

Louisbourg:

As at Ontario sites, it's a trip back in time when visiting the reconstructed French fort on Cape Breton Island

by Shirley Whittington
Down in Nova Scotia, they still talk about John Diefenbaker's wisdom in putting unemployed coal miners to work reconstructing Louisbourg, an 18th century French fort on Cape Breton Island. In 1961, the ex-coal miners were trained in stone cutting, masonry, wrought iron, carpentry and timber hewing. Now, 14 years later, the fortifications and village of Louisbourg loom through the Cape Breton fog, looking just as they did in 1748. The site is a 10 minute bus ride away from the present village of Louisbourg. There are no telephone poles or humming

superhighways nearby - only the sea and the rocks and the lonely marshland. A visit there is a trip back into time, and the first sight of the huge King's Bastion, with its dozen chimneys, its drawbridge and clock tower, and the Bourbon coat of arms hand cut in limestone over the front gate, is an unforgettable experience.

Walking through history

The entrance to the King's Bastion is across original cobblestones. One literally walks across history. The governor's quarters in the Bastion are furnished in period antiques, imported from France. Tables are set with linen,

crystal and silver. There are opulent drapes and bed coverings, chandeliers, gilt framed portraits and mirrors on the walls.

The soldiers' barracks within the fortress are crudely furnished with plank bunks, straw mattresses and grimy home made playing cards and chunks of tallow on the tables. The walls are scrawled with 18th century graffiti.

In the governor's kitchen, a couple of hams turn slowly on a clockwork spit before the fireplace. There are pots and drying vegetables hanging from the smoky beams, and knitted stockings hanging by the window to dry.

Outside, there's a fenced farmyard with a pig, a couple of horses, and a playful pair of kittens scuttling underfoot.

On the fortifications beyond, grubby looking soldiers, their uniforms patched and mis-buttoned, pace back and forth listening for the sound of the clock tower bell which signals the end of their watch.

Realism

The final touch of realism at Louisbourg is provided by people. There are women and children at Louisbourg, appropriately costumed, and going about their daily tasks.

The most important element in the original Louisbourg were the soldiers of the Compagnies Franches de la Marine. These men formed the garrison of the town, as well as providing the primary source of labour during primary construction.

Life was nasty and brutish for these men. Despised by their officers, bullied by NCOs, and feared by the townspeople, they slept and ate in crowded conditions pierced with unending cold and damp. They relied on gambling and drinking to relieve the harshness of their lives.

The young men who portray members of the Compagnies Franches undergo an intensive two week training course covering every aspect of Louisbourg's life. They sleep in the barracks, and stand lonely sentry duty at night.

They fully understand their roles, even to the taking of a "nom de guerre" - a nickname derived from one of the original garrisons. They absorb as much biographical information as they can from old records and in effect, become those ancient soldiers.

They are well informed guides, but guides with a difference. It's something of a shock to see them lounging about or casually chatting with their fellows while

on duty, but it heightens the sense of having stepped back into history.

Built in 1715

Louisbourg was built in 1715 to save France's dreams of Empire. She had lost her coastal colonies in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia through the Treaty of Utrecht and was left only with the islands of Cape Breton, Prince Edward and St. Pierre and Miquelon.

The fortified naval base perched on the rocky eastern reaches of Cape Breton Island was blessed with a perfect natural harbour, and Louisbourg defended France's fishing interests at the mouth of the St. Lawrence.

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The cost of building the fortifications and town on the swamp and rock was enormous, and Louis himself wondered, as he poured more and more money into his distant bastion, if the streets were paved with gold.

It was a good fortification, capable of holding 7,000 men in garrison and 23 ships at anchor, but the defenses were directed mainly to the sea. The relatively undefended swamp land behind the fort was its undoing.

Louisbourg survived two sieges and in 1760 the victorious British decided that should the French return again, no fort would await them. The summer of 1760 was spent in blowing up its defences.

The little settlement at Louisbourg gradually deteriorated and builders from as far away as Halifax and Boston used the dressed stone and brick for foundations. The causeway from the present village of Louisbourg to the site of the reconstruction was made from the rubble.

40-50 buildings

Final restoration will include 40 to 50 buildings, as well as the rebuilding of the massive defences. At the moment, the King's Bastion, and several homes, gar-



On patrol in '75

dens and workshops have been completed. The year 1980 has been set for the final completion of reconstruction. Now, or later, a trip to Louisbourg is a step back into the history of our country.

A word of caution - take a raincoat. Even though the rest of the island may be lying in brilliant sunshine, Louisbourg can be shrouded in fog and drizzle.

Visitors would also be wise to take a lunch. The IODE has erected a stone building commemorating the second fall of Louisbourg. The exterior is handsome. The interior is distressing - filled with vending machines and chrome and plastic chairs - a scene which rather destroys the atmosphere of ancient isolation.

Much better to take a lunch and eat it on a rock on the sea coast.



Moe Koffman, guest soloist at Blue Mountain Symphony Orchestra debut

Huronian Happenings

Dance at Coldwater

This Saturday at Coldwater, the Coldwater and District Minor Hockey Association is sponsoring a Summerfest dance at the community centre. Music will be provided by the Toppers.

Special at Wasaga

This weekend at Wasaga Beach, the Ministry of Culture and Recreation will hold a series of special events at Nancy Island to mark the sinking of the British supply ship Nancy during the War of 1812. They take place both Saturday and Sunday at the Museum of the Upper Lakes.

Barrie Fair

Following Collingwood's Summerfest this weekend, it's the annual Barrie Fair, which starts next Wednesday, August 20, and runs through to Sunday, August 24.

Festivities get under way at 10 a.m. Wednesday when the city's Huronia Striders track and field club hosts a track meet. The Rhythm Pals and Al Cherney of the Tommy Hunter show will be on hand, as will Carole Taylor, with other events including a fashion show and harness racing at the Barrie Raceway on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m. Conklin shows, as usual, will have midway rides for kids of all ages.

Sailing championships

The Ontario Soling sailing championships will be held in Collingwood this Saturday and Sunday. The provincial race is the result of a co-operative effort of Rothman's of Canada and the Collingwood Yacht Club.

Collingwood Summerfest

Wrestling will be one of the many activities featured in Collingwood's annual Summerfest celebrations. Summerfest '75, this Friday, Saturday and Sunday, in Collingwood, will also feature such events as frog jumping and log sawing contests, dances, a beer garden, softball tournament, plane rides plus much, much more.

The wrist wrestling championship, played to national rules, will be held Saturday in the beer garden. Organizers of Summerfest, the Collingwood Chamber of Commerce, hope the wrist wrestling championship in Collingwood will become a major event in the burgeoning sport.

Quote of the week

In England, we have come to rely upon a comfortable time-lag of fifty years or a century intervening between the perception that something ought to be done and a serious attempt to do it.

H.G. Wells, The Work, Health and Happiness of Mankind, Chapter 11.

TERRY PENN by John Beaulieu



The working office



by Ray Baker

The first thing that strikes an overseas tourist about 'The Falls' is that it is shared by Canada and the U.S. Having seen Niagara, starring Marilyn Munro, and a host of 'B' movies on the same subject over the years, they had the impression it was in the States. They now find it is shared. We had taken our visiting relatives to 'do' the Falls, a must for every tourist. We

Niagara Falls is living on past glories

were crossing the bridge to U.S. Customs and Immigration. They were clutching passports, visas, trying to glimpse the Falls through the mist - and sweltering.

High 90 degrees, high humidity, traffic line-up. "No, I've never been a member - no we are not going to overthrow the Government, we have only come for a few hours," and they were through immigration and into the park.

License plates ranged from California to Nova Scotia and wedding parties were predominant. Everybody had a camera stuck in his (or her) eye.

"It's not as big as I thought," said the brother-in-law, fingering a Niagara Falls beer mug made in Taiwan. So we got neerer and it looked bigger. We also got soaked, which also felt better.

Pausing only long enough to pick up a Niagara Falls ash tray made in Hong Kong we headed for the nearest supermarket. Twelve cans of Budweiser beer, at 90 plus, tasted like the nectar of the gods.

We stood in awe and watched a baptism ceremony in knee-deep rushing water just above the big drop. The participants were being dunked under with a safety belt

round their waist.

Back on the Canadian side, a pushing, swirling mass of people lined the railings on the brink of the Falls. Some of them, in order to have an impressive photo taken, would climb up the safety railings and stand on the wall. If a diving board were erected on the edge, a line-up would form on the right. We had lined up for the washroom and for the elevator down into the gorge—"On your left ladies and gentlemen the famous Horse Shoe Falls, empty ump million gallons an hour, think of all the whiskey to go with it. Ha... Ha..." We lined up to come back up, to go on the scenic ride, the caves behind the Falls, and the ice cream.

The whole area, of course, is geared to tourism, and in peak periods line-ups are inevitable.

I like the story of the woman tourist, so worn out with trudging 'round that she leaned against a lamp standard for a rest. Immediately a line-up formed behind her, a local enterprising coach operator sent round an empty bus, and they all finished up touring St. Catharines at \$5 a head. Although Niagara Falls boasts such

modern attractions as the Skylon Tower, Marineland and Game Farm and MacDonald's hamburgers, it has an underlying air of nostalgia, of living on past glories.

Nobody in his right mind has gone over the Falls in recent years, with or without barrels. The exhibits of barrels, balls and sundry daredevil equipment date back to prohibition, or before.

With today's technology, I'm sure somebody could go down the Falls, and back up again safely. But nobody has come forward. Dragstrips and honeymoons have carried the day.

The highlight of our trip, for me, was discovering some of the old photographs or 'artists' impressions' of yesteryears, before commercialization set in.

One painting showed two Indians standing at the base of the Falls looking up, and the Falls appear at least six times higher than today. It was titled The Noble Savage. Maybe the Falls have diminished since the turn of the century.

The next etching in brown and white depicted an Indian maiden kneeling in a canoe. She is way past the point of no return, paddling furiously towards the

edge. Her face has a look of celestial bliss as she approaches her doom. Title - Maid of the Mist.

The classic trick photograph I discovered hung on a wall in a passage inside a restaurant at the edge of the Falls. It deals with a former champion swimmer and athlete called Captain Webb who was drowned in the rapids below the Falls.

The 'photograph' depicts a gigantic whirlpool, surrounded by enormous waves, mist, and rain. At the centre is the swimmer, his body shown from the hips up, with each hair in place and his mustache carefully combed. He is waving at the camera with his left hand.

He is perfectly dry and a mona Lisa smile plays on his lips. It is entitled Cap't Webb's Last Salute.

And so we leave the land of the great waters as the sun slowly sinks in the west, and line up, hot, sticky, sweaty and tired, for the Queen E highway and the long trip back to reality - until next time.

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Inventors are the fathers of astonishment

wonderment. The electric hot dog cooker, for instance, seems de trop, since there is nothing particularly onerous about dropping a couple of raw weenies into a pot of hot water.

Disposable cigarette lighters, aerosol cans, instant tea and mini-gyms all seem to me to be pretty far down on the list of things the world could not get along without.

They were invented, I suspect, by a fellow who woke up one morning and said, "Today I will invent something that nobody needs, but that everybody will want; something that will wear out as soon as it becomes indispensable; something that is non-repairable and non re-fillable; something which I can make for very little and sell for a lot; something the Jones will buy as soon as it comes on the market, and which their neighbours will have to nip out smartly and get, lest they be considered square, under-achievers."

The inventor then wriggles into his lab coat and comes up with something like the

battery-operated swizzle-stick.

It may be cynical to suppose that such frivolous thoughts went through the head of the man who invented the chastity bauble - a readily broken capsule disguised as costume jewellery. When broken - in the heat of battle, as it were - the capsule opens and releases a cloud of noxious fumes which repels would-be rapists.

There is also, the inventor darkly hints, an element in the fumes which renders the attacker impotent for perhaps a dozen hours.

The inventor demonstrated his device on television recently using his curvaceous wife as a model. Dressed provocatively, she tucked this little ampule in her cleavage, and waited for the inevitable.

The crunch never came because after all, the marauding hands were her husband's, and he knew what was concealed in his wife's jewellery. Anyway, if the CBC cameramen had been rendered impotent even temporarily, by those

stinky fumes, NABET would have raised a worse stink.

The inventor felt sure that his chastity baubles would be available soon at neighbourhood drug stores, and he said he hoped they wouldn't cost more than five dollars.

He's on to a good thing. A ring or pendant full of masher repellent would be the perfect gift for the girl who has everything.

The smelly little gems would quickly become status symbols, and we all know who would be the first girl in our bridge club to get one. Or two. Or a colour coordinated set.

Girls on budgets will buy plastic ones in a simulated pearl or ivory. Suburban Matrons will go for dinner rings or artsy-craftsy amulets with the little stinkers embedded in hand-wrought silver settings. I foresee a mass produced cardigan, with identical buttons, one of which will be deadly, and hot blooded swains will be forced into a malodorous form of Russian roulette.

Like every great invention, this one has

bugs which need to be ironed out before it is mass produced - or so says the inventor. I'll bet there are more than a few bugs.

When, for instance, should one wear a chastity bauble? Would a guy be offended if you wore one on the first date? Or would he be offended if you didn't? And what if your room-mate gives you an affectionate hug before you go out the door?

What if they fall into the wrong hands? Will slap-happy high school students glue them on the seats of their teacher's chairs? Or attach them to the underseats of knackers in apartment hallways?

What if a capsule is squeezed into noxious activity in a crowded elevator? The men who survive would have a lot of explaining to do when they got home.

Will we have to take gas masks with us to the movies on Saturday nights?

Rape is a serious thing. But like every crime of violence, perhaps a couple of ounces of prevention is worth a gram of exploitation.

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