of Castle Frederick; DesBarres now cut her off. She was understandably upset, but showed more concern for their offspring than for herself: "I think my treatment but indifferent. . . . But I am relying on your justice, promises, honour as a gentleman that. . .you will. . . make due arrangement of settlement for the children."[42]

No such arrangement was forthcoming. It is evident that there were problems between Mary and her offspring during this period. In 1794, Mary Cannon leased property at Minudie to her son William, who lived there until his death by drowning in 1800.[43] By 1799, Amelia, Spry Ann and Sophia had leased a small farm at Horton, where they continued to live for many years. Only the youngest daughter, Mary, remained with her mother.[44]

41 MacDonald to DesBarres, 15 Nov. 1795. DesBarres Papers, Vol. 19, p. 3921 ff, PAC.

42 Cannon to DesBarres, 12 Apr. 1796. DesBarres Papers, Vol. 18, p. 3422-3424, PAC.

43 Registry of Deeds, Cumberland County, Vol. E, p. 38.

44 Amelia DesBarres to DesBarres, 28 July 1799. DesBarres Papers, Vol. 19, p. 3807, PAC. As early as 1791, Joseph Scott had written DesBarres that Amelia was a guest in his home at Fort Sackville, outside Halifax. He had found her "in poor health in the country last year," which may simply have been a polite euphemism for whisking her out of an embarrassing situation at Castle Frederick; Scott to DesBarres, 10 Oct. 1791, in *ibid.*, p. 3381.

Although relations among the various households appear to have been fairly amicable, the children were no doubt embarrassed over their mother's conduct. John MacDonald had noted that "every body whatever talks handsomely of the young Ladies as being fine women & having excellent dispositions and accomplishments;"[45] nevertheless, because of their peculiar family situation, they had neither financial nor marital prospects. As for Mary Cannon, she was no longer young, she had never been socially acceptable, and she had been bitterly deceived in her few expectations; the luxury of an affair, if such occured, was small recompense indeed.

During these years, management of the properties creaked along, sometimes supervised by John MacDonald, sometimes by William and Amelia. After her brother's death in 1800, Amelia assumed sole responsibility. She was determined, diligent and concerned, and in 1802 wrote her father that "I cannot do as well as a Capable man faithfully attached to your interest. . . but it would be difficult to find such a one which you could intirely [*sic*] trust."[46]

Amelia's problem was that while her father demanded unquestioning diligence in the management of his properties, he himself paid absolutely no heed to them. Even his lawyers were astounded at his perversity:

> we are labouring for a Gentleman who seems to pay no attention to his own business -- and taking a great deal of trouble labouring in vain and spending our strength for nought and without encouragement to go on. . . -- and why shall we take so much trouble for one who does not take a step to help himself![47]

The situation deteriorated to the point where, between 1799 and 1803, DesBarres did not even reply to Amelia's frequent and frantic letters. She nevertheless remained staunchly loyal to her "always affectionately remembered & steadily loved" father, and in 1802 she wistfully assured him that "tho' many (I may say unhappy) years have pass'd a way since we parted I feel no difference & one of my first wishes has been ever to see you again. . . ."[48]

45 MacDonald to DesBarres, 15 Nov. 1795, p. 3922.

46 Amelia DesBarres to DesBarres, 18 Aug. 1802. DesBarres Papers, Vol. 19, p. 3820, PAC.

47 Amos Botsford to Amelia DesBarres, 15 Aug. 1800, in *ibid.*, p. 3705.

48 Amelia DesBarres to DesBarres, 28 July 1799, p. 3805.

In 1805, his claims on the home government finally settled, DesBarres returned to North America once again, this time as lieutenant-governor of Prince Edward Island. Here was another reward for long service and for the dogged self-defence of his actions in Cape Breton. At the age of 84, he was starting out again. By now, DesBarres had mellowed somewhat, and during his seven years in Charlottetown, managed to keep within the bounds of his official instructions. He avoided promoting the island beyond its obvious worth and was also careful not to create resident enemies, but found them anyway after 1810, when he was drawn into the unending dilemma of land tenure and control on the island. He was soon described as being in his "absolute dotage,"[49] and the impending War of 1812 conveniently facilitated his replacement by a younger man. At the age of 91, he hoped for another appointment, but had to settle for retirement.[50]

Little is known of DesBarres's private life in Charlottetown, but soon after his arrival there, he began a final attempt to play the colonial landlord. In 1805, he installed Dr. James Chalmers, his son-in-law, as agent. Chalmers began a thorough examination of the properties, but used a heavy hand in dealing with the tenants, and soon had Mary Cannon writing DesBarres for the last time: "With respect to me the thread of life is only brittle at best and neither you nor I may long be permitted to settle our long standing affairs. I have had a hard life and would wish peace on just terms for what remains."[51]

DesBarres's reply came in 1809 when he began proceedings against her in the Chancery Court at Halifax. The general tenor of his complaint was that although the power of attorney granted Mary in 1776 had given her wide legal authority, he had nevertheless reserved final decision for himself. He argued that she had wilfully ignored this arrangement, and that because she had repeatedly failed to advise him of leases which she had arranged, he had lost his most valuable tracts of land to tenants who paid little or nothing for their occupancy.

49 Quoted in Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate*, p. 93.

50 Julia Dolben to Isabella DesBarres, June 1812; original held by Mrs. David Micklem.

51 Cannon to DesBarres, 24 July 1806. DesBarres Papers, Vol. 18, p. 3751, PAC.

The legal question centred on Mary's authority to make leases, and the subsequent validity of any leases she had so contracted. The problem was that after 1786, DesBarres had ignored his colonial holdings, apparently refusing either to approve leases or to issue new instructions. Mary had been forced to run the properties to the best of her abilities, and she had deemed the low rents necessary as an attractive alternative to freehold land. The Chancery Court was in a quandry, since the fate of the properties and the tenants depended on their decision. The case dragged on interminably, and after DesBarres's death in 1824 was presumably closed without a decision being rendered. The court's failure to pass judgment suggests that there were grave legal doubts concerning DesBarres's claims. His own failure to prosecute to a conclusion suggests that he, too, grudgingly conceded the futility of his complaint.[52]

It had been, in retrospect, both shortsighted and foolhardy to thrust such a role upon Mary Cannon. Her ambiguous social position and lack of sufficient training should immediately have excluded her from duties which, in any case, were more the responsibilities of a man. The vagaries of colonial agriculture, the impediments thrown up by a bureaucratic government, and the financial fiasco surrounding Cape Breton all dictated the inevitable failure of DesBarres's feudal aspirations. While he had great ambitions and enthusiasms, he possessed neither the compassion nor the patience necessary to nurture his dreams. He was, moreover, both unreasonable and indifferent: no property manager, male or female, ever satisfied his expectations. Mary Cannon's great achievement was the survival of DesBarres's colonial properties, virtually intact but financially crippled; without her hard work, they would have been quickly swallowed up by creditors or by escheat.

After his retirement in 1812, DesBarres moved with Martha Williams and some of their eleven children to the Amherst area, in order to keep a closer watch over his local properties. The Acadian tenants there had not seen him in nearly fifty years, and he was greeted with cries of "You come late Monsieur Le'Governor, Why you not come before?"[53] Amherst was an ad-

52 Kernaghan, "A Man and His Mistress," pp. 37-39.

53 Isabella DesBarres to Julia Dolben, ca. 1811; original held by Mrs. David Micklem.

justment for his family after London, and even after Charlottetown, but DesBarres himself was adaptable, and always a man of simple tastes. Charles Baker wrote of dining with him in November 1812: "they seem very easy satisfied. . . the dinner. . . was a piece of Corned Beef and Cabbage & a beef Stake & apple pye. . . with Cider to wash it down. I believe there was also Rum & Water. . . ."[54]

In 1817, DesBarres was prompted by declining health and the advice of friends to remove to Halifax, although he still made periodic visits to the Cumberland area. In the town, the family lived at Poplar Grove, and DesBarres became somewhat of a local conversation piece -- crotchety, eccentric, but still vigorous and entertaining. Martha died in January 1821, but DesBarres went on to celebrate his centennial later that year, reputedly by dancing on a tabletop.[55]

He was not unmindful of his own mortality, however. In 1805, he drew up a will which settled an annual sum on Amelia and her sisters in Horton; this will also specifically noted that only offspring bearing the surname DesBarres could be considered as legal heirs -- an oblique reference to DesBarres's legendary philandering.[56] A new will in 1818 omitted Amelia and her sisters, but in recompense they were deeded his remaining rights to Castle Frederick in 1819.[57] It was bitter recompense. The once prosperous estate had declined to a mere subsistence farm, and in 1820, Mary Cannon made a last desperate plea for assistance; she found the governor, in her own words, "like Pharoah of old, hardened to every request. . . ."[58]

It would be convenient to attribute DesBarres's perverse behaviour in

54 Baker to Edward Baker, 18 Nov. 1812. MG1, Vol. 106, Doc. 40, PANS.

55 Richard Blair to DesBarres, 7 Apr. 1817; original held by Mrs. David Micklem. St. George's Anglican Church records, Halifax. Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate*, p. 97, notes the unsubstantiated tale of DesBarres dancing on his birthday.

56 DesBarres Papers, Vol. 29, pp. 6074 ff, PAC. Joseph Scott to DesBarres, 25 May 1792, in *ibid.*, p. 3388, mentions a visit to Dr. [*John*] Phillips, Halifax, concerning a young boy in the latter's care: "We shook hands by the name of James. I say this to help your memory lest you might elapse the name of one of the many."

57 Registry of Deeds, Hants County, Vol. 13, p. 114.

58 Cannon to S.G.W. Archibald, 24 Mar. 1820. MG1, Vol. 89, No. 286, PANS.

later life to senility; indeed, in 1820, a Halifax physician recommended the application of leeches to the governor's temples, "if there be any tendency to stupor or confusion of ideas."[59] Nevertheless, this condition seems to have been temporary, and DesBarres probably remained mentally agile until very near the end of his life, one month short of 103, on 27 October 1824.

At that time, he was most certainly not competent, as more than one of the attending physicians later testified.[60] DesBarres's children by Martha Williams were a fractious, unsettled lot, particularly James Lutterell, whose unscrupulous management of his father's business affairs earned him the latter's distrust after 1815. [61] No sooner was DesBarres respectfully interred beneath St. George's church -- near the present-day furnace -- than his family began arguing over his will, and particularly a contentious deathbed codicil which James Lutterell had engineered.

DesBarres's legal heirs moved to England, where they quickly squabbled away his colonial properties -- an inheritance they could neither comprehend nor control. Mary Cannon died at Castle Frederick in October 1827; her daughters passed into oblivion and the Falmouth property was purchased in the 1840s by her grandson, William Frederick DesBarres, a distinguished provincial jurist who perpetuated the family name in Nova Scotia.[62]

The continued scarcity of research materials concerning DesBarres's private life guarantees that any final assessment of the man must remain, for the present, inconclusive. Nevertheless, a few tentative conclusions may be posited.

DesBarres was indeed "a most eccentric genius." Superbly educated, he had many talents and used them well. He knew the value of friends and influence, and cultivated both. He was an opportunist and an optimist, eager to turn situations to his own advantage. A man of broad vision, he could also scrutinize minute details. His cultivated air and personal magnetism drew many admirers, as did his keen intellect, lively conversation and ability to live life with gusto.

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59 [Illegible] to Miss DesBarres, 5 Sept. 1820; original held by Mrs. David Micklem.

60 See, in particular, the deposition of John Sterling, physician and surgeon, 7 Sept. 1825. Probate Court, Halifax County, Estate Papers, file D49.

61 Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate*, p. 96.

62 Registry of Deeds, Hants County, Vol. 29, p. 145; and Kernaghan, "A Man and His Mistress," p. 40.

The true genius, however, is usually eccentric, and DesBarres was no exception. He was brilliant but impetuous. He often ignored the niceties of bureaucratic procedure, then railed at those who advanced by following the more conventional routes. He did not suffer fools gladly, nor was he interested in those whose ideas and opinions ran counter to his own. He was convinced of his own rightness, and expected those around him to be likewise, without question or hesitation. He was pompous, overbearing and impatient, descending at times to pettiness and suspicion.

While to the modern observer, DesBarres's treatment of Mary Cannon and her children appears rancorous and intransigent, it was perhaps more in keeping with the accepted moral standards of his time than we would like to admit. A docile and devoted mistress could be tolerated; a determined and capable one, who challenged both his patience and his pocketbook, could not -- particularly when she had been superceded in his affections by a more complaisant rival.

We may like to think of DesBarres as pompous, quibbling, sometimes distasteful, and perhaps even insecure, but the fact remains that he *is* a larger-than-life folk figure in our history, and that the enigma of his private career will continue to fascinate us. Like William Dyott, Charles Baker and countless others who have been spellbound by his personality, we would all feel honoured to be his guests at dinner.

An Apostolic Visit to Cape Breton in 1812

Brian D. Tennyson

Religion was an important part of life among Cape Breton's pioneers, although there was a severe shortage of clergy -- of all denominations -- available to serve the people. As an underdeveloped island with a thinly scattered and generally poor population, Cape Breton relied largely on missionaries until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Within the Roman Catholic Church, Cape Breton was part of the Diocese of Quebec, and in 1812 the Bishop of Quebec, Joseph-Octave Plessis (1763-1825) toured the lower provinces to see what progress was being made and to demonstrate the Church's concern for its distant adherents.

Plessis was a native of Montreal, born in the fateful year of 1763, and ordained a priest in 1786. Appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Quebec in 1801, he succeeded to the bishopric in 1806. Plessis played an important role in reducing the antagonism between the new English Protestant government of Quebec and the French Canadian population, and rallied his people to the British side during the War of 1812. He was appointed to the Legislative Council by Sir John Sherbrooke in 1817 and became Canada's first Archbishop in 1819.

Aside from providing much descriptive information about the coastal communities of Cape Breton in 1812, Plessis's journal also reveals the perhaps inevitable strains that existed in a Church dominated by French Canadians but seeking to serve the Roman Catholic Scottish population of Cape Breton as well. Plessis was clearly more sympathetic to the Acadians than to the Scots in his flock.

Plessis's *Journal de Deux Voyages Apostoliques dans le Golfe Saint-Laurent et les Provinces d'en Bas, en 1811 et 1812* was originally published in *Le Foyer Canadien* in 1865. The translation presented below is by Arthur LeBlanc and the Rev. A.A. Johnston, and is from a manuscript in the possession of the Beaton Institute at the University College of Cape Breton.[1]

Readers interested in the original French version are referred to "Le journal des visites pastorales en Acadie de Mgr. Joseph-Octave Plessis -- 1811, 1812, 1815," in *Les Cahiers* of La Société historique acadienne, Volume 9, Numbers 1, 2 and 3 (mars, juin, septembre, 1980). Also of interest is Cyril Byrne's

1 The late Rev. A.A. Johnston was for many years archivist at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, N.S., and was the author of *A History of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nova Scotia* (Antigonish: St. Francis Xavier University Press, 1960-71), 2 vols. Dr. Arthur LeBlanc teaches French at the University of Manitoba.

"The maritime visits of Joseph-Octave Plessis, Bishop of Quebec," in *Collections* of the Nova Scotia Historical Society, Volume 39 (1977), 23-47.

July 20

Before leaving [Rollo Bay, P.E.I.], we were informed that Captain Benoni Boucher,[2] of Arichat, had been captured by an American vessel, and that the privateers of that country were infesting the gulf especially on the southern coast of Nova Scotia. This news was not very encouraging for the voyage to Cape Breton, on whose coasts it could happen that we might meet one of these vultures. Nevertheless, the bishop kept to his plans of visiting the mission of Chetican [Cheticamp] which lies on the west of that island and 12 leagues [36 miles] from Cape St. Lawrence which is at its northern end. Therefore, after having given orders for the establishment of a little more propriety in the St. Alexis chapel, he left the faithful of Rollo Bay, who were frightened less by the signs of war than by the inroads of the smallpox brought to the place by some schooners arrived recently from Newfoundland.

He went aboard on the evening of the 20th, but it was not possible to set sail before the next day, Tuesday, the 21st. The distance to be covered was about 22 leagues [66 miles]. It took two days of navigation. On the 22nd the travellers could not see any vessel which might give them cause for alarm; but unintentionally they themselves frightened some of the faithful whom they were about to visit in a spirit of charity and Christian peace.

Three launches which had left the harbour of Chetican on Wednesday morning were fishing for cod at a fair distance from land. Captain Dugast,[3] who did not know the entrance to the harbour, approached one of the three, which was separated considerably from the others. His intention was to take as a pilot one of the three men it had aboard. The poor fellows thought he had hostile intentions, and, convinced that we were Americans, they began to discuss among themselves what action they should take. One was in favour of resisting, although they were unarmed; another wanted

2 The 1811 census reports a Benoni Bouché as one of only two residents of Arichat who owned two vessels each. Johnston, *The Catholic Church in Eastern Nova Scotia*, 1, 234.

3 Aimé Dugast, captain of the *Angélique*, which had carried Plessis's party from Kamouraska, Quebec.

to cut the cable of their anchor and take flight; the third was willing to be captured. Their minds were not set at rest until they heard a greeting in French and recognized Fr. McEachern,[4] whom they had seen in Isle Saint-Jean [Prince Edward Island]. They were so pleasantly surprised that the whole three of them would have come to pilot the *Angélique* if they had been asked. Only one was needed; he jumped joyfully aboard and lost no time in telling us about the terror with which they had been seized. But just when these people were recovering their tranquility, a poor Irishman named Dudley, whose house was in sight, saw "this wretched American Privateer" and fled to the woods, with his wife and children, carrying with him his most valuable possessions, and perhaps burning another part of them. When he saw the prelate and his companions come ashore peacefully with a few effects and direct their steps towards the church, he was ashamed of his mistake and thought that the least he could do was to admit it. This he did as soon as he arrived.

The harbour of Chetican is formed by a peninsula about two leagues [six miles] long, which runs northward and parallel to the mainland of Cape Breton. The isthmus which attaches it is only a sandbank, which the sea lashes on both sides, without ever covering it. It would seem that the inhabitants should have settled on the shores of this beautiful basin. Not at all. With the exception of three or four, all the others, more than forty in number, have taken up their abode in a frightful valley, bordered on one side by mountains entirely covered with woods, and on the other by a slope which causes them to be nearly a league [three miles] away from the harbour. In this sort of vast tomb are buried also the presbytery and the church -- which is too small -- as well as a larger one, which has yet only its first covering and should be finished in the course of the autumn. A little brook, the kingdom of frogs and *wawarons* [wild geese], winds disagreeably around the presbytery, and it regaled the bishop with rather discordant music during the four nights he stayed there.

Besides, if the valley occupied by the people of Chetican is disagreeable because of the swamps and the south and southwest winds which prevail there with a force about which it would be difficult to form an idea, one

4 The Rev. Angus MacEachern (1759-1835), a native of Scotland who emigrated to Prince Edward Island in 1790. He served as Episcopal Vicar General of Quebec over Cape Breton from 1820 to 1830.

is amply compensated by the goodness of the inhabitants, by their respect and their affection for priests. These sentiments were shown in a very consoling manner on the arrival of their chief pastor. They had never yet seen a bishop among them; and their joy was inconceivable. Each family came to him from a distance of three and four *arpents*, to receive his blessing; then they formed a procession behind him, with a thousand offers of service to him and his companions, whom they were all anxious to welcome and lodge in their homes. These good people speak only with the greatest praise of the pastors who, up to the present, have preached to them the word of God and administered the sacraments. The word of a priest, among them, is as powerful as would be that of an angel, for they are unable to think that a priest could tell them anything but the truth, or ask them anything but what God commands. They do not speak to an ecclesiastic except with hat in hand, even if the rain were drenching their hair or the sun burning their heads; they would keep up an hour's conversation with him without daring to put on their hats, if they were not ordered by him several times to do so. They have been served only in a missionary way by Fr. Lejamtel,[5], since the death of Fr. Campion,[6] which occurred in 1807 [*sic*]. Nothing is more ardent than their desire to have a priest who can stay during the winter with them, or at least spend with them several consecutive months. Fr. Lejamtel is unable to do this, since he is in charge of several missions. The people here would be happy to have a priest who could have charge only of them, and the faithful of Magré [Margaree] and of the Magdalen Islands.

Magré is five leagues [fifteen miles] to the south of Chetican, and in the same territory. The population of this place is only thirty-eight families scattered along both sides of a river where they can occupy only the flat

5 The Rev. François Lejamtel (1758-1835), a native of France, went out to St. Pierre and Miquelon in 1786. He became the second missionary resident at Arichat in 1792, and from 1808 to 1814 was the only priest residing in Cape Breton. He retired to Quebec and died there. Johnston claims that he was "the last survivor of the early Holy Ghost Fathers who had come to the missions in the New World because of the French Revolution." Johnston, *The Catholic Church in Eastern Nova Scotia*, I, 364.

6 The Rev. Gabriel Champion (1748-1808) was the first missionary resident at Cheticamp. Born in France, he was exiled to England in 1792, then emigrated to Prince Edward Island in 1800, before moving to Cheticamp. He established the first Roman Catholic school in Cape Breton after the British conquest, in 1802. He retired to Arichat in failing health in 1807 and died there early in 1808.

places. The bishop had not time to visit them. Fr. Macdonnell,[7] since he had very little to do at Chetican, undertook to notify them to come there, while he himself would go and hear the confessions of the Scots of Magré Cove, and then go to Justico where the episcopal visitation was to take place the following week. He set out therefore on Thursday morning, leaving with the bishop only two priests, Frs. Maguire[8] and McEachern, who were kept occupied for four days in hearing confessions, and only barely finished them; as a help to them, the bishop undertook with his chaplain all the instructions of the morning and evening, drew up a list of all the people who were to be confirmed, both from Magré and Chetican, and heard confessions of the children who had not yet received their First Communion, as well as of twelve persons whose six marriages he celebrated personally before leaving the place, on the express condition that the wedding festivities were to take place only after his departure. This order was faithfully carried out.

In these places wedding finery is limited to few things. The bride is covered with red ribbons in front of her head to her waist; the groom has a bunch of ribbons of the same colour attached to one of the buttonholes of his coat and cockade in his hat; the two groomsmen have similar cockades; these ornaments are worn throughout the wedding day; the next day they no longer appear, each one goes to church in ordinary dress and resumes his former simplicity. Now this simplicity is so great and so severe that any girl who would think of wearing a sharp-pointed fold in her cloak (for here the use of gowns is entirely unknown) would be considered worldly, and would never succeed in getting married; the same would be true of a young man who would dare wear bourgeois clothing.

Chetican and Magré are inhabited for the most part by Acadian families, although there are others there who are French, Irish, or Jerseymen, all strongly united and equally zealous for their religion. They gave many proofs of this during the stay of the bishop among them, every day renewing their petitions to obtain a priest who would be able to stay with them more permanently than was the case during the past five years.

7 The Rev. Alexander Macdonell (1753-1816), also identified as MacDonald, was a native of Scotland who served as a missionary in the Highlands for 21 years before becoming the second pastor of St. Margaret's parish, Arisaig, in 1802, which parish included the western coast of Cape Breton.

8 The Rev. Thomas Maguire, pastor of Saint-Michel, accompanied Plessis from Quebec.

The Magré chapel has St. Michael as titular. The chapel at Chetican having none, the bishop gave it St. Apollinaris, Martyr, because he had begun his mission among them on the day on which the Church honours that saint. He ended the mission on Sunday, the 26th, feast of St. Anne, after having conferred the holy annointing on 154 persons. The afternoon of the same day, he prepared to rejoin his schooner; most of the inhabitants wanted to escort him even to the shallop which was to receive him at the head of the harbour; to get there meant a walk of half a league [1½ miles], but this distance deterred neither the men nor the women. He could not avoid a feeling of tenderness stirred up in his heart by this crowd of good souls, kneeling on the strand, asking him for his last blessing, and recommending themselves to his prayers with tears in their eyes. This scene, repeated in several other places, recalls inevitably the farewell given to St. Paul by the faithful of the church in Miletus [Acts 20:36-38], and suggests reproaches and comparisons in which the modern apostle recognizes how much he falls short of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

We went on board about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It was his aim to reach a harbour named Justico or Justaucou or Justaucorps [Port Hood], for there is no agreement about the name; it is a place about 15 leagues [45 miles] to the south of Chetican, and one of the meeting places of the Scottish Catholics spread out along this coast of the island of Cape Breton, to the number of more than 150 families, there being 50 others on the same island in the neighbourhood of the gut or passage of Canseau. Their establishments, encouraged by grants from the government, are already under full cultivation, although of recent date, a great many of them having come only because of the difficulties put in the way of the colonists by the landlords of Isle Saint-Jean where they had first settled. A hurricane which passed this coast, 30 September 1811, blew down part of the woods, so that now there are as many trees flat on the ground as there are standing. The matter is of little consequence in a country where there is an abundance of woods; it only makes it difficult for the inhabitants to go into their forests; but this annoyance cannot last long.

Not until one passes Cape Mabou, which is three leagues [9 miles] long, does one see the port of Justico.

July 27

The apostolic travellers took two days getting there and were finally able to land on the evening of Tuesday, the 28th, but only with the help of

two Scottish boats which brought the schooner in, because there was not wind; for the harbour is certainly deep enough and large enough to shelter three or four hundred warships. It is said that the government is planning to establish a town here. Nature truly seems to have prepared a place for it in the form it has given to this place.

The Abbé Macdonell, who had gone there two days previously, received the bishop when he disembarked, about five o'clock in the evening, then led him to the home of an Irish Catholic named Murphy, to partake of a rather frugal meal, which Frs. MacEachern, Maguire and Coté[9] shared with him. This was the extent of the day's ceremony; for in the visitation of Scottish parishes or missions there is never question of either a procession or a solemn entry. Indeed! how could they have such things, where there is not even a surplice for the local priest, and they have no idea of the chant of the church OR of what we call altar boys! The matter was all the easier since the *Angélique* was moored less than three *arpents* from the shore. The next day, Wednesday, the 29th, after the Scottish priests, who had remained on land, had heard confessions during part of the night and of the morning, the bishop came ashore to celebrate the Holy Mass and give confirmation to the few faithful who prepared for it. He placed the chapel under the invocation of St. Cuthbert; but what a chapel! Imagine about thirty pieces of square timber placed vertically, enclosing a space of about 40 square feet and supporting badly assembled rafters, the ensemble covered with cross-boards, nailed over the whole edifice, with a half-foot opening between one board and another, so that rain, wind and hail could come in without obstacle, -- and at the end of this cage three rough planks placed horizontally at their full length on unequal chunks of wood covered with soiled cloths which left the two ends of the planks bare, -- and in front, an old silk cloth whose colour can no longer be recognized but whose stains are very visible and very indecent, a cloth they call an altar frontal, but which for thirty years has been unsuitable for such use, -- behold the place where the bishop was asked to say the fourth Mass of the day, glad that he had brought with him the means of vesting without making use of the worn-out vestments which had been used by the three others. A boat sail had been spread out on the roof, and the altar was

9 Xavier Coté was an ordained acolyte who accompanied Plessis on his 1812 journey, serving as his secretary.

sheltered by a sort of cotton canopy, with the help of which it was possible to celebrate protected from the rain that was falling that morning.

If this chapel was indecent because of its shape, it was more so because of the multitude of dogs within it, and the babbling and bawling of perhaps more than 40 children in their mothers' arms; several mothers spanked their children noisily, to prevent them from crying, but the remedy only made them cry louder.

It was amid this unpleasant hubbub that the prelate celebrated Mass and confirmed 44 persons in all. He did not want to leave the place without letting the people know that he was shocked at seeing animals grazing in their unfenced cemetery. He praised, however, the steps they had taken to procure a succession of priests, steps that were now all the more urgent, since he was alarmed at seeing 800 Catholic families doomed to remain without help for their religion when death should take their present missionaries, unless they think in advance of means to provide successors to them who speak their language. Now these successors can be found only in the young men whom they might send to Quebec for their ecclesiastical education, since old Scotland has too much need of her own to think of being able to send others to the diocese of Quebec. The Scottish colonies of the Gulf of St. Lawrence have realized this long ago and have formed among themselves a fund of £600, destined soley for the fulfilment of this project. Its execution has unfortunately been deferred by the hope held from year to year that a Catholic school would be built at Halifax in which seminarians might be trained. But since the setting up of this school met new delays every day, the Scots have finally decided to send to the seminaries of Canada six of their children next autumn, namely: two from Cape Breton, two from Isle Saint-Jean and two from the northern coast of Nova Scotia. The bishop was not only satisfied with making his mind known on this matter in public, but also spoke about it several times to the two priests of their race with whom he had occasion to confer, and by whom the boys destined to begin their studies must be chosen.

We re-embarked after dinner, and since the wind was favourable, we set out with several sails hoisted to reach the Gut or passage of Canseau before night, the church which the bishop intended to visit next being N.D. [Notre Dame] of Arichat or Narichaque, as the Acadians called it. The rest of the west coast of Cape Breton offered nothing worthy of note, except that, four leagues [twelve miles] south of Justaucorps, Fr. Macdonnell pointed

out another settlement of Catholic Scots named Judique, where it will inevitably be necessary to authorize before long the building of a chapel, to serve not only the inhabitants already established in the place, but also the remainder of the Catholics stretched out from there to the entrance of the strait.

This idea was approved at once, and St. David was chosen to be the titular of the future church, for the Scots must have saints of their own nation to satisfy their piety. It was according to this conviction that, after having designated St. David as patron of Judique, the bishop gave as titular to the settlement of Antigonish . . . another Scottish prelate named St. Ninian.

A fair wind continued to blow and brought us at sunset to the entrance of the Gut of Canseau. It is a strait 15 leagues [45 miles] long and one and a half [4½ miles] wide, which separates the mainland of Nova Scotia from the southern extremity of the island of Cape Breton. Vessels wishing to go to Halifax from the west of this Island or from other parts of the Gulf must necessarily pass through it. In time of war, it is one of the places where unarmed vessels can easily become the prey of privateers. Therefore, Captain Dugast, trembling as he entered the strait, was quite upset when he found that there was no frigate standing by, as he thought there would be. The result was that, after going as far as l'Isle à l'Ours [Bear Head], which is at the other end of this strait, he went back, and the next morning took advantage of certain rumours of the neighbouring inhabitants to declare that he would not dare to go farther unless security were guaranteed for his schooner.

When the prelate heard him make such a pronouncement, he did not insist; but contracted with him to retreat to Pictou, and wait for him there for fifteen days. He himself kept Frs. MacEachern and Coté, engaged a rowboat and continued his journey towards Arichat, where he could arrive safely, because of the facility this little conveyance provided for going through out-of-the-way channels, and of landing easily when need arose.

All was ready at eleven o'clock in the morning, except that nobody thought of providing this little boat with cooked meat or fresh water, with the result that the oarsmen, who worked for seven consecutive hours against a head wind, were reduced to eating dry bread, with nothing to drink.

The passage which is only four leagues [twelve miles] from the outlet of the Gut, but which proved to be more than seven [21 miles] from the

point where we set out, went through the Madame islands, because the wind would not allow us to keep to the open sea, and moreover we could not have done so without some danger on the part of the American privateers who were said to infest this shore.

This little passage [Lennox Passage] is situated between the eastern extremity of the island of Cape Breton and Chedabouctou Bay, now Manchester Bay, which belongs to Nova Scotia and forms part of it. The Madame islands are four leagues [twelve miles] distant from it and belong to the government of Cape Breton. It would be difficult to say how many there are, but the only one that is inhabited is Arichat island [Isle Madame], named by the English Richmond Island. It is from five to six leagues [fifteen to eighteen miles] long and has a varying width. In the language of the people the eastern part is called Grand Narichaque, and the western part little Narichaque. It is inhabited by Acadians. Its settlement goes back only forty years. Frs. Bailey and Bourg[10] are the first missionaries who stayed there. Long after them came an Irish priest named William Phelan,[11] he stayed there one or two years. Fr. Lejamtel, a priest of the diocese of Avranches, and an emigré from Miquelon in 1792, was established there in the same year by the late Fr. Jones, superior of the missions of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and has remained there steadily to this day, sometimes having charge also of several other missions, and at other times limited to this one only, which today numbers between a thousand and eleven hundred communicants, including one or two little settlements of Cape Breton which are in the neighbourhood.

The inhabitants of Arichat, attracted to seafaring by the proximity of the sea which surrounds them, engage in it like many others, at the expense

10 The Rev. Charles-François Bailly de Messelin (1740-1794), one of the first *canadien* priests ordained by Bishop Briand, was missionary to the Gulf St. Lawrence from 1767, and Vicar General, 1768-72. He is considered to be the first missionary resident in Arichat, as he spent some time there in 1771. The Rev. Joseph-Mathurin Bourg (1744-1797) was born at River Canard, N.S., and went with his family in the Acadian deportation of 1755 to Virginia. From there the family moved to England, then to France. Bourg emigrated to Quebec and was ordained in 1772, becoming the first native Acadian priest. He served as Vicar General from 1774 to 1795, when he retired to Quebec.

11 The Rev. William Phelan was an Irish priest who claimed also to possess the D.D. and Ph.D. degrees. He established himself as the first permanent missionary resident at Arichat, from 1786 to 1792, but was removed from office by Father Jones, the Superior of Missions, after repeated conflicts. He retired to the United States, where he died in 1795.

of the tilling of their lands. Not only do they go to sea, but they also build schooners for the other seamen of the Gulf; a schooner can be seen on the ways at almost any point along their shores; last year they built more than sixty of them. These building activities are depleting their forests, which are sparse enough as it is, and as a love for farming is not at all common among them, the result is that those who can neither go to sea, nor build, live in extreme poverty. The condition of their cottages is an unanswerable proof of this.

Arichat is remarkable for a superb harbour formed by some little islands which shelter it from the open winds, without obscuring the view of the Nova Scotia coast as far as Cape Canseau. At this harbour, which has an extent of easily three-quarters of a league [2¼ miles], is situated Notre Dame church, with an elegant presbytery and a vast cemetery nearby. Although this church has already been once enlarged, it is again too small for the number of the parishioners. Nevertheless, it is furnished with vestments, a steeple and two bells, a rare thing in these parts.

At the time of the bishop's arrival he was surprised at the haste with which all the schooners which were out fishing returned to port, but the mystery of it was soon explained to him; the reason was that a brig had appeared off shore, and that the poor fishermen, convinced that no vessel of any importance could be anything but an American privateer, fled with all their might in order to avoid being taken as booty. Their fear, though ungrounded -- because they learned later that the vessel they had seen was an English transport carrying provisions from Halifax to Isle Saint-Jean -- had been caused a few days before by the sight of several real enemy privateers, one of which had chased two schooners right to the entrance of the harbour, whereupon the local colonel of the militia,[12] a scatterbrain, had taken fright, ordered the church bells rung to assemble the people, and following up his zeal for the defence of the colony, had had built by thirty men in five days an entrenchment which ten men could have built in four hours, and had arranged in it three embrasures for the mounting

12 Tentatively, this "local colonel of the militia" can be identified as Clement Hubert, who was born in Jersey in 1765, and moved to Arichat in 1783. He was a ship captain and merchant; was appointed militia captain in 1795 and a justice of the peace in 1803; and served for a time as the collector of provincial (i.e. Cape Breton) revenues.

of two six-pounder guns, while waiting for the guardian angel of the island to procure him a third, which he did not know where to get.

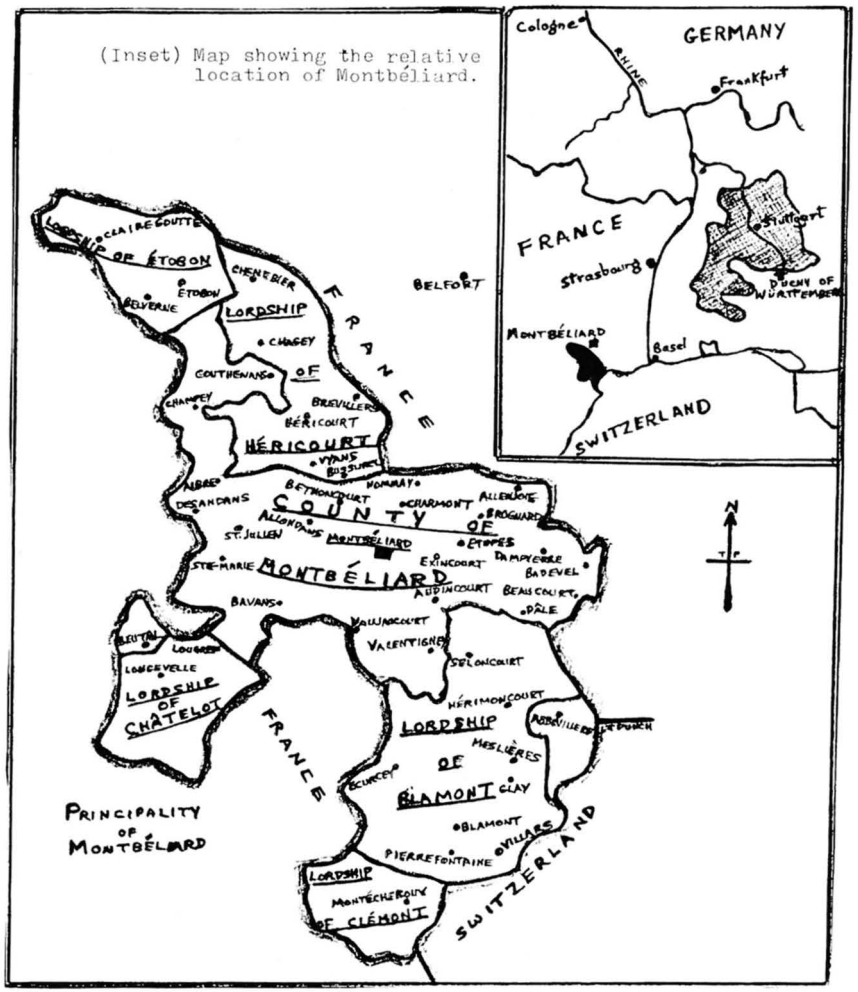
This gallant colonel, now an engineer by the force of circumstances, had played other roles before that. Being a justice of the peace he celebrated marriages. Deprived of this qualification, he set himself up as a minister to the Protestants of the place. But these Protestants, mostly Jersey people, were pleased with neither the doctrine he preached to them, nor the manner of announcing the divine word. They were struck by the inconsistency of his arguments, for they know at least that they are Anglicans, whereas the good man does not know to what sect he belongs, and they gradually vacated his meeting-house, and left him only their negroes as a congregation. His zealous ministry is now limited to this coloured flock. But as he wants to try everything, he dismissed his congregation on the Sunday which occurred during the episcopal visitation, and came himself to listen to the instructions which were given on that day in the parish church. Not satisfied with this step, to which, however, he attached much merit and importance, he asked the bishop to crown his happiness by coming to his house for dinner. The invitation was accepted on condition of the wind proving unfavourable for sailing on Monday. The prelate was hoping that after two days of a very thick fog which prevailed on Saturday and Sunday, the following day would be fit for travelling. The fog cleared up, but unfortunately there sprang up a head wind which made departure impossible. Therefore there was no way out of going to dinner at the colonel's, being saluted by his militiamen, and of being regaled during the dinner by a quarrel which he picked with one of his sons-in-law whom he ordered officially to leave the table, take charge of the company of which he was captain, and order some musketry volleys which he thought necessary to complete the festivity. The son-in-law refused to obey; the colonel left the table in high dudgeon, reappeared laughing a moment later, outside the window, had a decanter and glass served there, and took a drink at each volley, ending by taking too much. We finally succeeded in leaving the table, but not in escaping the boring civilities and annoying prattle of the colonel, who did not release his guests until he had gone back with them more than a half mile.

August 4

Whey they were liberated they thought only of their departure which took place the next day before five o'clock in the morning in a fairly large

rowboat; but all the oarsmen were worn out with fatigue, because they had to row against wind and tide until evening, making only two short stops, namely at l'Isle à l'Ours [Bear Head] and at Cross Point [Low Point], which are at the two ends of the strait.

The sun had set when the boat arrived at Havre à Boucher on the Nova Scotia coast. . . .


(Inset) Map showing the relative location of Montbéliard.
Cologne
GERMANY
RHINE
Frankfurt
FRANCE
Strasbourg
Stuttgart
DUCHY OF WURTTEMBERG
MONTBÉLIARD
Basel
SWITZERLAND
LORDSHIP OF ÉTOBON
CLAIREGOUTTE
ÉTOBON
CHENEBIER
BELVERNE
LORDSHIP
CHAGEY
BELFORT
FRANCE
COUTHENANS
OF
CRAMEY
BRIEVILLERS
BÉRICOURT
HÉRICOURT
VYANS
BUSSUREL
NIBAREL
DESANDANS
BETHONCOURT
HOWARAT
COUNTY OF
CHARMONT
ALLENJOIE
BROGNARD
ALLONDANS
ST. JULLIEN
MONTBÉLIARD
ÉTUPES
EXINCOURT
TAMPEVERRE
BADEVEL
STE-MARIE
MONTBÉLIARD
AUDINCOURT
BEAUCOURT
PÂLE
BAVANS
VAUJNOCOURT
VALENTIGNEY
SELONCOURT
BRUTAN
LOUGRES
LONGEVELLE
LORDSHIP OF CHÂTELOT
HÉRIMONCOURT
ABBEVILLERS
LE BOUCH
LORDSHIP
MESLIÈRES
OF
BLAMONT
CLAY
BLAMONT
VILLARS
PIERREFONTAINE
PRINCIPALITY OF MONTBÉLIARD
FRANCE
LORDSHIP
MONTÉCHEROUX
OF CLÉMONT
SWITZERLAND
N

Montbéliard: An Unknown Homeland

Terrence M. Punch

French-speaking Protestantism existed in three traditions among those who contributed to the genetic pool of Nova Scotia. There were the Channel Islanders of Jersey and Guernsey, with names such as LeCain, Ballam, Barteaux, Clements, Darby, Fuller, Nicolle, Pennell, Renouf and Robbins. Their church was usually Anglican, reflecting the islands' lengthy links with the British Isles. Secondly were the Huguenots -- French Calvinists -- who bore such names as DeBlois, Bessonett, DeMille, DesBrisay, Embree, Gerrow, Payzant and Pineo. They came from many parts of France and, as a rule, they had fled their homeland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 removed the vestiges of legal protection they had against religious persecution. Usually the Huguenots reached America via European Protestant nations such as Germany, the Netherlands, the Channel Islands or the British Isles. The third group derived from Montbéliard and were French-speaking Lutherans. This article discusses the historic background of this last group, in order to tell a story that is more than a footnote to the settlement of Nova Scotia. It is a history of survival in the face of great odds.

Among the 2700 foreign Protestants brought to Nova Scotia by John Dick in the 1750s were about 420 people whose language was French and whose religion was Lutheran. Their homeland, Montbéliard, was the westernmost Lutheran state in Europe and the sole francophone example. These settlers were French only in an ethnic sense, because until 1648 their country was not a neighbour of France, let alone part of the Bourbon realm. The immigrants, though Protestant, were not Huguenots. The latter term should not be used for a Lutheran, but only for one in the tradition of John Calvin.[1] The appelation began as a nickname given to those in France who adopted Calvin's doctrines and scheme of life.[2] After 1550, as Lutheranism played a diminishing role in French religious politics, the term *Huguenot* tended to be considered the generic term for all French Protestants. The word had originated in Zurich and reached France via Geneva. *Huguenot* was the

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1 Arthur James Grant, *The Huguenots* (Hamden, Conn., 1969), p. 17.

2 Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the Consolidation of the French Protestant Movement, 1564-1572* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1967), p. 37.

French corruption of the German word for those Swiss who had banded together against the secular power of the bishops: *Eidgenossen* (*Eid* = oath; *Genosse* = comrade), i.e., those who were bound together in their cause by an oath.[3] Since the term applied to those who were both Protestant and opposed to episcopal rule in Geneva, it was conflated into a word to embrace all French Protestants, plainly an erroneous notion, considering the social conservatism of Luther in supporting the secular authority of the German princes against their subjects.

Until 1793, a tiny homeland existed in a corner of what we would consider eastern France, against the frontier of Switzerland. Its princes lived not in Paris or Versailles, but in Stuttgart in soutwestern Germany, for the Duke of Württemberg was also Prince and Count of Mumpelgart and Lord of Héricourt. In the language of its inhabitants, Mumpelgart was Montbéliard, both forms being derived ultimately from the Latin *Mons Beligardi*, or "well-defended hill." First, the area will be introduced in today's terms, and then will follow a survey of its historic development.

The former *Pays* or region of Montbéliard is divided today principally between the French *départements* of Dubs and Haute-Saône, and supports about 250,000 people, thanks largely to the vast Peugeot auto works, which employ nearly 40,000 workers. The *Pays* is situated between 300 and 500 metres above sea level for the most part, although next to the Swiss frontier the elevation climbs to 1,000 metres. In winter, temperatures hover around the freezing point, while during summer, 30° to 35°C. is typical. This fairly temperate climate is warmer overall than that of Nova Scotia. Annual precipitation totals about 900 millimetres, evenly distributed among all four seasons. The natural vegetation is beech and pine, with evergreen predominating at the higher altitudes. The principal rivers, the Doubs and the Allan, form part of the Rhône drainage basin, remotely linking the *Pays* with the distant world of the Mediterranean. Apart from the factories, other economic activities include watchmaking, textile spinning and weaving, metallurgy, and trade in cheese and livestock. In short, this is a healthful and reasonably diversified region of France.[4]

3 Will Durant, *The Reformation* (New York, 1957), pp. 467, 521.

4 Information gleaned from several sources, especially *Bourgogne, Franche-Comteé, Morvan, Monts Jura* (Paris, 1924), pp. 348-351, and from "Le Pays de Montbéliard, Doubs," brochure prepared for l'Office du tourisme de Montbéliard, 1984. During the eighteenth century, Anabaptists living in the region bred the widely-known breed of Montbéliard cows.

The tiny *Pays* -- 55 kilometres its greatest length, 22 kilometres its widest breadth -- is less than one-fifth the size of the Grandy Duchy of Luxembourg, which we in North America consider a small nation indeed! Despite its tiny extent, Montbéliard has had quite a history since its first appearance in an authentic record, in the year 985, which makes this its millenium, a fact that is being celebrated in the *Pays* during 1985.

Historically, the principality of Montbéliard was bounded on the north by the Vosges mountains, on the east by Alsace and the Jura range, and on the south and west by Franche-Comté. Alsace was part of the Holy Roman Empire, a German entity, until 1648, while Franche-Compté was Spanish territory until 1678. Montbéliard was nestled among its mountains and insulated from France for a long time. The principality was independent for five centuries, with a distinctive government and institutions, under the rule of the house of Württemberg. Its particularism was enhanced by its being the sole francophone Lutheran state in Europe.

At its greatest extent, the principality included not only the County of Montbéliard and the Lordship of Étobon, but also the adjacent lordships of Héricourt, Blamont, Clémont and Châtelot, as well as scattered towns in central Alsace, such as Horbourg and Riquewihr. Before the sixteenth century, two basic events shaped the *Pays*: the awarding of a charter of freedoms by Count Renaud of Burgundy in 1283, and the marriage, a century later, of the county's heiress.

The charter of the town of Montbéliard created an urban republic on the German or Swiss model, with a middle class, guilds, local self-government, and the status that went with such freedoms. For example, each new sovereign had to confirm the freedoms in a public ceremony prior to his accession, a custom that continued until the eighteenth century.[5]

In 1397, Henriette, heiress of the Montfaucon line of counts of Montbéliard, married Duke Eberhard IV of Württemberg. Eberhard died while yet a young man, and Henriette, known to her people as *la bonne comtesse*, because she liberated all her peasant bondsmen, became foundress of the *Pays* of Montbéliard. She and her sons turned the *Pays* towards the German world, and for four centuries the influence of the rulers main-

5 An outline of the conditions and privileges granted by the charter may be found in Pierre Pegeot, "Montbéliard, origines et originalités d'une ville medievale," *Histoire de la Ville de Montbéliard*, Jean-Claude Voisin, ed. (Roanne, France, 1980), pp. 20-21.

tained that orientation.[6] Thus, when the Reformation was introduced into Württemberg, the ducal family could support the ultimate victory of Lutheranism within its county of Montbéliard.

Since the Prince of Montbéliard was also the Duke of Württemberg, and since the latter realm was the larger and more important, the princes lived mainly at Stuttgart. The effective day-to-day government devolved upon a Regency Council, which was authorized to act as a council of state, a board of finance, a court of justice and an ecclesiastical tribunal. The people had a right to petition directly through the resident intendant to the Duke, who might overrule or uphold, as he saw fit, the decisions of the Regency. The latter also met annually to set the price of cereal grains, and this valuation formed the basic unit upon which were calculated all farm rents, princely duties, and other tithes and taxes. At a time when goods and services, rather than specie, were the principal mediums of exchange, this function was particularly critical.

The main official of the principality was the bailiff, later called the governor, who presided over the Regency Council. He was armed with administrative, economic, judicial and military powers. To assist him he had a chancellor, a vice-chancellor, an intendant who audited receipts and supervised tax collections, a provost who maintained law and order outside the town, and an attorney-general who acted as chief of police within the town and was personally the inspector of weights and measures.

The modern history of Montbéliard can be separated into three periods. The first runs from the Reformation to 1620 and may be termed the years of establishment. The next, from 1620 to 1723, is known locally as the days of distress. Finally, the third period, from 1723 until 1793, forms what have been called the years of the struggle. During the first period, the major development was the arrival of the Protestant Reformation. The ruling duke, Ulrich of Württemberg, had been obliged in 1519 to flee from Stuttgart. He took refuge in his other realm, Montbéliard. Ulrich and his chaplain became early supporters of Luther's protest against abuses in the Church, and in 1524, they invited Guillaume Farel to preach at Montbéliard, the first appearance of Protestantism in the principality.

6 Lucien Lerat, *Histoire de la Franche-Comté*, Jean Brelot and Roger Marlin, eds. (Paris, 1969), p. 30, underlines the important point that the counts of Montbéliard were not vassals of the County of Burgundy. As shall be seen later, the French crown contested this as part of its policy of *la politique des réunions*.

Thanks in part to the opposition of the Archbishop of Besançon, in whose diocese Montbéliard was situated, there were riots in opposition to the Lutheran sermons. This turmoil merged with an outburst of popular violence, known as the War of the Peasants, which spread southward from Alsace into Montbéliard and Franche-Comté. Farel was driven away, but the mobs (known by the German name of *Bündschuh*) subsequently eluded the control of the archbishop's agents and proceeded to plunder abbeys, priories and castles. Such excesses provoked retaliation by the archbishop and the local nobility; repression of the peasants began.

Ulrich regained control in Montbéliard and, in a striking exercise of clemency he acceded to a petition for pardon submitted to him by his erring subjects under the traditional usages of the principality. In time, Ulrich also resumed power at Stuttgart, and he still wished to see the Reformation introduced throughout his domains. In 1535 he sent to Montbéliard the preacher Pierre Toussain, who favoured a compromise between Lutheranism and Calvinism, and who in 1538 persuaded the Regency Council to abolish the Catholic Mass in Montbéliard. Within a decade the Reformation had spread to Étobon and Blamont. In 1548 Emperor Charles V imposed the Interim on the Holy Roman Empire, though such a compromise -- which allowed some of the demands of Protestants to be conceded -- proved abortive.[7] Shortly afterwards, the Treaty of Augsburg introduced the famous doctrine *cujus regio, ejus religio,* meaning that whoever ruled a territory could impose his religious preference upon his subjects.

Duke Ulrich preferred the more conservative social attitudes of the Lutherans to what he considered the radical views of the Calvinists. The religious superintendent at Montbéliard was experiencing increasing trouble with Calvinist pastors and had been obliged to restrain and even to expel a few of them. Ulrich's brother, Christophe, bequeathed money to be used to send six young *Montbéliardais* each year to the university at Tubingen. Thus, from 1560 until 1797, most young theological students from the *Pays* went to Württemberg to complete their studies, thereby providing a supply of well-educated and francophone Lutheran clergy for Montbéliard and

7 The Interim, for instance, granted the laity the privilege of receiving the Eucharist in both forms, bread *and wine*. Rome was unwilling to go that far in making concessions. Likewise, the emperor was willing to allow priests who had married to retain their wives, pending a final decision by a full council of the Church. Such concessions would have gone some way to satisfying princely Lutherans such as Duke Ulrich.

its dependencies. Although the duke supported Lutheranism, he did permit religious refugees from elsewhere to settle in places which he designated within his territories.

A few years later, Ulrich's nephew and successor, Frédéric, took the local Reformation a step further when he sold the remaining monastic and episcopal properties and used the proceeds to set up a fund which supported churches, pastors and schools. Frédéric also instituted a system of fines for misbehaviour and for non-attendance at church. Receipts from this source, as well as from bequests of money and produce went into the poor box. One might bequeath a field of cabbages, with the request that the first crop after one's death be given to the poor box of the parish. The funds thus provided were carefully administered by a committee which used all proceeds for the needy in each parish. The evidence suggests that this method of poor relief worked fairly well in normal times in the principality, and that the great majority of committees did their work honestly and diligently.[8]

Prince Frédéric was probably the outstanding ruler of Montbéliard. He was a man of wide and energetic interests and was, moreover, a ruler who spent a substantial part of his time in residence within the *Pays*. His personal flamboyance was more than balanced by his genuine application to business and to the advancement of his realms. Frédéric introduced papermaking, local coinage, a printing press, iron mining, gypsum quarrying, a powder factory, a cannon foundry and the famous forges at Chagey. He established schools, botanical gardens, new fairs and markets. He granted guild privileges to drapers, tanners, physicians, surgeons and apothecaries. Coal mines were opened so that forest timber could be conserved for the forges and salt works.[9] Roads and bridges were improved and extended. Frédéric's intelligent interest in agriculture resulted in sheep farms, a stud farm for improving horses, and in the first vineyards in the region. He also founded the village of Frédéric-Fontaine, west of Étobon, for Calvinist refu-

8 Jean-Marc Debard, "Une institution charitable luthérienne 'La Boîte des Pauvres' dans la principauté de Montbéliard. Un exemple paroissial: Saint-Julien au XVIII[e] siècle," *Bulletin et Mémoires* de la Société d'Emulation de Montbéliard, LXXVIII (1982), 197-221.

9 André Bouvard, "Heinrich Schickhardt, technicien des salines au XVI[e] siècle — Les salines de Saulnot," *Bulletin et Mémoires*, LXXIX (1983), 69-77, explains how there was a search for a means of conserving wood by using other means of providing heat in the salt-making process.

gees. Although some of these innovations were destroyed by the subsequent period of trouble, Frédéric must nevertheless be reckoned a successful ruler. The years of his reign, from about 1593 to 1618, formed the only period of peace and prosperity which Montbéliard would be allowed for a long time.[10]

The fat years of Frédéric were followed all too soon by the long lean years, locally termed *les jours de détresse*. In 1617, the five sons of Frédéric agreed that Louis-Frédéric, the second eldest, would live and rule at Montbéliard, but should his male line perish, the elder brother, Jean-Frédéric, or his line at Stuttgart, would inherit the principality. Therefore, from 1617 until 1723, a line of purely *Montbéliardais* sovereigns resided in and reigned over the territory.

Louis-Frédéric's reign was ill-omened. At the outset there was a scandal over the clipping of coins, followed by galloping inflation, revaluation of the currency, and crises in the cost of provisions. A brush with the bubonic plague during the 1620s further darkened the picture. Louis-Frédéric's son, Léopold-Frédéric (1631-1662), was ruler when the Thirty Years' War spilled its religious and political antagonisms into Montbéliard. Feeling threatened by the neighbouring Spanish forces in Franche-Comté, and by the Duke of Lorraine, Léopold-Frédéric sought French protection. For seventeen years a French garrison was maintained in the town of Montbéliard, a community of only 2,500 people, and capital of a principality having about 11,000 souls in all. Rather than being a protection, the presence of the French garrison proved a curse, for now the opponents of France in the Thirty Years' War had a pretext upon which to attack and pillage Montbéliard.

The plague reappeared in 1635 and carried off between a sixth and a fifth of the population. Peasants deserted their farms in the hundreds, seeking to flee the Black Death, with the result that productivity virtually ceased. Famine broke out and continued for eight years, accompanied by new out-

10 Louis Renard, *Nouvelle Histoire du Pays de Montbéliard* (Montbéliard, 1950), pp. 81-83, outlines the reign. See also Jean-Marc Debard, "Reformes protestante et catholique: Frédéric de Württemberg, prince de Montbéliard, et Blarer de Wartensee, prince-évêque de Bâle," *Les Pays de Montbéliard et l'ancien Évêché de Bâle dans l'histoire* (Montbéliard, 1984), pp. 134-135. Duke Frédéric travelled to London in 1592 to see Queen Elizabeth, who was sufficiently impressed to award him the Order of the Garter. He was that "Duke of Mombeliard" whom Shakespeare alluded to in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Act IV, Scene III), where Bardolf exclaims, "Sir, the Germans desire to have three of your horses; the duke himself will be tomorrow at court, and they are going to meet him." Shakespeare simply ignored the two centuries that intervened between the time of his play and his own day.

breaks of plague each summer. The survivors took to the remote corners of the forests or to Switzerland. The war continued to rage, and French, Swedish and other troops plundered and burned the deserted villages; several communities were reduced to feeding on carrion. Between 1635 and 1638, one author has estimated the loss of population through death and flight at between 65 and 75 per cent of the inhabitants, with some entire villages disappearing from the map. As it was dramatically expressed at the time, when peace finally came, it was because there was no one left to fight.[11]

In 1648 the Treaty of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years' War, returned peace to the Holy Roman Empire, and restored Montbéliard to its rightful ruler. Now, for the first time, Montbéliard and France had a common border, causing one learned writer to lament, "The French are welcome as friends, but not as neighbours!"[12] The French garrison evacuated Montbéliard, but recovery was slow and was constantly endangered by the ambitions of Louis XIV of France. By 1671, the principality contained about 2,000 households, or 8,000 inhabitants. Helplessly, the *Montbéliardais* watched their neighbours in Spanish Franche-Comté offer a futile resistance to annexation by the French. The peril of sharing a frontier with France was painfully illustrated by this episode.

Now that France surrounded the tiny state, except for a small strip of frontier with Switzerland, the *Montbéliardais* feared the worst: "The French long to have us at any cost. They only await the hour."[13] The following year, 1676, the Maréchal de Luxembourg occupied the territory, and this time the French remained for twenty-one years. Louis XIV's lawyers obtained decrees that transferred Montbéliard from the sovereignty of the Holy Roman Empire to that of the French province of Burgundy. This obliged the people of Montbéliard to swear allegiance to the French king or forfeit their lands and risk injury to person or property. Prince George II, the

11 "Le combat cessa faute de combattant." J.-M. Debard, "La principauté de Montbéliard (XIV^{e} - XVIII^{e} siècles)," *Histoire de la Franche-Comté* (Editions privat, 1977), pp. 335-338. Corneille, *Le Cid* (1636) used the line quoted.

12 "Gallus amicus sed non vicinus!" (Montbéliard saying of the day.)

13 "Je crois que le François a envie de nous avoir,à quel prix que ce soit, il attend seulement son heure." (Councillor Perdrix of Montbéliard, letter of 1675.)

ruling count, refused to take the oath and went into exile. A period of confusion and plotting ensued.

Although the Treaty of Ryswick, 1697, obliged Loius XIV to restore Prince George, that sovereign had scarcely returned to Montbéliard when he died. In 1700 Louis seized the four dependent lordships of Blamont, Clémont, Châtelot and Héricourt. The king quartered dragoons on the last of these and replaced a number of Protestant pastors with Catholic curés. Religious persecution was renewed, as Louis cynically used religion for political advantage. The *simultaneum* was imposed on many churches. This was a German compromise which obliged two denominations to share the use of the church premises when neither of the two groups was strong enough to force out the other. As the King of France imposed it on communities in which there was scarcely a Roman Catholic inhabitant, his use of the *simultaneum* was clearly a ruse and not an effort to keep order among warring parishioners over control of church buildings and cemeteries.[14]

Duke Léopold-Eberhard, son of Prince George II, died in 1723, leaving no legitimate issue. Under the terms of the 1617 treaty among the five brothers, the succession now reverted to the Stuttgart branch of the dynasty. In order to dispossess the numerous natural progeny of the late duke, the military of Württemberg took control of Montbéliard.[15] A census was taken, which found that the population had recuperated to about 12,000 people, thanks in part to the arrival of Swiss Anabaptist farmers as religious refugees. The closer connection with Stuttgart ensured that Montbéliard and Étobon remained out of French hands, but the four lordships, subject to French suzerainty and lacking the protection of nominal fealty to the Holy Roman Empire, began to suffer considerably.

After 1723 the Lutheran church in the principality was reformed and reorganized. Primary schools were opened in the villages, while a high school, the *Gymnase*, operated within the town of Montbéliard. Meanwhile,

14 Jean-Marc Debard, "Reforme et dragonnades à Brévilliers (XVI^{e} - XVII^{e} siècles)," *Bulletin et Mémoires*, LXXIX (1983), 184-188, gives an example of what happended at Brévilliers in the lordship of Héricourt in 1700.

15 Adrien Fauchier-Magnan, *The Small German Courts in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1958), pp. 253-262, explains the almost incredible private life of Léopold-Eberhard, his numerous children, and the circumstances under which the line of independent counts of Montbéliard came to its end. The French *Mémoires* of both the duc de Saint-Simon and the baronne d'Oberkirch mention the matter as well.

Louis XV and his agents were active in neighbouring lordships, replacing deceased pastors with the curés, forbidding the use of parish cemeteries by Lutherans, and even enforcing the occupation of church buildings by the use of troops. In 1740, a clash in front of the church at Chagey involved people who would settle in Nova Scotia twelve years afterwards. Plainly, the episode did not cause their actual emigration, but it gave them a memory of religious persecution that was passed down in oral tradition.[16]

The current prince of Montbéliard who, after 1723, was also the reigning duke of Württemberg, attempted to assist the former subjects of his family by establishing pastors and new churches within his county, but close to the churches being taken over or closed down in neighbouring communities in the four lordships. When Louis XV and the prince of Montbéliard-Württemberg signed a treaty in 1748 which might have settled their disputes, the *parlement* of Besançon refused to register the agreement, and thereby sabotaged the peace. Lutheranism survived into the late 1700s, when an attitude of forebearance, if not of tolerance, became prevalent. In the county of Montbéliard and the lordship of Étobon, Lutherans were in full possession of their rights, but in Héricourt and Châtelot especially, the people suffered for their beliefs. Nevertheless, one cannot build a good case for religious persecution as being the primary cause of emigration; rather, it must be regarded as a contributing factor, secondary to the economic distress of the period from 1743 to 1755.

By 1750 there were about 17,000 people in Montbéliard, and this number was simply greater than the resources of the area could bear at that time.[17] One recourse of surplus populations was to clear forest land and open new farms, but the prince forbade this, because wood had to be conserved for the forges.[18] People could, and sometimes did, make a transition from being

16 Renard, pp. 94, 149, tells of this incident. In a somewhat garbled version, the tale of this event was passed down in a couple of Nova Scotian families -- the Millards and the Tattries -- who settled in Pictou County. It was told on two occasions to Rev. George Patterson, who included the story in his *History of Pictou County* (Montreal, 1877), pp. 127-128. More recently, the tradition has been detailed by Gordon M. Haliburton in "George Tattrie: A Nova Scotian Pioneer from Montbéliard," *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, I, 2 (1981), 77-78.

17 Jean-Marc Debard, "Le Traité de Versailles de 1748 et La Lettre de Cachet de 1749," *Bulletin et Mémoires*, LXXIII (1977), 181-191.

18 François Vion-Delphin, "Les ordonnances forestières du Comté de Montbéliard et de l'ancien Evêché de Bâle aux XVII^{e} siècles," *Le Pays de Montbéliard et l'ancien Évêché de Bâle dans l'histoire* (Montbéliard, 1984), pp. 173-194.

farmers to becoming craftsmen, making clocks, textiles and other small-scale manufactures. The alternative was emigration, and this took people away to Russia, Germany, and to Maine, Carolina, Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, in North America.[19]

The history of independent Montbéliard came to a close in 1793 during the French Revolution, when the forces of the Convention swept into the capital. The revolutionaries could find no aristocrats in the town, and had to test the guillotine, which they had set up in the town square, by catching and beheading an alley cat.[20] It is said that the French revolutionary Bernard met the delegation bringing him the keys of the town and exclaimed, "I bring you liberty!" His ringing declaration fell flat when the spokesman of the townsmen replied, "We have known liberty for a long time, and as complete as possible."[21] Thus, with the decapitation of an animal and the failure of the revolutionaries to impress the *Montbéliardais*, came the end of the independent *Principauté de Montbéliard*. French republicans had accomplished by force what two centuries of Bourbon diplomacy, chicanery and pressure had not: the extinction of the freedom of a tiny territory, the unknown homeland of thousands of Nova Scotians, through their four hundred immigrant ancestors who left Montbéliard 233 years ago.[22]

The people of modern Montbéliard retain their regional pride in being who they are. One of them, an academic and an historian, wrote as recently as 1977 that "we can state that there will ever be a *Pays* of Montbéliard between Alsace and Franche-Comté."[23] It is not a sentiment with which one would choose to disagree.

19 About one *Montbéliardais* in forty came to Nova Scotia between 1749 and 1753. This estimate is based on an actual count of 416 such persons in surviving passenger lists (C.O., Series 217), and the reported population of Montbéliard in 1750 as "about 17,000." The Société d'Emulation de Montbéliard will shortly publish J.-M. Debard's article, "Les Montbéliardais en Nouvelle Angleterre, une émigration protestante au milieu du XVII[e] siècle (1751-1755)."

20 Fauchier-Magnan, p. 268, n.2.

21 Renard, p. 102: "Je vous apporte la liberté!" -- "Nous la connaissons de longue date et aussi complete que possible."

22 The Société d'Emulation de Montbéliard will publish in 1986 my account of the establishment of the *Montbéliardais* in Nova Scotia, in an article entitled, "Les Montbéliardais en Nouvelle Ecosse: une colonisation par des protestants étrangers au XVIII[e] siècle (1750-1815)."

23 Debard, "La principauté de Montbéliard," p. 349: "nous pouvons constater qu'il y a toujours un *Pays de Montbéliard* entre l'Alsace et la Franche-Comté."

Montbéliard Immigrants to Nova Scotia, 1750-1752

Alison, George-Frédéric, wagoner, 40; *Speedwell*, 1752; 5 people. Catherine-Elisabeth, his wife. Children: Gabriel, Marie-Elizabeth, Anne-Charlotte.

Amet, Pierre, farmer, 56; *Betty*, 1752; 2 people. Catherine, his daughter.

Bailly, George-Frédéric, farmer, 25; *Sally*, 1752; 3 people. Frédérique, his wife. Jean, his son.

Banvard, David, weaver, 23; *Speedwell*, 1752; 2 people (son of Pierre). Eve, his wife.

Banvard, Pierre, weaver, 50; *Speedwell*, 1752; 3 people (father of David). Françoise, his wife (died in the crossing). Marie-Elisabeth, his daughter.

Begin, Jacques, farmer, 25; *Betty*, 1752; 2 people. Marie-Madeleine, his wife.

Besançon, Jean-George, 44, farmer; *Speedwell*, 1752; 7 people. Jeanne, his wife. Children: Marie, Nicolas, David, Marie-Catherine, Marie-Elisabeth.

Biquenet, Jacques, farmer, 22; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Bizet, Jacques, farmer, 43; *Betty*, 1752; 5 persons (father of Jean-George). Anne-Catherine, his wife. Daughters: Eléanore, Claudette. One unidentified girl.

Bizet, Jean-George, farmer, 17; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person (son of Jacques).

Bouillon, Adam, joiner, 31; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Bourgeois, Jacques, miller, 40; *Speedwell*, 1752; 5 people. Catherine, his wife. Children: David, Susanne-Thérèse, Marguerite.

Bourgogne, Marc, farmer, 33; *Betty*, 1752; 6 people. Anne-Elisabeth, his wife. Children: Catherine-Elisabeth, Jean-David. Two boys, Jacques and Jean, probably surnamed **Mignerai.**

Bouteiller, George, weaver, 26; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Bouteiller, Jean, joiner, 29; *Betty*, 1752; 2 people. Françoise, his wife.

Bouteiller, Jean-George, weaver, 26; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Bouteiller, Jean-George, joiner, 50; *Sally*, 1752; 5 people. Sarah, his wife. Children: Frédéric, Jeanne. One unidentified woman.

Bouteiller, Jacques, weaver, 33; *Sally*, 1752; 6 people. Marguerite, his wife. Two women, two children, unidentified.

Bouteiller, Jacques, farmer, 17; *Sally*, 1752; 1 person.

Bouteiller, Jean-Nicolas, farmer, 21; *Sally*, 1752; 1 person.

Calame, Abraham, mason, 52; *Speedwell*, 1752; 7 people. Susanne, his wife. Children: Jeanette, Marie, Jacques, Madeleine, Catherine.

Carlin, Jean, joiner, 38; *Speedwell*, 1752; 4 people. Elisabeth, his wife. Daughters: Judith, Jeanne.

Carlin, Jean, joiner, 38; *Speedwell*, 1752; 4 people. Catherine, his wife. Two unidentified children.

Certier, Étienne, weaver, 18; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Clemençon, Daniel, smith, 36; *Sally*, 1752; 2 people. Jacques-Christophe, his son.

Clemençon, Frédéric, farmer, 18; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Coulon, Jean-Nicolas, farmer, 66; *Speedwell*, 1752; 4 people. Susanne, his wife. Sons: Jean-George, Jean-Jacques.

Coulon, Pierre, joiner, 46; *Betty*, 1752; 6 people. (Father of Pierre and David). Marie-Madeleine, his wife. Children: Jacques, Jean-George, Jonas, Catherine.

Coulon, Pierre, Jr., joiner, 19; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person (son of Pierre).

Coulon, David, joiner, 17; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person. (son of Pierre).

Curie, Jacques, wagoner, 27; *Speedwell*, 1752; 2 persons. Marguerite, his wife.

Daré, Nicolas, farmer, 42; *Betty*, 1752; 6 people. Susanne, his wife. Children: Jeanne, Catherine, Jacques. One unidentified child.

Dauphiné, Jean, shoemaker, 26; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Dauphiné, David, tailor, 25; *Speedwell*, 1752; 4 persons. Two women and one child, unidentified.

Demet, Pierre, farmer, 26; *Betty*, 1752; 2 people. Marie, his wife.

Donzell, George, farmer, 40; *Speedwell*, 1752; 2 people. Anne-Barbe, his wife.

Duperrin, Pierre, tailor, 46; *Speedwell*, 1752; 6 people. Catherine, his wife. Children: Catherine, Anne-Marie, Marguerite, Pierre-Nicolas.

Dupuis, Jean-Nicolas, mason, 27; *Speedwell*, 1752; 3 people. Catherine, his wife. Pierre, his son.

Durand, Jean, stonecutter, 24; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Duré, Samuel, tailor, 24; *Sally*, 1752; 1 person.

Duvoison, Jean-Harri, . . .; *Ann*, 1750; 5 people. Marguerite, his wife. Daniel, his son. Two unidentified children.

Emoneau, Samuel, farmer, 50; *Speedwell*, 1752; 4 people. Elisabeth, his wife. Daughters: Judith, Anne-Elisabeth.

Emoneau, Frédéric, farmer, 24; *Speedwell*, 1752; 2 people. Elisabeth, his wife.

Euvrai, Pierre, farmer, 18; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Fainôt, George-Frédéric, gunsmith, 24; *Sally*, 1752; 1 person.

Fevre, Pierre, mason, 26; *Betty*, 1752; 4 people. Catherine, his wife. Jacques, his son. Jacques, his brother or half-brother.

Goguel, Frédéric, miller, 28; *Betty*, 1752; 3 people. Marguerite, his wife. Frédéric, his son.

Grandjean, Jacques-Frédéric, farmer, 21; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Greignaud, Jean-Abraham, farmer, 46; *Speedwell*, 1752; 3 people. Marie, his wife. One other unidentified person.

Gretteau, Jean-George, joiner, 35; *Sally*, 1752; 6 people. Children: Louis-Nicolas, Anne-Catherine, Elisabeth-Marguerite. One woman (probably his wife) and one child, unidentified.

Grosrenauld, Jean-Jacques, farmer, 36; *Sally*, 1752; 5 people. Marguerite, his wife. Children: Pierre, Jean-Christophe, Françoise.

Guigné, Guillaume, mason, 48; *Speedwell*, 1752; 7 people. Madeleine, his wife. Children: Susanne, Pierre, Marie-Marguerite, Susanne II, Catherine.

Huguenot, Pierre, weaver, 19; *Sally*, 1752; 1 person.

Humbert, Pierre, weaver, 24; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Iselin, Jean-Pierre, smith, 40; *Pearl*, 1752; 6 people. Elisabeth, his wife. Children: Alexandrine, Pierre, Catherine. One unidentified child.

Jacot, Jacob, shoemaker, 30; *Betty*, 1752; 5 people. Catherine, his wife. Children: Jacob, Madeleine. One unidentified woman.

Jacot, Jonas, stonecutter, 38; *Betty*, 1752; 2 people. Catherine, his wife.

Jacque, Abraham, farmer, 48; *Betty*, 1752; 5 people. Eve, his wife. Daughters: Jeanne, Marguerite, Elisabeth.

Jacquin, Jacques-Frédéric, schoolmaster, 45; *Betty*, 1752; 6 people. Marguerite, his wife. Children: Jean-George, Frédéric, Christophe, Marguerite.

Jeanbas, David, cutter, 18; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person (brother of Jean-Jacques).

Jeanbas, Jean-Jacques, weaver, 25; *Betty*, 1752; 2 people (brother of David). Judith, his sister.

Jeanperrin, Jean-Urbain, stonecutter, 32; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Jeaudry, Jean-Christophe, farmer, 44; *Speedwell*, 1752; 8 people. Anne-Catherine, his wife. Children: Jean-George, Catherine, Pierre, Frédéric, Jean-Urbain, Jeanne.

Jeaudry, Jean, farmer, 54; *Betty*, 1752; 5 people. Children: Joseph, Catherine, Judith, Anne-Marie.

Jeaudry, Jacques, farmer, 27; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person (son of Jean).

Jeaudry, Marc-Élie, shoemaker, 26; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person (son of Jean).

Jeaudry, Jean-George, farmer, 24; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person (son of Jean).

Jeaunné, Pierre, farmer, 32; *Speedwell*, 1752; 7 people. Charlotte, his wife. Children: Frédéric, Pierre, Jacques, Jean-George, Samuel.

Jolimoy, Pierre, farmer, 50; *Betty*, 1752; 3 people. Sons: Pierre, Nicolas.

Lagarce, Pierre, farmer, 50; *Betty*, 1752; 3 people. Anne-Marie, his wife. Elisabeth, his daughter.

Lagarce, Nicolas, farmer, 23; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Lagarce, Pierre, farmer, 42; *Pearl*, 1752; 3 people. Nanette, his wife. Anne-Marie, his daughter.

Langille, David, joiner, 31; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Langille, Matthieu, farmer, 26; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Langille, Léopold, joiner, 24; *Betty*, 1752; 3 people. Marguerite, his wife. Catherine, his daughter.

Langille, David, farmer, 34; *Sally*, 1752; 5 people. Marie-Catherine, his wife. Children: Jean-Jacques, Marguerite, Jacques.

Langille, Jean-Jacques, farmer, 16; *Sally*, 1752; 1 person.

Leau, David, farmer, 46; *Speedwell*, 1752; 2 people. Catherine, his wife.

Leau, George, joiner, 30; *Speedwell*, 1752; 4 people. Marie-Madeleine, his wife. Children: Eve and Frédéric.

Leau, Jean, mason, 27; *Betty*, 1752; 2 people. Catherine, his wife.

Leau, Jean-George, farmer, 20; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Lods, Jean-Jacques, mason, 38; *Pearl*, 1752; 6 people. . . ., his wife (died in the crossing). Children: Jean-George, Étienne, Jeanne-Catherine, Claudine.

Maillard, Jean-Frédéric, . . .; *Ann*, 1750; 5 people. Elisabeth, his wife. Three others, unidentified.

Maillard, Frédéric, farmer, 45; *Betty*, 1752; 8 people. Judith, his wife. Children: Judith, Catherine, Elisabeth, Jean, Jeanne, Susanne.

Maillard, Pierre, farmer, 15; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person (son of David).

Malbon, Daniel, farmer, 40; *Betty*, 1752; 6 people. Jeanne-Marguerite, his wife. Children: Anne-Marie, Susanne-Elisabeth, Jacques, Catherine.

Malmahu, Jacques, thatcher, 36; *Speedwell*, 1752; 2 people. Nanette, his wife.

Mariette, Étienne, farmer, 40; *Pearl*, 1752; 6 people (father of Pierre). Marie, his wife. Sons: Michael, Étienne, Daniel. One unidentified child.

Mariette, Pierre, farmer, 16; *Pearl*, 1752; 1 person (son of Étienne).

Masson, Frédéric, farmer, 31; *Speedwell*, 1752; 6 people. Catherine, his wife. Children: Pierre, Catherine, Henriette, Nanette.

Masson, François, farmer, 26; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Mathieu, Jérôme, farmer, 21; *Betty*, 1752; 4 people. Jeanne, his wife. Sisters: Marguerite, Françoise.

Menegaux, Jean-George, weaver, 44; *Speedwell*, 1752; 7 people. Children: Marie-Catherine, Françoise, Jean-Jacques, Susanne, Anne-Marie, Jean-Nicolas.

Menegaux, Jean-Frédéric, farmer, 38; *Speedwell*, 1752; 8 people. Anne, his wife. Children: Anne-Marie, Elisabeth, Jean-George, Jean-George II, Susanne. One other unidentified woman.

Metin, Jean-Nicolas, farmer, 17; *Sally*, 1752; 1 person.

Mettetal, Jacques-Christophe, tanner, 50; *Speedwell*, 1752; 5 people. Judith, his wife. Daughters: Susanne, Marguerite. One other unidentified woman.

Mettetal, Jean-Nicolas, farmer, 30; *Speedwell*, 1752; 5 people. Judith, his wife. Daughters: Catherine, Anne-Catherine. One unidentified child.

Mettetal, Jean-George, mason, 20; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

Miliet, Abraham, gardener, 31; *Speedwell*, 1752; 3 people. Sisters: Clemente, Susanne-Marguerite.

Monnier, Abraham, farmer, 38; *Sally*, 1752; 6 people. . . . , his wife. Children: Isaac, Jacques, Susanne. One unidentified child.

Morleau, Jean-Pierre, farmer, 48; *Speedwell*, 1752; 5 people. Anne-Catherine, his wife. Sons: Jean-George, Daniel, Jean-Pierre.

Nardin, Jacques, farmer, 56; *Speedwell*, 1752; 6 people. Madeleine, his wife. Children: Isaac, Pierre, Suzette, Jean-Pierre.

Nardin, Jean-Jacques, farmer, 36; *Speedwell*, 1752; 4 people. Anne-Judith, his wife. Children: Jean-Christophe, Françoise.

Nardin, Jacques, farmer, 40; *Pearl*, 1752; 5 people. Anne-Judith, his wife. Daughters: Jeanne, Marie. One unidentified child.

Petrequin, Jean, joiner, 28; *Betty*, 1752; 2 people. Anne-Marie, his wife.

Petrequin, Jean, farmer, 21; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Quidore, Jean-George, thatcher, 36; *Speedwell*, 1752; 5 people. Clemente, his wife. Children: Jean-George, Jeanne. One unidentified child.

Rigouleau, Vernier, farmer, 40; *Speedwell*, 1752; 6 people. Jeanne, his wife. Children: Anne-Marie, Jean-Frédéric, Susanne, Elisabeth.

Rolland, Jean-Jacques, farmer, 60; *Speedwell*, 1752; 6 people. Catherine, his wife. Children: Jean-George, Anne-Catherine, Catherine. His sister: Anne.

Robert, Abraham, mason, 30; *Speedwell*, 1752; 3 people. Elisabeth-Catherine, his wife. Elisabeth, his daughter.

Robert, David-Josué, farmer, 18; *Betty*, 1752; 4 people. Sisters: Jeanne, Catherine, Elisabeth.

Sertie, Jean-Urbain, farmer, 34; *Betty*, 1752; 4 people. Marie-Catherine, his wife. Sons: Pierre, Jacques.

Surleau, Pierre, farmer, 28; *Sally*, 1752; 1 person.

Tatteray, Jean-George, farmer, 30; *Sally*, 1752; 3 people. . . . , his wife (died in passage). Jeanne, his sister.

Thom, Daniel, mason, 31; *Speedwell*, 1752; 2 people. Françoise, his wife.

Tisserand, Jacques, farmer, 29; *Betty*, 1752; 5 people. Catherine, his wife. Sons: Pierre, George, Jacques.

Veuilamet, Isaac, farmer, 36; *Betty*, 1752; 4 people. Catherine, his wife. Marguerite, his daughter. Catherine, probably his sister.

Veuilamet, Léonard, farmer, 17; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person.

Veutilot, Jean-George, thatcher, 36; *Sally*, 1752; 5 people. . . ., his wife. Daughters: Catherine, Eléanore. One unidentified child.

Veinot, Léopold, farmer, 48; *Betty*, 1752; 4 people (father of Jacques). Jeanne, his wife. Sons: Christophe, George.

Veinot, Jacques, farmer, 15; *Betty*, 1752; 1 person (son of Léopold).

Virpillot, Pierre, sawyer, 40; *Sally*, 1752; 4 people. Marguerite, his wife. George, his son. One unidentified child.

Vuilquet, Jean, farmer, 36; *Speedwell*, 1752; 7 people. Catherine, his wife. Children: Barbe, Joseph, Catherine, Suzette. One unidentified child.

Vuilquet, Pierre, farmer, 50; *Speedwell*, 1752; 1 person.

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416 people

Jacob Ueltschi and Family: Nova Scotia Pioneers from Switzerland

Barry Cahill

It is not generally recognized that among the 2700 or so "foreign Protestants" who emigrated to Nova Scotia in the early 1750s were perhaps as many as three hundred Swiss. This article will bring to light the early history of one such family, against the background of what Dr. Winthrop Packard Bell has called "a piece of arrested British colonial policy in the eighteenth century."[1]

Soon after the founding of Halifax in June 1749, the British government undertook to sponsor, through its agents, continental emigration to Nova Scotia on a larger scale. Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts had suggested this course of action, and copies of his dispatches were relayed to Governor Edward Cornwallis. The new governor of Nova Scotia, for his part, had written to the Lords of Trade and Plantations as early as 24 July 1749, praising the virtues of the handful of Swiss immigrants who had accompanied him: "There are amongst the settlers a few Swiss who are regular honest and industrious men, easily governed and work [*sic*] heartily."[2] He understandably urged the lords commissioners to try to recruit as many foreign Protestants as possible as settlers for the new colony.

The Lords of Trade engaged a Rotterdam merchant named John Dick to act on their behalf in the recruiting of emigrants. He in turn arranged for an advertisement to be circulated, which promised (among other things) fifty acres of free land to the new settler.[3] It is easy to imagine how attractive such an offer would have been, especially to the small tenant farmer. According to Kurt B. Mayer, however, "Crop failures, famines, and oppressive dues and taxes were [more] important incentives to emigration, especially when settlement in sparsely populated countries promised better living

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This article is for Stella Catherine (Hilchey) Mann of Sydney, N.S., to whom it owes much of its inspiration.

No attempt has been made at a uniform othography of the family name. The pure Swiss *Ueltschi* quickly gave way to the teutonism, *Uelsche*, and then to a bewildering variety of English phonetic spellings. As early as the 1770s, moreover, the *Ue* began to be replaced by the English aspirated *h*, so that the only spellings one encounters in Nova Scotia today are *Hilchie* or *Hilchey*.

1 The sub-title to his *The "Foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1961), the authoritative work on the subject; hereafter "Bell."

2 Cornwallis to Lords of Trade, 24 July 1749 (Colonial Office Papers, Series 217 [hereafter CO217], Vol. 9, fol.71b, Public Record Office).

3 A copy of this advertisement is the first document in R.G.1, Vol. 382, Public Archives of Nova Scotia [hereafter PANS].

conditions."[4] Religious persecution also played a part, but there is no evidence to show that the Ueltschi family belonged to any of the sects (Mennonite, Anabaptist, etc.) which were not tolerated. Just as it was the policy of the British government to encourage foreign Protestants from countries such as Switzerland to emigrate to Nova Scotia, however, so it was the general policy of Swiss cantonal governments to discourage such emigration as unpatriotic or even treasonable. Various authorities at various times had taken repressive measures against emigrants,[5] "[b]ut. . . all the manifold restrictive ordinances and interdictions remained half-hearted and largely ineffective."[6]

On 6 March 1750 John Dick wrote to the secretary of the Board of Trade to advise him that his agent at Geneva had, by his orders,

> Caused the Encouragement given by the Board of Trade to Foreign Protestants in Regard to their going to Settle in the Province of Nova Scotia to be published in the Gazettes of Neufchatle [*sic*] & Berne, on account of the many handycrafts people that are there idle. [H]e has also caused many Coppys [*sic*] to be dispersed thro' the Vilages by proper People which he has Employ'd on purpose. . . .[7]

Disseminated throughout the canton of Bern, the largest and most populous in the Swiss confederation, Dick's advertisement presumably attracted the attention of Jacob Ueltschi. He may not have had the chance to read it in the Bern *Gazette*, however, for the editor wrote to Dick's agent at Geneva on 11 April 1750 telling him that the president of the council had forbidden him to make any further comment on the subject.[8] Censorship in the Bernese Republic being probably the strictest in Europe,[9] it seems more likely that Jacob Ueltschi first heard about Nova Scotia from a copy of Dick's advertisement, which was being circulated.

4 *The Population of Switzerland* (New York, 1952), p. 198.

5 M.G. 100, Vol. 235, no. 29, PANS.

6 Mayer, *Switzerland*, p. 199.

7 Dick to Thomas Hill, 6 March 1750 (CO 217/9/150b, PRO).

8 DeMurantiour[?] to Jean Louis Courlat, 11 April 1750 (CO 217/9/173b, PRO).

9 Wilhelm Oechsli, *History of Switzerland 1499-1914* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 269.

Jacob Ueltschi came from a village in the foothills of the Freiburg Alps, descriptively called Oberwil-im-Simmental ("in the valley of the river Simme"), where his forefathers had lived for at least six generations. Jacob was born in December 1692, the son of Batt Ueltschi and Margret Eschler, and was married to Margret Sullinger in January 1726. They had five children, three of whom, Margret (born October 1729), Jacob (born February 1734) and David (born May 1736),[10] went with their parents to the New World. Neither Jacob Ueltschi's occupation nor whether or not he petitioned to leave the canton of Bern legally is yet known. But leave he did, probably in the spring of 1750, when Dick's advertisement first made its appearance.

The Ueltschi family journeyed via Basle and Rotterdam to London, whence the "few Swiss" had gone out to Nova Scotia with Governor Cornwallis the previous year. The trip down the Rhine was expensive and usually slow, though it could be made in as little as two weeks.[11] Had the Ueltschi family embarked for Nova Scotia from Rotterdam, they would have travelled on Dick's ship, the *Ann*, which left that port before the *Alderney* sailed from London, but arrived in Halifax later. The Ueltschis did not stay in Rotterdam, however, nor were they passengers on the *Ann*; they went instead to London.[12]

The presence of the family in England can be taken to suggest either that they had not left Switzerland as a result of Dick's advertisement, or that they had been diverted by one of his competitors. According to E.H. Bovay, "Some of these Swiss Protestants had already been living for some time in England, when they decided to emigrate to Nova Scotia."[13] The Lords of Trade, moreover, had advertised in English newpapers and magazines the previous year for settlers for Nova Scotia; the Swiss who accompanied Cornwallis were among those who answered that advertisement. More Swiss may have gone to England on their own initiative, hoping to follow those who had already set sail. Dr. Bell's explanation has the most to commend it:

10 Information extracted from Church registers at Oberwil-im-Simmental by Kathrin Fiechter.

11 Bell, p. 137, n. 17.

12 Cf. the memorandum of the Lords of Trade to the Secretary of State (23 May 1750), as quoted by Bell, p. 158. The original is in CO 218/3/123b, PRO.

13 *Le Canada et les Suisses 1604-1974* (Fribourg, 1976), p. 165, n. 256.

> Possibly more of those people [foreign Protestants] had arrived in England in the interim, and the government, not knowing what else to do with them, had decided to ship them, too, to the new colony. For, by chance, we have information that those people had made their own way to England *for the purpose* of getting to Nova Scotia, and they had done so in the spring of 1750. From a report of Dick's of 17 July 1750 it would seem that somehow a rumour had circulatedd to the effect that would-be emigrants who made their own way to London would be carried free from thence.[14]

The rumour was well-founded: whereas passengers on Dick's ships had to pay their own fare, those on his competitor George Heyliger's travelled at British government expense. Such a rumour would quickly have spread among the intending emigrants, and could easily have persuaded a number of them to go direct to London at their own expense.

The vessel on which the Ueltschi family almost certainly sailed was the larger of the two transports which had been chartered to the government by Heyliger, a London merchant and long-time purveyor of emigrants. The barque *Alderney* was less than a decade old and had been decommissioned from the navy. It was a "sixth rate" (i.e. small battleship), with dimensions of 112 x 32 x 11 feet and a capacity of 504 tons.[15] By the standards of the time, the *Alderney* was comparatively spacious, having six feet between decks, and well ventilated; its passengeres "were. . . regarded as being in good health on arrival at Halifax."[16] The voyage lasted about ten weeks, the *Alderney* with its 370 or so passengers and crew of 34 sailing out of the Thames estuary on or about 12 June 1750 and into Chebucto Harbour on 22 or 23 August. The voyage by and large seems to have been uneventful, at least after the *Alderney* left the English Channel, though there was evidently no love lost between the seventy foreign Protestant emigrants and the master, Pendock Neal. According to a letter written to the Lords of Trade by the German Swiss minister, the Reverend Pierre Christian Bürger, a petition to the captain which he had drafted at the request of his countrymen was so badly received that the Swiss were forbidden even to speak to him.[17]

14 Bell, p. 159.

15 J.J. Colledge, *Ships of the Royal Navy: An Historical Index* (New York, 1969/70), I, 33.

16 Bell, p. 249.

17 See " 'Ministre des Etrangers suisses allemands' A Halifax Letter of 21 September 1750," in *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, IV, 2 (1984), 91-96.

Information about the *Alderney*'s Swiss upon their arrival in Halifax does not come from Council minutes but from Rev. Bürger's letter and from provincial secretary Hugh Davidson's verbal report to the Lords of Trade in November 1750. While the *Alderney*'s English-speaking passengers were set down on the eastern side of the harbour to found a new settlement at Dartmouth, "the Swiss were employed at Gorham's Point out of the town of Halifax."[18] It is odd perhaps that there is no reference to this in the minutes of the Council meeting of 23 August. Since Davidson had been present at that meeting, however, it is likely that the decision about the placement of the Swiss was taken at the same time.

Gorham's Point was due north of the original town plot, on land which would later be incorporated in the naval dockyard and become the site of the commissioner's house. It was named for Captain John Gorham, a member of the first Council, whose company of Rangers had formerly been encamped there. The Swiss were placed at Gorham's Point because it was intended as a temporary location to be occupied until lots could be assigned, cleared and built upon.[19] Indeed, the Swiss seem to have had no intention of staying where they were, even until springtime. Secretary Davidson reported to the Lords of Trade that by the time he left Halifax on 22 September 1750, "not one person had asked for his allotment of land."[20]

The *Alderney*'s Swiss instead sent, with the governor's approval, a delegation of twelve men to inspect farms at Piziquid (Windsor), abandoned by Acadians who had removed to present-day New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island to escape the incessant demands of the British administration. When their delegation reported favourably, the Swiss were keener than ever to relocate. It needs to be emphasized that there were probably many farmers among them; that they had been promised fifty acres of land as well as farming implements; and that most of the land on the Halifax peninsula was rocky and heavily wooded. The government, however, would not allow the Swiss to migrate to Piziquid or Minas, because it was both fearful

18 *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations*, IX (1749-1753), 115.

19 Dr. Bell (p. 353, n. 27a) quotes an unsubstantiated statement by T.B. Akins to the effect that the "German lots in the north suburbs of Halifax were laid off in 1750." Akins's statement, however, is supported by the evidence of the inset ("Plan of the Town of Halifax in Nova Scotia") of an official map published by John Rocque in London in 1750, where these lots are plainly indicated.

20 See Note 18 above.

of the Indian menace and hopeful of persuading the Acadians to reoccupy their homes and take the oath of allegiance.

In the autumn of 1750, the Swiss were still at Gorham's Point, where they were gainfullly employed clearing land to build themselves log cabins or to earn money by selling the trees they had felled. Just like their predecessors in 1749, they made an excellent impression on Governor Cornwallis, who contrasted them favourably with the "in general old miserable wretches" who had come over on Dick's ship, the *Ann*, which arrived in September 1750.[21] In Dr. Bell's words, ". . .one may presume that they [the Swiss] were not the sort of men to loaf about, subsisting on their rations and waiting to be granted lands, if at any work available they could earn something to help give them a start when the promised farming lands should be assigned to them."[22] What was assigned to them at first, however, were town lots in the North Suburbs, most of which were 50 x 60 feet apiece: big enough for only a small garden.

The assigning of these lots had taken place by July 1751 at the latest. It is at this point that the name Jacob Ueltschi (phonetically spelled *Wilsehoy*) first enters the provincial records. According to the Allotment Book, he was assigned No. 7 in the front range of "C" Block of the German and Swiss lots in the North Suburbs.[23] The Ueltschi property lay to the northeast of the "Old Dutch Church" (built in 1755), on the block formed now by Artz, Gerrish, Upper Barrington and Brunswick Streets. If Dr. Bell is right to infer that the Swiss had built near Gorham's Point enough "blockhouses" to shelter them,[24] then the Ueltschi family would doubtless have continued to live there until they had raised a house on their newly assigned lot.

Perhaps they had already moved into their new home when the daughter, Margret, who bore the same name as her mother and who was the eldest of the three emigrating children, married John Ulrich Klett. The wedding took place at St. Paul's on 19 July 1751 and was performed most likely by Rev. Bürger, who did not leave the colony until a little later. Ulrich Klett was a native of Ulm, and a surgeon by trade, who had come

21 Cornwallis to Lords of Trade, 27 November 1750 (CO 217/11/5a, 6b, PRO).

22 Bell, p. 347.

23 Halifax, Allotment Book (mf), PANS.

24 Bell, p. 349. A blockhouse was a musket-proof dwelling built with squared logs.

over on the *Ann*. He left two children, both of whom died young, and died himself before 16 June 1755. Though she was not yet 26 at the time of his premature death, Klett's widow did not remarry. Margret lived the rest of her life with her brother Jacob and likewise widowed mother, dying in Lunenburg in 1792, aged 63.[25]

Unlike most if not all of their fellow Swiss, the Ueltschi family did not remain in the North Suburbs. By deed poll bearing date 1 May 1752, Jacob Ulshe, "Labourer," sold his house and lot in the North Suburbs to Paul Anschütz and Ulrich Klett, his son-in-law, for £3.[26] Here the question arises of where the Uelsche family lived between the time they left the North Suburbs and when they left Halifax for Lunenburg at the end of May 1753. Despite the lack of documentary evidence, there is reason to believe that Jacob Uelsche either was given a licence to occupy or had purchased from the original occupier, a farm lot on the North West Arm, from which he subsequently was evicted by July 1752.

According to the recollection of Surveyor-General Charles Morris I ten years after, "In the year 1750 the new settlers applied to Governor Cornwallis for land on the Peninsula of Halifax, who ordered me to Survey the same and to report what number of acres, there were on the Peninsula, exclusive of the Town and Suburbs, to be granted, which was accordingly done."[27] The only new settlers in the year 1750 were the arrivals by the *Alderney, Ann* and *Nancy*, among whom were Jacob Uelsche and family. It stands to reason that the immigrants, many if not most of whom were farmers, should have applied to the governor for land on the peninsula, especially after the hopes held by the Swiss, of migrating to the Piziquid or Minas area, has been disappointed. Though there is some information about when the five-acre lots were surveyed, it is not known exactly when they were assigned. Governor Cornwallis wrote to the Lords of Trade on 24 June 1751 to say that the lots had been laid out and were being cleared.[28] Harry Piers has stated that according to a note on the official plan of Halifax for 1841,

25 See in general Dr. Bell's "Register of Lunenburg County Families," M.G.1, Vol. 110, p. 27, PANS.

26 Registry of Deeds, Halifax County, Vol. 6, p. 145.

27 "An Account of the Lands called the Commons near the Town of Halifax, drawn up by Order of the Lieutenant Governor Commander in Chief," *ca.* 8 January 1762 (CO 217/18/266b, PRO).

28 Cornwallis to Lords of Trade, 25 June 1751 (CO 217/12/85b, PRO).

"the five-acre lots were laid out under Lord [*sic*] Cornwallis[s] government in 1750, and assigned to the proprietors in 1751."[29] In Dr. Bell's opinion, however, the distribution of these lots probably took some time.[30]

As to the allotments themselves, Piers went on to say, "Each man received but one lot, having a frontage of 330 feet on a proposed road and a depth of 660 feet, and this he was supposed to clear and to build upon it a dwelling."[31] Each lot was assigned on condition that the proprietor would "improve" it, i.e. clear and cultivate the land and build a house. Yet we know from the lengthy petition for redress of grievances that was presented by "the whole Body of Germans and Swiss" to Colonel Peregrine Thomas Hopson when he took over the government on 3 August 1752, not only that Jacob Uelsche had been evicted from his land "at the North West Arm" but also that his land was far from unimproved.[32] If, to quote the petition exactly, "Jacob Ulsche a German Swiss had his land taken from him on that Pretense [i.e. neglect]," then either the petitioners were grossly exaggerating the amount of improvement which had in fact taken place ("there was a Blockhouse built and he and his two sons daily working and clearing it"); or the government had acted in extreme bad faith. What was the reason for this unhappy event?

The petition broadly implies that the government had been playing favourites: not only giving the best land to New Englanders, but also *not* taking it away from them when they failed to improve it. Such a penalty was imposed on Jacob Uelsche even though he had demonstrably improved his land. If it were taken away from him on the "Pretense" of "not being sufficiently improved on," what then might the real reason have been? The conclusion seems inescapable either that the government was just being bloody-minded, or that some influential New Englander coveted Jacob Uelsche's land. In view of the explicit statement in the petition about how the land had been improved, it is difficult to deny that the proprietor had fulfilled the conditions on which the lot would have been assigned: a house was built and the land was being cleared.

29 "The Old Peninsular Blockhouses and Road at Halifax, 1751: Their History, Description and Location," in *Collections* of the Nova Scotia Historical Society, XXII (1933), 103.

30 Bell, p. 341, n. 21.

31 See Note 29 above.

32 CO 217/13/319b-321b, PRO; cf. Bell, pp. 364-365.

Dr. Bell, however, has another explanation: "Jacob Ulsche. . .was quite possibly under some misapprehension as to his right to the lot at the North-west Arm that he regarded as 'his'."[33] Dr. Bell goes on to point out that the name does not occur in the allotment books for five-acre lots, but this fact is immaterial: no division of the five-acre lots was contiguous to the North West Arm. One can hardly explain Jacob Uelsche's occupying land there unless he had been given a licence to do so, or had bought the land from its original assignee; nor can one explain his having sold his house and lot in the North Suburbs in May 1752. To paraphrase Dr. Bell: whether there is any record of it or not, we may take it that Jacob Uelsche was assigned -- or purchased -- a farm lot on the North West Arm, from which he subsequently was evicted -- as if he were a mere squatter.

If Jacob Uelsche were "under some misapprehension," then it may have concerned legal title to the land on which he and his family were living. In fact, it would not have been "granted" to him but merely "assigned": "the lots were not covered by formal grants of any kind to their occupants."[34] The foreign Protestants of the time were aliens -- landed immigrants, as it were -- and could therefore be only land*holders*, not land*owners*. It would of course be perfectly natural for Jacob Uelsche to have assumed that the land which had been allotted to him, and which he had taken possession of and was working to improve, was his in law as well as in fact. Dr. Bell has admirably described the situation in which the Uelsche family found themselves:

> . . .one can well understand how the disappointments and uncertainties of such incidents, the lack of any timely advice or assistance from the authorities, and the absence of redress locally, would contribute to discontent and suspicion among the many hundreds of foreigners who had found themselves deceived in their expectations of many of the furnishings they had believed promised to them, and who after two or three years in the colony were still without fulfilment of the major promises (farmlands and implements) that had attracted them thither.[35]

Dr. Bell goes so far as to suggest that "resentment over the dispossession

33 Bell, p. 368.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 354.

35 See Note 33 above.

of the Uelsche family" contributed to causing the insurrection of December 1753 at Lunenburg (see below).[36]

Having lost their home on the North West Arm, where then did the Uelsche family go? The available evidence points to their relocating in the South Suburbs of Halifax. We know from "A list of the families of English, Swiss, etc., which have been settled in Nova Scotia since the year 1749, and who are settlers in the places hereafter mentioned," that "1 Swiss" family, consisting of one male and one female above sixteen and two males under sixteen, was to be found there.[37]. They were almost certainly the Uelsches, though both sons had already passed their sixteenth birthdays at the time. The census was taken in July 1752; the petition, wherein Jacob Uelsche is described as a "German[-speaking] Swiss," was probably drafted about the same time. To judge from the language of the latter document, Jacob Uelsche was apparently "obliged to hire Lodgings at a very high Rent"[38] for his family after they had been evicted. Since he and his sons no longer had a farm lot to improve, moreover, perhaps the three of them were obliged to hire themselves out as labourers at low wages.

The 1752 petition, in which Jacob Uelsche alone was mentioned by name as an innocent victim of official abuse, paints a black picture of the life led by the foreign Protestant immigrants at Halifax before they were "outsettled." Dr. Bell has described them "as entirely the unfortunate victims of adverse circumstances and official obtuseness."[39] Conditions deteriorated so that by the winter of 1752/53 the governor had to introduce a system of "compassionate victualling." The names Jacob Ulshey and Margretta Ulshey are No. 33 and 34, respectively, on the list.[40]

In the spring of 1753, the decision was taken to outsettle the foreign Protestants at Merligueche on the south shore, and preparations for the move

36 Bell, p. 457.

37 Printed by T.B. Akins as Appendix F to his "History of Halifax City," in *Collections* of the Nova Scotia Historical Society, VII (1895); the original is the first document in R.G.1, Vol. 417, PANS. Here only, in a long list, is there a description instead of a surname. Its absence may be significant; perhaps the paterfamilias, in view of the way he had just been treated by the authorities, would not give it.

38 Cf. Bell, p. 364.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 370.

40 M.G.4, Vol. 83, p. 132, PANS. Two names might indicate a family of two, three or four members. At that time the Ulsheys would have numbered four.

went ahead.[41] The new settlers were ordered to assemble on the Parade at Halifax on 21 May 1753 at 7:00 A.M., in order to draw for their township lots. According to the Lunenburg Allotment Book, Jacob Ulshe drew on that occasion lot A.8 in Rudolf's Division of the new town.

The foreign Protestant outsettlers sailed in two groups, the one embarking on 29 May, the other on 15 June. It is not known on what basis they had been divided, nor into which of the two groups the Uelsche family were placed. If to the first, then they would have disembarked on 9 or 10 June; if to the second, then on 17 June.

The new townsite was laid out in 42 blocks, each division containing seven. Each block in turn contained fourteen lots of 240 square feet each. Jacob Ulshe's lot lay in the northern half of the southernmost block of Rudolf's Division, which was bounded by King and Prince Streets. He took possession of it on 19 June, the surveyors having completed their work a day or so before. The surveyor-general, however, remained in Lunenburg throughout the summer. By the third week of August a large number of so-called "garden lots" had been laid out. These five-acre pieces of land lay to the southeast of the town. It is not known exactly when they were drawn for; Jacob Ulshe drew two of them (or rather he and his elder son Jacob, one each[42]): F.4 in the Fourth Division and E.3 in the Second.

Before the settlers were even able to begin cultivating their garden lots, the government food ration, however inadequate, had to sustain them while they built dwellings on their township lots. According to Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Lawrence, who commanded the entire operation, the settlers "are indefatigible when labouring for themselves. Most of them are well under cover. All of them have gardens and many of them good Framed Houses."[43]

In addition to the township lots and garden lots, work was also begun on surveying the thirty-acre farm lots. This continued through the autumn of 1753 and into the winter and beyond. No lots could have been assigned before 15 September 1753 at the earliest, for it was only then that the surveyor-general submitted his plan of them to the Council. Dr. Bell was

41 On the founding of Lunenburg, See Bell's Chapter XI, *passim*.

42 These lots were "to be allocated among the different families and single men" (Bell, p. 431). The younger son, David, was presumably not yet eligible.

43 Quoted in Bell, p. 437.

44 Bell, p. 471.

of the opinion that the draw took place sometime in September,[44] though the settlers only occupied their lots as and when they were indivually surveyed.

Jacob Ulsche emerged from the first drawing with lot A.25 on the Northwest Range, which was subsequently registered in the name of Jean Boutaillier. The lot registered to Jacob Ulsche was A.1, LaHave River, which had originally been drawn by Adam Kohl. Since three parties were involved, some transaction other than a simple exchange must have taken place. It would seem that Jacob Ulsche sold the lot he had drawn to Boutaillier, and used the money to buy the lot registered in his name from Kohl.[45] But it is noteworthy that while Jacob Ulshe junior eventually sold both the township lot and the two garden lots, there is no record of his having sold (or for that matter retained) the thirty-acre farm lot registered, presumably, to his father. All we know is that "LaHave River A.1" formed part of the Crown grant to John Newton and Philip Knaut, dated 9 October 1780.[46] Hence the allotment to Jacob Ulsche senior must have been declared vacant before that time. The situation would have been complicated by the death of Jacob Ulshe senior, which almost certainly took place before the insurrection of December 1753, although no record of his death or burial has survived.

The unfortunate and unnecessary events which began on 15 December 1753 and lasted for several days were apparently caused by an imaginary letter which an illiterate *Montbéliardais*, Jean Petrequin, was supposed to have received from a relative in London who was a minor civil servant. The real cause, however, was a conspiracy which drew on the lingering resentment felt by the settlers over the treatment they had received from the government.[47] The situation hung in the balance until reinforcements arrived from Halifax, and the garrison commander at Lunenburg, Captain Patrick Sutherland, was hard pressed to restrain the mob. An immediate consequence of the rebellion was the disarming of the entire militia, as a matter of course after order had been restored. The disarming was car-

45 "Lawrence spoke of 'sales or exchanges,' and possibly money may have played a part in some of the alterations" (Bell, p. 473).

46 Nova Scotia, Land Grants, Old Book 12, fol. 138 (mf), PANS.

47 See the excellent account in Bell §63 (pp. 450-468).

ried out, division by division, on 26 and 27 December. The return for Rudolf's Division includes the names of the brothers Jacob and David Ulchey, who each handed over one "firelock" and one box of cartridges.[48] Whether or not they had been actively involved is unknown, but in view of the shabby treatment Jacob Ulshe senior had received in Halifax, it seems likely that his sons would have been willing participants. The two men were young and single, and the restraining influence of a father had by that time been removed. They were not, in any case, among the fifteen principal insurgents against whom the grand jury proceeded at Easter Term 1754. One of those was Johann Wendel Wüst, David Ulchey's future father-in-law.

In a letter written to the Lords of Trade the same month the ringleaders went on trial at Halifax, Lieutenant-Governor Lawrence rather quaintly described the new settlers as being "almost incredibly industrious."[49] However, a census of each division, dated 17 July 1754, paints a less optimistic picture of the struggling infant settlement.[50] According to the return for Rudolf's Division, township lot A.8 was occupied by Jacob Ulshe's widow and contained a house. The information given is a little confusing, however, because there is mention of four house lots, but not of any garden lots or farm lot. It is just possible that the recently widowed Margreth had exchanged the latter for the former. The two garden lots, E.3 in the Second Division and F.4 in the Fourth, declared vacant in 1762, were in any case sold by Jacob Ulshe junior in 1764 and 1772 respectively.[51]

It is, to say the least, uncertain whether the Ulshe family retained their thirty-acre farm lot long enough to improve, let alone settle on it, as many other families were doing. If the farm lot was indeed disposed of quite early on, then Jacob Ulshe's sons could hardly have been making their living as farmers. The two garden lots were retained for the time being, however, and Jacob and David may well have carried on some sort of agricultural trade. By 1770 Jacob Hilshie could say that he had "for a Considerable time past followed, and wholly depended upon the Market, from Lunenburg

48 R.G.1, Vol. 382, doc. 3, PANS.

49 Lawrence to Lords of Trade, 1 June 1754 (CO 217/15/38b, PRO).

50 R.G.1, Vol. 382, doc. 5, PANS.

51 Registry of Deeds, Lunenburg County, Vol. 1, pp. 213, 399.

to Halifax, with Roots and other Small Articles, for a livelihood."[52]

A year or so after its founding, overall conditions in the new settlement were not improving. The year 1754 saw the government's distribution of the first livestock to the settlers. The Ulshey and Klett households, paired for obvious reasons, received one cow and one sheep.[53] The autumn of 1754 was dry, and the winter following was a hard one. The crops failed, and most of the livestock died of starvation. The onset of a wet spring, moreover, brought illness in its wake. By the end of May 1755, the initial period of two years' free victualling was to come to an end. The situation in Lunenburg was so serious, however, that the authorities there were brought to recognize that, were the victualling to stop, the people would either starve or be forced to move back to Halifax. The settlers petitioned, and an extension was granted. The names Margretta Ulshy, Jacob Ulshy and David Ulshy, as well as those of Margaret Klett and her son John Mathias, appear on the Lunenburg victualling list for 16 June to 29 June 1755.[54]

The loss of the livestock was made good, in part at least, by the acquisition of some which the expelled Acadians had had to leave behind. This process was repeated in 1756; document no. 27 of R.G.1, Vol. 382, in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, purports to give the names of the settlers who left Lunenburg on or before 30 July, in an expedition to Minas Basin. Dr. Bell considers this "enigmatic document" to be probably authentic.[55] The names Jacob and David Ulshy are not to be found there, although they and their mother Margaret appear on the Lunenburg victualling list of 23 February to 16 May 1756.[56] The most plausible explanation would seem to be that the family left Lunenburg between the middle of May and the end of July 1756.

They returned to Halifax, scarcely three years after they had left it, and remained for about a decade. One can only make an educated guess as to their reasons for doing so. Jacob senior had been dead for at least two

52 R.G.5, Series A, Vol. 1a, doc. 32, PANS.

53 R.G.1, Vol. 382, doc. 9 (lot no. 3), PANS.

54 Lunenburg and Halifax, Victualling Lists, 1755 (no. 131, 133-135, 1544) (mf), PANS.

55 Bell, pp. 499-500.

56 M.G.4, Vol. 85, p. 112 (no. 309-311), PANS. The change in the order of the names apparently means that Jacob, having attained his majority, was thenceforth regarded as head of the family.

years. Had he lived, it is unlikely that he should have wanted to return to the very place where he had been treated so shabbily. But, as subsequent events were to show, his elder son Jacob had a head for business, and the best opportunities were to be found in Halifax. It is also evident, as already noted, that neither Jacob nor David was much interested in farming. The Indian warfare, moreover, which began in earnest in 1756, would have been very disheartening. According to Ursula Bohlmann, "Halifax . . . had many employment opportunities to offer. Those who left Lunenburg were willing to give up their land and ma[k]e a new life for themselves in Halifax. Those who remained were the ones really interested in farming."[57] She is but echoing the sentiments of Dr. Bell:

> In October 1755 [Lieutenant-Governor] Lawrence was reporting that "the Germans" had been coming from Lunenburg to work at Halifax. And in the following war years, when there was plenty of employment to be found at Halifax, while Lunenburg was suffering from Indian raids and harvest failures, the movement would seem to have increased. . . . For several years the attraction must have been considerable for any except those whose emigration from Europe had been inspired by an overpowering desire for farm-land of their own.[58]

Having failed at, or perhaps not even attempted, farming on a larger scale, the Ulshe brothers no doubt wanted to take advantage of the wartime boom in commerce. They were both young, single men, moreover, but had a widowed mother, a sister and a nephew to support.

An undated and fragmentary document in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia purports to be a list of "Germans in the North Suburbs." All that remains of it are the last two pages, the final one bearing, among others, the names Jacob Ullshey and David Ullshey and the grand total of 415. This figure indicates that the list could date from no earlier than the late 1750s.[59] It may be presumed that the Ulshe family went to live at that house and lot in "Dutchtown" which they had formerly occupied (C.7), though Margaret Klett did not buy out Paul Anschütz's interest in the property until October 1763. She did so for a mere five shillings; and then, less than

57 "The Germans: The Protestant Buffer," in Douglas F. Campbell, ed., *Banked Fires -- The Ethnics of Nova Scotia* (Port Credit, Ontario, 1978), p. 191.

58 Bell, p.618.

59 M.G.100, Vol. 153, no. 13, PANS. Cf. Bell, pp. 418-419.

four years later, was able to resell it to the Halifax merchant, Andrew Cuenod, for £25.[60] A year or so after moving to Halifax with her family, Margaret Klett sold her late husband's thirty-acre farm lot on the Second Peninsula to the Lunenburg justice and militia captain, Sebastian Zouberbuhler, for £12.5.[61]

Though they would not have completely met the seven years' residence requirement, Jacob and David Ullsche had probably been naturalized when they signed, legibly if not well, a petition to Lieutenant-Governor Robert Monckton calling for an elected House of Assembly.[62] This petition was dated 25 January 1757, by which time the Ulshe family must have been firmly resettled in Halifax.

Though he was no longer living there, Jacob Ulshe retained his two garden lots at Lunenburg for the time being. In 1762, however, he sold his father's original township lot, A.8, in Rudolf's Division.[63] Then in May 1761, Jacob Ulzy was one of ten Germans who petitioned for land in Halifax between the blockhouse at the isthmus and Bedford Basin.[64] The Council ordered

60 Registry of Deeds, Halifax County, Vol. 6, p. 145; Vol. 8, p. 212.

61 Registry of Deeds, Lunenburg County, Vol. 1, p. 125.

62 Biography: Chalmers, George, doc. 13 (mf), PANS. There is a touch of irony in the fact that Jacob and David had grown up in a Swiss canton which was governed quite without democratic institutions. A conspiracy in Bern in 1749 to overthrow the patrician aristocrats who made up the Great Council, and to replace them with burghers, had been decisively quelled, and a large number temporarily or permanently banished from Swiss territory (Oechsli, *Switzerland*, p. 272). One wonders whether Jacob Ueltschi senior might not have been a *political* refugee.

The surname proper is found for the first time in Bern in 1465, where one Clewi Ueltschi, a brazier, was a member of the ruling Great Council and thus a citizen (Alfred Schaetzle, "Das Geschlecht der Ueltschi" ["The Ueltschi Pedigree"], p. 1; MS in private hands). A collateral relation of the Nova Scotia Hilchie family today, moreover, is the lawyer Dr. Hans Ueltschi of Boltigen (born 1913), who was himself a member of the Great Council of the canton of Bern from 1962 to 1972, and of the National Council of the Swiss federal republic from 1971 (*Who's Who in Switzerland* (1980/81), p. 597). As Jacob Ulshe junior was heir to a family which in the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth century was well known for its political activity in the Simmental region, there may be appropriateness as well as irony in his signing a petition for representative government in Nova Scotia.

63 Registry of Deeds, Lunenburg County, Vol. 1, p. 84.

64 R.G.1, Vol. 204, p. 1, PANS. Dr. Bell (p. 620, n. 20) mistakenly implies that the *Ulzy* of this petition is the same as the *Ulsche* of the petition quoted in §51 (p. 365). They were both called Jacob, but they were father and son, not the same man. The statement on p. 620 (n. 21), that Uelsche appears in lists at Lunenburg perhaps as long as 1760, is also wrong. Jacob Ulshe the elder disappears from lists in 1753; Jacob the younger, in 1756: for about ten years.

that a grant of 150 acres be made to each petitioner, but the actual grants were not made for another two years, and Jacob Ulshe's name was not among the grantees. The most likely explanation would be that he had by that time returned to Lunenburg -- were it not for a deed of 3 June 1767, in which his sister Margaret still described herself as a resident of Halifax.[65]

Jacob Ulshe must have done quite well for himself in town. When he returned to Lunenburg, apparently in June 1767, he purchased from Joseph Pernette for £53, "all that Messuage or Tenement commonly called or known by Lot number four in the Common containing thirty acres more or less."[66] Here, too, we can only speculate as to why Jacob returned to Lunenburg after an absence of several years. The wartime boom was inevitably followed by a post-war recession. A reflux from Halifax to Lunenburg may therefore have begun at the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763. Jacob Ulshe would probably not have purchased a thirty-acre lot had he not intended to take up farming -- even if on a smaller scale than those who had drawn 300-acre lots. Perhaps he decided to use his savings to set himself up as a part-time farmer in Lunenburg, trading in Halifax in goods he could produce himself. The fact that, for whatever reason, he did not receive a grant of land "between the Blockhouse and the Bason" may also have contributed to his decision.

Both brothers were at this time still bachelors. It was the younger, David, who married first. His bride was Sophia, the twenty-year-old daughter of Johann Wendel Wüst, by his first wife?[67] West was a native of Hesse-Darmstadt who had come over on the *Murdoch* in 1751. The wedding took place at St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg on 18 December 1769. The eldest of the ten children of the marriage, David junior, was born on 19 December 1770.

Earlier the same year a census had been taken of the township, from which some fairly detailed information about the two Ulshe households can be obtained.[68] The first consisted of one man and two women: Jacob

65 Registry of Deeds, Halifax County, Vol. 8, p. 212.

66 Registry of Deeds, Lunenburg County, Vol. 1, p. 279.

67 She had been born in 1749, according to Terrence M. Punch, "The Wests of Halifax and Lunenburg," in *Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly*, VI (1976), 70.

68 R.G.1, Vol. 443, doc. 19-43, PANS.

and his mother and his sister, the two Margarets; the second, of one man and one woman: David and his bride of less than a year. Jacob owned a horse, two cows and a pig; David, a cow and a pig. In 1769 their farm had yielded four bushels of rye, eight of barley and eight of oats. Jacob, moreover, owned a sailing vessel: a "schooner or sloop," which he doubtless used in the coastal trade in Halifax. It is ironic that natives of a landlocked European nation such as Switzerland should earn their living mainly from the sea, but Jacob and David had grown up in the valley of the river Simme, a great navigable inland waterway, and no doubt had some knowledge of such matters.

By the late 1770s, in any case, profitable business transactions enabled Jacob Ulshe not only to give up his secondary occupation, farming, but also to cut back on his heretofore primary one, coasting. He had been buying up township lots and then renting them; he also kept a shop and, towards the end of his life, an inn. By the time he sold his thirty-acre lot, in September 1776, Jacob had also bought four township lots in Moreau's Division. In March 1778 he bought another lot, H.7, in the same division.[69] This would appear to be where Jacob Ulshe spent the rest of his life: it was one of the four township lots which his executrix and trustees disposed of after his death in 1795.

In 1776, Jacob Ulshe gave up farming entirely -- and got married. At 43, he was a middle-aged bridegroom. His mother had probably died by this time; as with her husband, no record of death or burial has survived. Since he was also looking after his widowed sister, it is perhaps understandable for Jacob not to have married until after his mother's death. Jacob Ulshe's bride was the nineteen-year-old Maria Magdalena Merlin; the wedding took place at St. Paul's Church in Halifax on 30 May. Maria Magdalena was the daughter of Hans Georg Merlin, who may have been Swiss and who, like Ulrich Klett, had come over on the *Ann* in 1750.[70] He was one of the small group of foreign Protestants who remained in Halifax beyond May 1753, continuing to live in Dutchtown. Jacob Ulshe could have made Merlin's acquaintance during the seven years or so when he himself was back in Halifax and living in Dutchtown. Jacob and Maria Magdalena had ten children, born between October 1777 and July 1795, the youngest posthumously.

69 Registry of Deeds, Lunenburg County, Vol. 2, pp. 33, 55; Vol. 3, p. 155.

70 Cf. M.G.1, Vol. 110, p. 96, PANS.

Though Jacob Ulshe may have scaled down his marine activities as he grew older and more prosperous and became a family man, he did not give them up entirely, as he had farming, until quite late. In a shipping register for the port of Halifax between July 1778 and November 1781,[71] we find that Jacob Ilshie was master of the sloop *Sally*, a prize which would have been captured from the Americans, condemned in the Vice-Admiralty Court and then auctioned off to the highest bidder. The date was 12 February 1780; the vessel was carrying one passenger and a crew of four, one of whom was David Elshy, who subsequently replaced his brother as captain. David's name occurs regularly in this shipping register. Until October 1779 he was master of the sloop *Three Sisters* (perhaps to be identified with the "schooner or sloop" which Jacob owned in 1770), out of Lunenburg; then he relinquished command to Francis Glawson.[72] The Ulshe brothers coasted between Lunenburg and Halifax during this period, carrying both passengers and merchandise. The outbreak of the American Revolution had given special impetus to commercial enterprise, but there were also the inevitable dangers. The same shipping register, under date 2 March 1781, stated that the master of the *Sally* had "permission to carry the cannon three pounds for the defence of His said vessel."

Such permission was no doubt granted in view of the threat from American privateers, a squadron of which raided Lunenburg on 1 July 1782. According to Mather Byles DesBrisay, quoting Beamish Murdoch, "The town of Lunenburg, at this time, consisted of about forty or fifty dwelling-houses. The male population of men and lads -- say, males from sixteen to sixty, were about sixty in number. Of these about twenty were constantly absent, trading to Halifax."[73] Jacob or David Ulshe, or possibly both of them, may have been in Halifax or *en route* when the raid took place. If so, then one can only imagine the panic of their wives and young children. But perhaps it is more likely that the elder and increasingly land-based brother was at home. Murdoch quoted an anonymous letter "officially written at the time," according to which "the effective militia force of the town, officers and men, on the morning of the surprise, did not amount

71 R.G.1, Vol. 178, PANS.

72 Glawson was also married to a daughter of Wendel West. According to Punch, "The Wests," p. 73, David Hilchie and Francis Glawson "were masters of vessels in the coastal trade to Halifax."

73 *History of the County of Lunenburg* (Mika reprint), p. 64.

to twenty, and their officers, several of whom, as they came out of their houses singly, were disarmed by the enemy."[74] Jacob Ulchie, who had been commissioned a lieutenant in the Lunenburg County militia in November 1779, was perhaps among them.[75] Fortunately no lives were lost, and the destruction of the town was prevented by the payment of a large ransom. Few if any private homes and places of business, however, escaped being plundered by the invaders, who were ninety strong.

Jacob's property no doubt was among those which suffered, though to what extent is not known. David by 1782 seems to have been one of his brother's tenants: he no longer owned any real estate. Shortly after Jacob had sold his thirty-acre lot on the common, David bought two township lots in Creighton's Division; then he bought another one in Rudolf's; but by the early 1780s he had sold all three.[76] By the time the raid on Lunenburg had taken place, moreover, David was near to leaving town for good. With the baptism of his son, John Wendel (named for his West grandfather) at the so-called "Dutch Reformed" Church on 21 September 1783, David Ulshe disappears from the records at Lunenburg.

As orthodox Swiss Protestants, the Ulshes had begun to worship at the Presbyterian or Calvinist Church in Lunenburg when it was established in 1770. Previous to that, both Lutherans and Calvinists had either worshipped in private or at the Anglican St. John's. Most of the Ulshe children were baptized at the Dutch Reformed Church, but Jacob Ulshe was not buried there. He was buried on 8 March 1795 from St. John's. From this, and the fact that his four younger children were baptized not at the Dutch Reformed but at St. John's, it can be inferred that sometime in the late 1780s, Jacob had rejoined the Church of England. He was no doubt attracted thither by the political and social benefits which accrued from membership in the established Church.

Commercial success would have increased Jacob's social standing in the town. He had become, if not wealthy, then at least comfortably well-off. In 1792, for example, he was assessed ten shillings.[77] Innkeeping was a lucra-

74 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

75 R.G.1, Vol. 168, p. 565, PANS.

76 Registry of Deeds, Lunenburg County, Vol. 2, pp. 295, 355.

77 R.G.1, Vol. 444, doc. 49, PANS.

tive profession, moreover, if only because innkeepers were licensed to sell rum. Jacob also made money out of real estate: not only by selling the property in Halifax his wife had inherited from her father, but also by selling at a profit what he had himself bought in Lunenburg. The four lots in Moreau's Division which he had purchased in 1776 for £37 he sold in 1781 for £140, a margin of almost 400 per cent.[78] The scarcer lots in Lunenburg town became, the more inflated were real estate prices and the more profitable was speculation. The shrewd businessman could also make money out of buying, and then renting instead of selling. To sum up: when Jacob Ulshe died, aged 61, he left his wife and still young family well provided for.

Maria Magdalena Ulshe outlived her husband by almost half a century, but did not remarry. She was the executrix and sole beneficiary of his considerable estate. Jacob's will had been signed and sealed on 14 February 1795, barely three weeks before his death.[79] Wendel Wüst, David's father-in-law, was one of the witnesses. By his will, Jacob Ulshe directed his executrix and the guardians of his children, as trustees, to dispose of his property as and when they saw fit. They sold his four township lots and two water lots in 1798 for £180. Soon after, they bought two 100-acre farm lots on the road between Chester and Windsor and several township lots in Chester.[80] Maria Magdalena and her family the previous year had moved to Chester, where her eldest daughter Sophia, who had married the widower David Floyd in March 1794, was living; and where some of the descendants of Jacob and Maria Magdalena live to this day.

In March 1814, having suffered the escheat of her one remaining farm lot, Maria Magdalena and her two eldest surviving sons, Jacob and George, were forced to petition the lieutenant-governor for redress.[81] Their petition was endorsed by the Reverend Charles Inglis, missionary at Chester, and was favourably recommended by Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Coape Sherbrooke to the consideration of the surveyor-general. Charles Morris III, for his part, was willing not only to regrant the land, but also to extend its quantity to five hundred acres. There is no record, however, of any

78 Registry of Deeds, Halifax County, Vol. 27, p. 223; Vol. 29, p. 173. Lunenburg County, Vol. 2, p. 441.

79 Probate Court, Lunenburg County, Vol. 1, p. 132.

80 Registry of Deeds, Lunenburg County, Vol. 4, p. 339; Vol. 5, p. 208.

81 R.G.20, Series A, Vol. 55 (1814), PANS.

subsequent grant being made to the widow or either of her sons. Maria Magdalena Hilshey died aged 87 and was buried from St. Stephen's Anglican Church in Chester on 6 October 1844. Her sons carried on the maritime tradition of the family -- coasting -- inaugurated by their father and uncle.

When his brother Jacob died, David Ulshe had not been living in Lunenburg for a decade. Five of the first six of his ten children had been baptized at the Dutch Reformed Church in Lunenburg; the seventh, John Valentine, born 3 March 1786, was baptized at St. Paul's in Halifax; the remaining three at the so-called "Old Dutch Church" there. It would appear that after the birth of their sixth child, and before the birth of their seventh, David and Sophia Ulshe left Lunenburg for the Halifax area. As to their reasons for doing so, reference can be made to Terrence M. Punch's history of the West family: "The coasting business and a wartime increase in naval activities ashore brought the second generation . . . to Halifax."[82] David Ulshe's relations with his West brothers- and sisters-in-law seem to have been quite good. Some of them, for example, were sponsors at the baptisms in Halifax of his younger children. It may be that their success in Halifax prompted him to follow them there. At Lunenburg, in any case, he had not done so well as his brother. He had no reason to stay there, moreover, if a better living could be made elsewhere. It is just possible that the David 'Halchaey" or "Hilchey" who was a fisherman at Prospect *circa* 1792, was our David.[83] A settlement at Prospect had been planned as early as 1754, and a fishing station came into existence shortly thereafter. Prospect would be an obvious landfall for a vessel navigating between Lunenburg and Halifax.

If David Ulshe had a final destination, however, it was neither Prospect nor Halifax. Perhaps for reasons which are best explained by Philip L. Hartling in his discussion of why some Lunenburgers migrated to the Eastern Shore -- "Vacant land would not be as obtainable as it had previously been in Lunenburg County, so that many had probably decided to come to the Eastern Shore, which was still relatively unsettled"[84] -- David Ulshe by the early 1790s, at the latest, had gone there too. He was undoubtedly living

82 See Note 72 above.

83 Cf. R.G.1, Vol. 444, doc. 47, 69, PANS.

84 *Where Broad Atlantic Surges Roll* (Antigonish, N.S., 1979), p. 15.

at Popes Harbour in August 1793, because his youngest son George was recorded on his death certificate as having been born there.[85] His eldest son David junior, moreover, on a deed of 1804, described himself as a farmer of Popes Harbour.[86]

The origins of Popes Harbour are shrouded in obscurity, but in October 1773, 2,000 acres in that area were granted to Lieutenant Samuel Harris, late of the Royal Marines.[87] Harris's grant was neither settled by its proprietor, nor is there any record of its having been escheated; the grant automatically became null and void ten years after, through non-payment of the quit rent. So in October 1783, a grant of 10,000 acres was made to the Hon. John Creighton of Lunenburg, which grant incorporated most if not all of what had originally been Harris's land.[88]

Both the brothers Jacob and David Ulshe once owned property in Creighton's Division of the town of Lunenburg. It is surely not coincidence that among the first permanent settlers of Popes Harbour were second-generation foreign Protestants from Lunenburg such as David Hilchie, Francis Glawson (both of whom were seafaring men and sons-in-law of John Wendel West), William Ger[h]ard and Abra[ha]m and John Bollong. Creighton, who can be described as the first citizen of Lunenburg, many very well have tried to fulfil the terms of his grant at Popes Harbour by encouraging such a migration. Land on the Eastern Shore was there for the taking, and plenty of it -- which could no longer be said of the South Shore. Mariners such as David Hilchie and Francis Glawson, moreover, could easily have made their way to the excellent harbours along the Eastern Shore.

The memory of the German-speaking settlers of Popes Harbour has been perpetuated in the name "Dutchtown Point," where at least one very old

85 R.G.32, Series WB, Vol. 38, p. 355, no. 27 (1872), PANS.

86 Registry of Deeds, Lunenburg County, Vol. 5, p. 483.

87 Nova Scotia, Land Grants, Old Book 10, fol. 231 (mf), PANS. The harbour proper was marked on British Admiralty charts at least as early as 1736 (V_3/1202-1736 [Adm. Lib. America, vol. 2, Map no. 8, Nova Scotia], PANS), and in June 1761 it was mapped and described by Lieutenant John Marr of the Royal Engineers (V_7/239-1761 [Popes Harbour], PANS). It would appear that settlement in this area began on the islands (Phoenix, Gerard, Long) soon after the American Revolution, and that the pioneer settlers moved onto the mainland as it became clear that the natives were not unfriendly.

88 Nova Scotia, Lands Grants, Old Book 14, fol. 13 (mf), PANS.

stone foundation of a house can still be seen.[89] Just beyond and to the left of the dirt road which leads from Number 7 Highway at Popes Harbour to Dutchtown Point is the pioneer cemetery. Though marked on the obsolete official map, the site is now entirely overgrown, so that not even the upright stones which once marked its boundary can be distinguished. Here no doubt lie the mortal remains of David Hilchie and Sophia West. The dates of their death, however, are not known.

As a founder both of Lunenburg and of Popes Harbour, David Hilchie was a pioneer twice over. He had perhaps suffered from the disability of being the younger of two sons, free likewise of the rights and of the responsibilities which devolved on the older, especially after their father's death. It was not David who looked after their widowed mother and sister; nor was it he who profited from the sale of their father's lots. As a seafaring man, of course, David had great mobility. Perhaps he desired to go farther afield because he could not obtain the land he wanted in Lunenburg County; perhaps John Creighton had then made him an offer which he could not refuse. Unlike his wife's brother-in-law, Francis Glawson, David Hilchie either did not live long enough or never became rich enough to be able to buy from the executors of Creighton's estate the land on which he was tenant. In 1821, however, the same acreage, Lot No. 10, was purchased from Glawson by David's two surviving sons, John and George.[90] It should not in any case surprise us if, later in his life and with a mostly young family of eight to provide for, David Hilchie decided to retire from the sea and become a farmer; so he was described on the death certificate of his son George, who had been born when his father was 57. The man who did not become a farmer at Lunenburg thus ended his days as one on the rugged, remote and isolated Eastern Shore.

89 Visitors to Popes Harbour in 1937 were shown a solid brass candlestick said to have been recently dug up on the site of the old Hilchie homestead at Dutchtown Point (Stella C. Mann to C. Bruce Fergusson, 18 May 1961, in R.G.53, Series C, Vol. 22, PANS).

90 Cf. Registry of Deeds, Halifax County, Vol. 39, p. 375; Vol. 47, p. 75.

"You come late Monsieur Le'Governor, Why you not come before?"

Mary Ellen Wright

Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres is one of the most colourful figures in our early history. He has been described as "pigheaded, irascible and litigious" by even a sympathetic biographer.[1] He was, in his day, soldier, surveyor, office-seeker and lieutenant-governor of two fledgling colonies under less than auspicious circumstances.[2] He was a great land speculator, a neglectful landlord[3], a colourful social figure and the father of two extensive and quarrelsome families.[4] His true personality is, however, revealed only by extrapolation from chance snippets of correspondence.

The following letter was written , probably in 1811, by Isabella DesBarres to her friend Julia Dolben. Isabella, one of DesBarres's daughters by his presumed wife, Martha Williams, was in her thirties when she accompanied her father on the journey described here. DesBarres, nearing the end of his term as lieutenant-governor of Prince Edward Island, was ninety when he decided to visit his lands in Nova Scotia, and Isabella reveals an understandable concern for his health and safety. He was obviously a spry old man to whom the rigours of the sea voyage and subsequent overland travel were not real hardship. We can also assume that he was stubborn -- the squalid accommmodations of the first night and the obvious discomfort of his daughter were no cause for hesitation, nor was the rough crossing of Northumberland Strait allowed to affect his travel plans.

The view we have of the countryside is Isabella's, not her father's. DesBarres, a surveyor by training, would probably have observed the geographical features of the country: Isabella, on the other hand, observes the human landscape. Describing her travels for a friend's eye, she uses the romantic phraseology commonly available to literate women of her class from the poetry and novels of the romantic period. Her descriptions are not overly critical, but we get a sense of what it was like for an English

1 G.N.D. Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate: The Several Public Careers of J.F.W. DesBarres* (Salem, Mass. and Toronto, 1969).

2 He was the first governor of Cape Breton (1784-1787) and followed an unpopular governor in Prince Edward Island (1805-1812).

3 For an examination of his relations with his mistress, see Lois Kernaghan, "A Man and His Mistress: J.F.W. DesBarres and Mary Cannon," in *Acadiensis*, XI(1), 23-42.

4 He had a number of children, both by Mary Cannon and by Martha Williams.

gentlewoman to encounter the realities of homesteading in the colonies, so different from the life she might have experienced in even a relatively civilized place like Charlottetown.

The original of this letter is held by Mrs. David Micklem, Great Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex, England. Mrs. Micklem is a direct descendant of J.F.W. DesBarres, and has kindly provided the transcript upon which the annotations are based.

> In a moment of dullness and dejection for the loss of my dearest brothers[5] my Father proposed to visit the distant parts of this little island[6], also that I should accompany him. On the 26th day of July we commenced our Pilgrimage, and enjoyed two days pleasant travelling; on the second arrived at Tryon Village[7], a little romantic spot tho' I could scarcely disern [*sic*] its beauties for sable night o'ertook us. Thus situated and being almost within sight of my Fathers Estates, it was hastily agreed we should cross from Cape Travers[8] to Cape Tormentine, a distance only of 9 miles. The villagers now contended who should have the honour of entertaining His Excellency and suite until the tide served; of course all submitted to Sq[r] Penman[9] having the most commodious apartments, consisting of three or four small rooms, -- at the door we were met by the host and half a dozen little wild children! After taking some refreshment and hearing the history of the whole family, their warlike achievements in ancient times, etc; we were conducted to our Chambers, and I was pursuaded to lie down, rather fatigued I acquiesed and threw myself on the bed, keeping on (like Knights of old) my boots and spurs! Scarcely five minutes had elapsed before I was nearly devoured. -- Spoke, but no one heard me, made a grand effort to be still, and jumped about again as if I was mad; Gulliver surely never was so tormented with Lilliputians. I attempted to make my escape and leave the field of action to the bold

5 Joseph Frederick and possibly Dolben W.H. had departed for military service. Joseph died in India in 1817 (Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate*, p. 95).

6 Prince Edward Island.

7 Near Summerside, P.E.I.

8 Cape Traverse is near Tryon Village.

9 In the 1798 census of P.E.I., David Penman lived on Lot 28 near Tryon with one male over 60, one female between 16 and 60, and two females under 16. See Duncan Campbell, *History of Prince Edward Island* (Charlottetown, 1875), pp. 214-215.

envaders,[10] but alas! I found myself a prisoner completely surrounded -- My Father on one side, Brothers James and Augustus[11], and several Gentlemen on the other, reposing on a shakedown (a Bed common in this country, a bundle of hay on the floor). I tried the window as my last resource, and after opening it with difficulty, I found t'was intended for ornament, not utility, as the Kitchen was behind filled with ploughmen, Children etc: some talking, -- others altho' under the power of Orpheus, were far from quiet. In this plight the time crept withal, as Shakespeare says, with your poor friend, until 2 O'clock A.M. when all hands were summoned to the Barge; happy release I exclaimed, while I hurried to my Father, whom I found not refreshed by rest -- (allow me to refer you to the Cottages of Glenburnie[12] for a description of a highland dwelling). -- Embarked, took leave of the Squire, his family, and away we sailed down the river[13] beautifully meandering, the sun just peeping -- sweet little songsters beginning to carral [*sic*] -- so delighted me that I n'ere thought of the wreched [*sic*] accommodations of the vessel, which as it bore us from those enchanting scenes began to pitch and toss; that dreadful sensation, seasickness approached and Orpheus appeared in sight -- A couch was prepared composed of saddle bags, portmanteaus, etc. and I weakly had an idea of being peaceable. Vain idea, for millions of my former plagues stung and frolicked o'er me & ere long monopolised all my patience. -- stood looking from side to side of the vessel, a total want of everything -- no female, my beloved Father ill, and I not able to assist him: He begged I would try my hard bed with the addition of a great coat, but too listless, I arose -- The wind blowing a gale against us -- at 6pm, great exertions were made to get into some Harbor and about 8 a house was desernable [*sic*] hailed, but no one answered -- tho' we distinctly heard dogs barking, yet the united voices of our crew reached not the shores or dwellings of these Savages. -- darkness & sleep now prevailed throughout the vesel. -- at 12 we were happily disturbed by the repeated cries of *You are all adrift* -- instantaniously all began questioning the man who recognized my Brother, and agreed to

10 Isabella was probably being attacked by fleas: the mattress was probably stuffed with straw.

11 James Lutterel and Augustus Wallet assisted their father in the management of his Nova Scotian properties.

12 There is a village called Glenberbie in Kirkudbrightshire, Scotland; otherwise the allusion is obscure, possibly from some literary work which both women had read.

13 The Tryon River, leading to the Northumberland Strait which separates Prince Edward Island from the mainland.

take him on shore to search for a covering till day break. -- I pleaded hard to go -- My Father also wished to be of the party, and the gentlemen who accompany'd us expressed no desire to remain behind -- Therefore all crowded into a small flat, half filled with water, which with some difficulty conveyed us on shore.[14] -- Walked a considerable distance through fields of grain, etc, rain pouring in torrents the whole time, at Length we reached a house, and entering perceived now & then by the glimmering blaze of fire, a miserable strong young woman lying on the ground with two dirty children. -- She looked up quite unconcerned, stretched herself, & again closed her eyes. -- The Boatman and our conductors were busyly [*sic*] employed in searching for chairs, making up the fire etc: here we were aroused from our astonishment by a hoarse voice calling aloud "Mrs. Williams[15] get up, Mistress here's a Lady very ill & several Gentlemen wanting *entertainment*", that word had the desired effect and brought the Landlady rubing [*sic*] her eyes and -------[16] . . by the bye is curious but too long -- enquiring for my father, I learnt he was lying down, which I knew not whether to rejoice or be sorry for: however I took a peep at this dear fatigued parent, and behind him in a sweet sleep. -- The children squalled and the people round the fire were loud in their jokes, yet he remained undisturbed. -- I seized this opportunity of being alone, and undressing for the first time since I left home, discovered millions of insects, ants, sun flies, etc etc: every part of me dreadfully stung. I scarcely knew how to proceed. -- Mrs. W came to see if I was asleep, when I made known to her my distress, she kindly got vinegar and water for me from which I soon experienced great relief, and with more composure listened to the conclusion of her history: however before she got to the principal part as she informed me, I heard my father enquiring for me, I therefore requested she would indulge me another time. -- I soon met him who just then occupied all my thoughts in conversation with an amazing large man with one eye, resembling Polyphemus the famed Cyclops,[17] be that as it may

14 From Isabella's subsequent description, the party seems to have landed at the mouth of River Philip (now a community called Port Philip).

15 A Samuel Williams, with his wife and fifteen children, was living in River Philip in 1809 (PANS RG20, Series A, 1809, petition of Samuel Williams). Williams, a Loyalist who had originally settled in Westchester, Cumberland County, found the land not to his liking and moved to River Philip in 1794.

16 The manuscript is interrupted here.

17 The man described here is probably Samuel Williams.

he kindly asked how I was after my nap -- apologised for not turning up sooner -- ignorant of a Governor being present; as he never disturbed himself for these kind of sports -- pointing round: and many other civilities. Our party being assembled, preparations were adjusted for embarking once more. -- Going down to the boat our attention was arrested by a wretched hovel on the beach, one of our Conductors observing it entreated we would honor him by looking at his work, being a professional man -- all consented and entered this abode of dire distress. -- Sq[r] Wilson[18] this great man pulled down a kind of shutter (or door without hinges, glass quite out of the question) and exhibited his work -- a *Tomb stone* on which he was engraving some lines to the memory of a Friend, every word ill spelt; indeed with difficulty he made it but himself -- however we could not but admire this pious man's generous intentions lamenting a lost friend gone two years since. This poor man's countenance brightened as we expressed our satisfaction, he closed the aperture up, and proceeded on with us -- Through rich fields of grain which literally I was forced to push through, so high and heavy with the still pouring rain. -- No sooner seated in the Boat and abade adieu to the wild inahabitants of River Philip, than inperseptably [*sic*] the lowering clouds vanished. -- The resplendid sun shone forth, and we glided down the most picturesque river I ever beheld. -- Not a ruffle on the water -- lofty Trees on each side -- the cool & bright shade of the marshes -- The frequent little projections and curves; a perfect scene of Arcadie (to which the pen or pencil of my Julia could do justice, however incapable her poor friend is to the task -- but to proceed) a few huts now and then peeping through the branches at a distance. -- Then back in thick woods. -- Time flew in this charming place, and with a degree of reluctance, we landed on a fine beach, and after walking about four miles through groves and parks by nature formed, we arrived at Squire Reeds,[19] who met and conducted us to his neat clean little Cot, shaking all by the hand, and my Father over and over again, while he tried to stiffle [*sic*] a laugh. Placed the chairs etc: his wife covered the table which we drew round, and sat down with good apetites [*sic*], I assure you

18 Possibly Richard Wilson, who lived in Amherst Township in the 1790s (PANS RG12, Poll Tax 1790-93), or John Wilson, Loyalist settler on the Cobequid Road, 1785 (Marion Gilroy, *Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia* [Halifax, 1937], p. 42). Neither has been identified as a regular carver of tombstones in the Cumberland area; see Deborah Trask, *Life How Short, Eternity How Long* (Halifax, 1978).

19 The identification is uncertain, but this is probably either Robert or Cornelius Read, sons of Stephen Read (1729-1801), said to have been a colonel in the British army; a resident of Sackville township as early as 1764; and the owner of extensive lands in the Nappan area. See article by E.E. Coates in *The Amherst Citizen*, 21 Feb. 1981 (PANS MG4, Vol. 234, No. 12).

to a humble fare, sweetened aparently [*sic*] by a hearty welcome. -- The Farmer still continued tittering. -- My Father enquired the cause of his mirth -- he answered "dear me, how droll to see Gov DB after 48 years absence,[20] why I was a little Boy on your Honors estates at that time, and now as happy as a King, if my Wife, myself and Boy can make you and yours comfortable". It really was the case, for we enjoyed their good Beds in sound repose, (a great luxury in this part of the world), arose the following morning quite refreshed, breakfasted, and took leave of these hospitable people who placed our horses, and followed us as far as they could with their blessings. -- The Roads and Country appearing to me so new, so large, so different to our little Isle, my surprise did not cease the whole 28 miles to Fort Amherst,[21] where My Father was at the taking upwards of 50 years ago, with General Amherst from whom it was named after -- here we were fortunate enough to meet with excellent accomodation, and rested the Sabbath day -- early on Monday morning renewed our travels towards Manudie, one of My Fathers estates, the roads good and pleasant till we came to the quick-sands which rather alarmed me, then the idea of going into a canoe -- Two mad looking Frenchmen helped us in and paddled across the river Styx. -- On landing, the shore was crowded with men, women & children -- some rejoicing -- others crying -- but all eagerly catching hold of my Father & called aloud, O' Why Monsieur Le'Governor, Why you not come before, etc. Walked round the village, visited some of the cottages which at one time had been neat, but time & disapointment had ruined much.[22] The little Church My Father built

20 DesBarres had last visited his holdings in Cumberland probably in the mid-1760s, during the time he was surveying for the series of hydrographic charts known as *The Atlantic Neptune*.

21 The road to Amherst from Truro and River Philip followed a straight line along the height of land from Londonderry to the river crossing near present-day Oxford, then proceeded in a more or less north-westerly direction from River Philip to Amherst. See A.J. Smith, "Transportation and Communication in Nova Scotia, 1749-1815," M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1944, chapter 4.

22 DesBarres's estates at Minudie had been settled in the 1760s by returned Acadians. DesBarres had provided these tenants with seed, livestock and the wherewithal to settle; see Evans, *Uncommon Obdurate*, p. 31. In exchange he was to get a percentage of all produce. The enterprise never prospered; by 1794 Charles Forest, DesBarres's local agent, described the crowded conditions of the houses:

> The premises of everyone seems to be a house from 18 to 25 feet long and as many in breadth, without a porch or partition.... They all sleep, eat, cook, smoke, wash, etc. in this house or room. I need not say it must look black and dirty enough, particularly as the houses are now old. (DesBarres Papers, cited in Régis Brun, "Un Registre de l'état civil des habitants de Francklin Manor des Champs-Elysées, de Maccan and de Nappan," in *Les Cahiers* de la Société Historique Acadienne, II (3), 90-136.)

By 1806, DesBarres's erstwhile mistress and estate manager, Mary Cannon, was imploring him to turn

-- orchards that he planted -- all dismantled, gone. -- Mounted our steeds and rode round the grand marsh, commonly called the Elysian Fields, about 4 miles square surrounded by an emense [*sic*] Dyke: in some spots the grass was so high & strong the horses with difficulty got on, added to the dreadful stings of Misquetos [*sic*] horse sun flies etc, etc. -- Keeping my eyes closed, save at intervals when the horse stumbled and beheld the poor Animals blood trickling down. -- Returned to the village about 6 o'clock, each family preparing and impatiently waiting -- not knowing which was to be the selected residence for the night: at last we made a full stop. -- The frantic people took hold of the horses, others their riders, as to poor me, being very small, was conveyed into the Cottage like an Infant, by these wild creatures almost mad with joy. -- The Evening was closed with the elders relating storys [*sic*] some 50 or 60 years ago. -- Early the next morning most of the settlement had assembled -- The old people were first admited [*sic*] -- Talked long, but the principle theme was, You come late Monsieur Le'Governor, Why you not come before?[23]

his personal attention to the condition of his estates at Minudie:

> It is with regret I see such a number of people made so very uneasy with [the] mode of treatment [displayed by DesBarres's new agent] and the familys [*sic*] destitute of their support through the means of his malice. . . . I have visited the tenants of Minudie. . . requesting them to keep content. . . [and] to wait your leisure of coming to Cumberland. (Cannon to DesBarres, 24 July 1806, cited in Kernaghan, "A Man and His Mistress," p. 37.)

It was no wonder that the fifteen families living in Minudie in 1811 asked DesBarres why he had not come before.

23 The transcript ends here.

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