

In Pursuit of a Canadian Identity: The Creation of National Colonial Narratives Through  
National Historic Sites in Nova Scotia, Canada

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**Abstract:** Within Canada, a variety of national colonial narratives are present which represent it as a welcoming, multicultural, and just country. These narratives do not include the histories of a variety of minority or marginalized nations, notably those of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Canada's national colonial narratives have been constructed mainly through avenues such as National Historic Sites (NHS). This thesis argues that Canada's national colonial narratives are reliant on a version of Canadian history, which centres, sanitizes, and romanticizes the history of French and British colonisation in Canada while sidelining or ignoring Indigenous and other marginalized histories. Recognition of these realities would destabilize the legitimacy of the Canadian state and require the settler Canadian population to confront a variety of uncomfortable realities. This argument is forwarded through an analysis of two NHS in Nova Scotia, Canada, (the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS, and the Halifax Citadel NHS). The versions of history presented at these NHS create Canadian national colonial narratives and have real-world impacts, particularly on Indigenous peoples.

December, 2021.

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## Introduction

Beginning in the 1960s, the popular narrative surrounding what it meant to be Canadian began to include French Canadians and their stories, and Canada's national narratives, originally British and Imperial, broadened to include French colonial exploits and culture.<sup>1</sup> Further alterations to Canada's national narratives throughout the following decades reflected changes in international outlooks towards topics such as immigration and human rights while simultaneously distancing Canada from the violence of its colonial past.<sup>2</sup> Those changing attitudes are reflected in Canada's national narratives today, which generally present Canada and its citizens as embodying "the core ideas of bilingualism, multiculturalism, a strong central government, and a constitutionally entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms."<sup>3</sup> However, this thesis argues that since the 1960s the changes made to the overall narratives of what Canada *is* exactly have been only partially successful - particularly those changes which have attempted to distance the country from its colonial past. This thesis demonstrates, through an examination of the development of and programming at two Nova Scotian National Historic Sites (the Halifax Citadel and the Fortress of Louisbourg), that the Canadian government, through Parks Canada, has created

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<sup>1</sup> C. P. Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada: The Liberals and Canadian Nationalism, 1964-1968*. (Montreal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 22-3; Yves Yvon J. Pelletier, "The Politics of Selection: The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and the Imperial Commemoration of Canadian History, 1919-1950." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 17, no. 1 (2006), 126.

<sup>2</sup> Dianne Dodd, "Canadian Historic Sites and Plaques: Heroines, Trailblazers, the Famous Five," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship*, 6, no. 2, (Summer 2009), 29, 57; Laurence Cros, "Canada's Entry into the OAS: Change and Continuity in Canadian Identity." *International Journal (Toronto)* 67, no. 3 (2012): 725-6.

<sup>3</sup> Alain-G. Gagnon, Canadian Electronic Library, Geneviève Nootens, and André Lecours., *Contemporary Majority Nationalism*. DesLibris. Books Collection. (Montreal [Que.]: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 147; Dallas Jokic, "Cultivating the Soil of White Nationalism: Settler Violence and Whiteness as Territory." *Journal of Critical Race Inquiry* 7, no. 2 (2020), 2.

a series of national colonial narratives wherein, regardless of which dominant nation is the focus, Canada is presented as a country proud of its colonial history, but completely distanced from any of the “uncomfortable” elements of that history. Additionally, this thesis argues that such a collection of national colonial narratives has contributed to the continued mistreatment of Indigenous and other marginalized groups within Canada.



Figure 1. Map of Nova Scotia with the Halifax Citadel NHS and the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS noted.

Finally, this thesis problematizes the issue of Indigenous representation through existing avenues like National Historic Sites (NHS), and questions its viability, taking into consideration the arguments and knowledge of a number of Indigenous scholars.

For the purposes of this thesis, national colonial narratives are the narratives, both past and present, which attempt to define what Canada is, how it came to be, and to an

extent, what it means to be Canadian. Generally speaking, these narratives are popularized by the Canadian government, regardless of the elected political party, and Canada's settler population through avenues such as public education, museums, and NHS which are controlled by the government. There are, of course, many national narratives; Canada is a country made up of multiple ethnicities and although national colonial narratives generally centre on the British and French (and the narratives considered in this thesis tend to be more popular amongst Canada's anglophone population), they also regularly include the histories and stories of other groups who have made homes in Canada, particularly those of European descent. All Canadian governments must reinforce the types of national colonial narratives that suppress Indigenous histories and perspectives, as they are beholden to sustain the narratives which support the existence of the system which gives them their power, regardless of political party.<sup>4</sup> The narratives with which this thesis concerns itself are those which present Canada as a multicultural, welcoming, and diverse country, its people as polite and friendly,<sup>5</sup> and the story of its foundation as a series of grand clashes between the British and French. Additionally, these narratives are used today to support the Canadian government, making them doubly colonial. In these narratives, Indigenous peoples are framed as supporting or background characters if they are at all mentioned. At other points in time, they have been presented as problematic or as a population that requires control,

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<sup>4</sup> Megan Youdelis, Stephanie Barrientos, Gary Gereffi, and John Pickles, "'They Could Take You out for Coffee and Call It Consultation!': The Colonial Antipolitics of Indigenous Consultation in Jasper National Park." *Environment and Planning, A* 48, no. 7 (2016), 1375; Everton G. Ellis, "A Valorization of White Settler Nationalism? The Canadian Sesquicentennial Anniversary." *The Canadian Review of Sociology* 55, no. 1 (2018), 149-52. Lorenzo Veracini, "Settler Collective, Founding Violence and Disavowal: The Settler Colonial Situation." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2008), 371; Néstor Medina and Becca Whitla, "(An)Other Canada Is Possible: Rethinking Canada's Colonial Legacy." *Horizontes Decoloniales / Decolonial Horizons* 5 (2019), 31-34.

<sup>5</sup> Medina and Whitla, "(An)Other Canada Is Possible", 20; Robert M. Macgregor, "I Am Canadian: National Identity in Beer Commercials." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 37, no. 2 (2003), 277-78, 284; Sylvie Beaudreau, "The Changing Faces of Canada: Images of Canada in National Geographic." *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 4 (2002): 517-8, 523, 529, 531-2.

intervention, or elimination.<sup>6</sup> At no point do these national colonial narratives address the violence of the process of colonisation or the continuing non-physical colonial violence that impacts Indigenous people across Canada today. Despite claims to multiculturalism, and the acceptance of many minority European nations within the overall umbrella of what it means to be Canadian, at no point have Indigenous or other marginalized groups been recognized by the Canadian government in the same fashion.<sup>7</sup> Creating and continuing such narratives allows the Canadian government to ignore and leave unacknowledged the violent processes through which it came into being and the damage done to the Indigenous population that the colonisers attempted to supplant. This exclusion of Indigenous peoples' histories and perspectives by Canada's national colonial narratives is indicative of both Canada's colonial past and its settler colonial present.

At the root of this exclusion, as well as the other injustices faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada, is colonialism. In Canada, colonialism has taken two main forms, both of which are relevant to discussions of Canada's national colonial narratives. The process of conquest colonisation in Canada began during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, starting with "Acadie", although, as historians such as John Reid point out, contact had been established much earlier.<sup>8</sup> The French, and shortly afterwards the British, were initially concerned with taking control of supposedly unoccupied portions of the "New World" to take advantage of its bountiful natural resources and commence claiming

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<sup>6</sup> Dwayne Donald, "Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage: Imagining Decolonisation of Aboriginal-Canadian Relations in Educational Contexts." *First Nations Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2009), 3, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Medina and Whitla, "(An)Other Canada Is Possible", 20.

<sup>8</sup> Alan Gordon, *Time Travel: Tourism and the Rise of the Living History Museum in Mid-twentieth-century Canada*. (Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2016), 65-6; Keith Thor Carlson, and Colin Murray Osmond, "Clash at Clayoquot: Manifestations of Colonial and Indigenous Power in Pre-Settler Colonial Canada." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2017): 159-160.



the land for Christianity. This process, carried out through the establishment of small settlements, which would eventually develop into colonies through which resources could be extracted, was the baseline of colonialism in Canada, as it was in many other parts of the world. In Canada, there was one major flaw in what otherwise seemed like an all-around beneficial situation for the colonisers. Instead of an empty land, ripe for the picking, with only other Europeans for competition, the French and British quickly encountered the same Indigenous peoples that French fishermen had earlier in the sixteenth century. In many cases of early contact, pre-warned about the presence of Indigenous peoples by summertime fishermen, the explorers brought priests and other religious men with them, (along with diseases that Indigenous populations were unable to deal with) thus justifying the crown's support by turning their economic venture into a holy mission of conversion.<sup>9</sup> The Europeans were unwilling to allow an existing population to obstruct profit or the spread of Christianity. For some exploratory parties, the solution came in the form of trade and collaboration with the Indigenous groups, while for others violence was near immediate.<sup>10</sup> While establishing colonies and attempting to either displace or assimilate Indigenous groups, the French and British were regularly faced with resistance and often made use of physical violence to suppress any objections.<sup>11</sup> Beyond purposeful, physical violence, and the spread of new diseases which ravaged the Indigenous populations, the colonisers also brought with them concepts of governance and property that were entirely foreign to the Indigenous populations with whom they were interacting and which would

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 65-6.

<sup>10</sup> John Reid, *Nova Scotia: A Pocket History*. (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Pub., 2009), 16-19.

<sup>11</sup> J. J. Ghaddar, "Total Archives for Land, Law and Sovereignty in Settler Canada." *Archival Science* 21, no. 1 (2020), 59-60; Travis Wysote and Erin Morton, "'The Depth of the Plough': White Settler Tautologies and Pioneer Lies." *Settler Colonial Studies* 9, no. 4 (2019), 480, 489.

eventually result in the suppression of traditional Indigenous practices and ways of being, a kind of erasure that continues to this day.<sup>12</sup> Throughout these processes, the British and the French imposed their cultures, languages, and religions in a variety of ways, some of which were diplomatic, but many of which involved more colonial violence, in the form of coercion or outright violence.

Moving beyond conquest colonialism and to settler colonialism, the goals of the colonisers shifted. No longer was the colonisation of Canada solely about resources or religious conversion; the goal was now to gain possession of the territory as full as possible, particularly by removing and replacing the Indigenous population. According to Patrick Wolfe, “the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element.”<sup>13</sup> In the case of Canada, “elimination” has alternatively meant literal elimination, in the form of outright murder or, in the longer term, injustices such as chattel slavery and forced cultural assimilation.<sup>14</sup> More concentrated attempts at assimilation rather than total genocide are noticeable after Canadian Confederation in 1867. Now, in addition to physical violence, there was a centralized, settler government which quickly imposed a variety of laws and practices that directly and indirectly caused (and cause) great harm to Indigenous people, in a clear continuation of early indirect colonial violence through the

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<sup>12</sup> Anders Sandberg, Jesse Thistle, and Martha Stiegman, ““But where am I?” Reflections on digital activism promoting Indigenous People’s presence in a Canadian heritage village.” In *Methodological Challenges in Nature-culture and Environmental History Research*, edited by Stephanie Rutherford, Anders Sandberg, and Jocelyn Thorpe, 298-308. (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), 300; Ghaddar, “Total Archives”, 62, 65; Sean Carleton, ““I Don’t Need Any More Education”: Senator Lynn Beyak, Residential School Denialism, and Attacks on Truth and Reconciliation in Canada.” *Settler Colonial Studies*, (2021), 3.

<sup>13</sup> Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006), 388; Jokic, “Cultivating the Soil of White Nationalism”, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Wysote and Morton, ““The Depth of the Plough”, 481, 489.

imposition of European ways of governance and property ownership.<sup>15</sup> As Canada developed as a country, the Canadian government perpetuated the subjugation of Indigenous peoples through discriminatory practices ranging from the continued falsification of Treaties, to the establishment of reserves, to the construction and running of Indian Residential Schools, and more.<sup>16</sup>

Discussion of the decolonisation of various “formerly colonised nations”<sup>17</sup> around the world began in the post-war years, particularly in relation to Africa and Asia, and spurred theories about the nature of colonialism that were not fully realized for many years to come. According to Raymond F. Betts in his article “Decolonisation: A Brief History of the Word”, the earliest definition of decolonisation was primarily political and encapsulated the dissolution of empire and the formation of self-determining nation-states, but quickly came to encompass the economic, cultural, and psychological elements of the process. However, it was generally conceived as a one-time event, rather than a continuing process.<sup>18</sup> More recently, scholars have generally created two categories within colonialism. Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang have summarized this as follows: they define external colonialism, wherein colonisers implement economic or political control, generally via military power, as a process through which the coloniser extracts as many resources as possible for the metropole from which they came, which is located

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<sup>15</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, “Understanding Colonialism and Settler Colonialism as Distinct Formations.” *Interventions* 16, no. 5 (2014), 619, 623; Ghaddar, “Total Archives”, 59-60; Jokic, “Cultivating the Soil of White Nationalism”, 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> Carleton, ““I Don’t Need Any More Education””, 4-5; Ghaddar, “Total Archives”, 62, 77,

<sup>17</sup> As in nations which have been physically vacated by their colonisers, not nations where colonisation and its lasting impacts are no longer present.

<sup>18</sup> Raymond F Betts, “Decolonisation: A Brief History of the Word.” In *Beyond Empire and Nation: The Decolonisation of African and Asian Societies, 1930s-1970s*, edited by Bogaerts Else and Raben Remco, 23-38. Brill, (2012), 23.

externally.<sup>19</sup> Then there is “*internal colonialism*, the biopolitical and geopolitical management of people, land, flora and fauna within the “domestic” borders of the imperial nation”, which is generally implemented and maintained via institutionalized methods of control, such as “prisons, ghettos, minoritizing, schooling, [and] policing.”<sup>20</sup>

Today, colonial violence takes a variety of forms, ranging from the refusal of the government to provide Indigenous reservations with clean drinking water, to the refusal to acknowledge the Treaty Rights of Indigenous groups across Canada and other injustices ranging from discriminatory law and policy making to institutional racism and the erasure of Indigenous histories. This thesis is concerned with the erasure of Indigenous history and perspectives that continues to this day, often described as a cultural genocide, which is itself colonial violence, and which occurs in part as a result of the national colonial narratives built and presented through NHS across Canada.<sup>21</sup> Thus, though NHS overwhelmingly represent the colonial period of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries and the violence (both physical and otherwise) of that time, the narratives that they create about those centuries, which almost universally leave out Indigenous knowledge and experiences, play a role in the continuation of settler colonial violence today by supporting the existence of the settler state. NHS contribute to the loss of Indigenous methods and ways of knowing by centring settler history and knowledge, and they are instrumental in the maintenance of settler population that generally has little or no knowledge of the injustices that Canada’s

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<sup>19</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, “Introducing.” *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011), 1.

<sup>20</sup> Eve Tuck and K. Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor.” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, 1 (2012), 4-5.

<sup>21</sup> Murray Sinclair, Wilton Littlechild, and Marie Wilson, *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation*. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Principles\\_English\\_Web.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Principles_English_Web.pdf), 1.

Indigenous populations have been subjected to since the arrival of Europeans.<sup>22</sup> This creates a cycle in which the Canadian government continues to undermine and harm Indigenous peoples through discriminatory laws and practices without protest from a majority settler population.

Institutions like Canadian NHS are the ideal vehicles for both creating and disseminating the national colonial narratives which suit the Canadian government. NHS in Canada are widely frequented by both international visitors and Canadian citizens. Choices about which sites are of historical importance are made by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), an organization established in 1919 and “mandated through the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act*” to make “recommendations for persons, places, and events of national historic significance to the Minister responsible for Parks Canada.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, because the information that they present to the public comes from the federal government, it is legitimized and seen as the truth, regardless of the validity of that information. NHS are marked in a variety of ways, ranging from simple brass plaques to traditional museums with static exhibits, to fully restored or reconstructed sites with interpretive programming and interpreters dressed in historical costume. Despite the actual breadth and depth of Canada’s history, most of its official NHS mark events which took place after the arrival of the French and British in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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<sup>22</sup> Victoria Freeman, ““Toronto Has No History!” Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Historical Memory in Canada’s Largest City.” *Urban History Review* 38, no. 2 (2010), 21; Carleton, ““I Don’t Need Any More Education””, 1-4;

<sup>23</sup> Catherine McKenna, *Framework for History and Commemoration*. Parks Canada, (2019), 8.

These NHS vary in the exact details of their histories but are disproportionately trading posts, ports, and old fortifications, all places where Europeans carried out colonisation.<sup>24</sup>

The Parks Branch, the organisation responsible for the naming and operation of such sites in Canada, is now called Parks Canada. Established in 1911 as the Dominion Parks Branch of the Department of the Interior, its initial purpose was the creation of National Parks and the maintenance of those that already existed. Banff, founded prior to the Branch in 1885, was the Branch's first charge.<sup>25</sup> The Parks Branch began to establish its first national historic parks in the early twentieth century, with Fort Howe in New Brunswick in 1914 being the first. There were few other branches of the government where the creation of such sites could have been assigned, and, although originally parks and nature-focused, the Parks Branch was required to adapt.<sup>26</sup> C.J. Taylor's history of Parks Canada, which focuses on the development of historic sites, is among the first of its kind. In *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Parks and Sites*, Taylor lays out the creation of the HSMBC, a committee made up of historians, professionals and hobbyists alike. The goal of the HSMBC was (and is) to find and choose which places were/are of enough historical importance to receive governmental recognition.<sup>27</sup> This thesis argues, as Taylor does, that the HSMBC generally defined sites of national historic importance as

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<sup>24</sup> "Find a National Historic Site." Parks Canada. (Last modified August 29, 2017). <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/recherche-search>; Donald, "Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage", 2.

<sup>25</sup> For a greater understanding of the early Parks Branch, see: Claire Elizabeth Campbell and Canadian Electronic Library, *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011*. Canadian History and Environment Series; 1. (Calgary [Alta.]: University of Calgary Press, 2011); Courtney W. Mason, *Spirits of the Rockies: Reasserting an Indigenous Presence in Banff National Park* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 58; C. J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 34-35.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 34-35.

those which represent colonial conflict, specifically between the British and the French.<sup>28</sup> This thesis posits, however, that this continues to be the case today, over four decades later.

Shannon Ricketts' "Cultural Selection and National Identity: Establishing Historic Sites in a National Framework, 1920-1939" presents a history of NHS in Canada, beginning with the establishment of the HSMBC in 1919. Arguing that the interwar years were crucial in "defining both the federal commemorative program and the public's image of the Canadian past", Ricketts posits that that image was rooted in a "particular vision of Canadian history".<sup>29</sup> Ricketts echoes C.J. Taylor's earlier points on the topic and argues herself that said vision was heavily based on military history, colonial expansion, and colonial architecture. In keeping with other developments in the field of history, that approach was not questioned until the 1980s. Ricketts' argues that the HSMBC and Parks Canada's decisions during the 1920s and 1930s were largely between representing French or English history, with a focus on prominent men, first events, wars, and only some "Aboriginal sites."<sup>30</sup> Any focus at the time on Indigenous peoples was to paint them as counterpoints to the British majority. Ricketts argues that "generally speaking, developed historic sites represented the expansion of trade and settlement, and the histories other than the dominant British Canadians were relegated to supporting roles as examples of conflicts in which the British emerged victorious".<sup>31</sup> While in agreement with all of these statements, this thesis contends that they are also applicable to modern historic sites and the decisions

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 52-3.

<sup>29</sup> Shannon Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity: Establishing Historic Sites in a National Framework, 1920-1939." *The Public Historian* 18, no. 3 (1996), 23-25.

<sup>30</sup> Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity", 23-25, 37-38.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

that continue to be made by the HSMBC and Parks Canada today, as well as vital elements of the creation of Canada's national colonial narratives.

Writing on the history of Parks Canada and the HSMBC in the context of Canada's North, David Neufeld's chapter "Parks Canada and the Commemoration of the North: History and Heritage" covers much of the same information laid out by Taylor and Rickett's. Neufeld supports Taylor's assertions that the commemoration of history by the Canadian government has fulfilled a specific purpose in creating Canadian national historical narratives. Stating that "the government of Canada has used various commemoration programs to both develop and sustain a national identity and to foster regional cultural identities," Neufeld points to the beginning of this process aligning with the development of the first National Parks, followed by the creation of National Historic Sites, particularly as facilitated by the HSMBC after its establishment in 1919.<sup>32</sup> Neufeld argues throughout his chapter, in keeping with the arguments forwarded in this thesis, that "while not visible to the public, and often not even an explicit part of the national commemoration process, the overall direction and purpose of the national historic sites program have been shaped largely by distinctive voices proclaiming their heritage."<sup>33</sup> This thesis contends that those voices have been, by and large, French and English Canadian in nature. While Neufeld's work does demonstrate some steps which were taken towards representing northern Indigenous histories through the Parks Canada system during the 1980s, (moving beyond brief inclusions at existing NHS and National Parks as early as the 1950s of recognition to Indigenous individuals who had aided early European explorers),

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<sup>32</sup> David Neufeld, "Parks Canada and the Commemoration of the North: History and Heritage," in *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*. Edited by Kerry Abel and Ken S Coates. (Broadview Press Ltd. Peterborough, Ontario, 2001), 45.

<sup>33</sup> Neufeld, "History and Heritage", 46.



that work was initiated and continues to be carried out by Indigenous communities themselves, such as the Gwichya Gwich'in people and the Nagwichoonjik NHS, making use of the Parks Canada system.<sup>34</sup>

*A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011*, introduced and edited by Claire Elizabeth Campbell, covers the history of Parks Canada from a slightly different angle and is a compilation of pieces by several environmental historians. Where Taylor and Ricketts focused heavily on the development of Parks Canada concerning the designation of NHS and in conjunction with the HSMBC, Campbell emphasises National Parks in her introduction to the volume. She helpfully details the intricacies of Parks Canada's many departmental shifts and name changes throughout the twentieth century.<sup>35</sup> One of the most striking differences between Taylor's *Negotiating the Past* and Campbell's introduction to *A Century of Parks Canada* is Campbell's immediate reference to Indigenous peoples, not as foils for the history of colonisers but as impacted by the actions of Parks Canada and the creation of National Parks and Historic Sites.<sup>36</sup> This is perhaps the most obvious demonstration of the different periods in which the two pieces were written, with the twenty-odd years in between bringing about a greater awareness of Indigenous issues and the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples, as well as more concentrated efforts at representational history from historians. In *A Century of Parks Canada*, all of the included pieces discuss various elements of National Parks, ranging from the environmental implications of running National Parks to the historical expropriation of various Indigenous

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<sup>34</sup> Neufeld, "History and Heritage", 61-5.

<sup>35</sup> Campbell, *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011*. Canadian History and Environment Series; 1. (Calgary [Alta.]: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 2.

<sup>36</sup> Campbell, *A Century of Parks Canada*, 3-4.

peoples to create ‘pristine’ and ‘untouched’ natural vistas, presenting a more well-rounded examination of their respective topics.<sup>37</sup>

As a branch of the Canadian government, and as a committee attached to that branch, Parks Canada and the HSMBC have been tools in the creation of Canadian national colonial narratives that would have the world at large believe that Canadians are white, culturally British or French, friendly, polite, and absolutely welcoming of others.<sup>38</sup> As such, Parks Canada and the HSMBC have been used to advance Canada’s national colonial narratives in a variety of ways across the country. As Campbell states, “Parks Canada is a lens through which to understand the making of Canada.”<sup>39</sup> This thesis examines the role of Nova Scotian historic sites in the creation of national colonial narratives that support that desired image, in the theme of other works such as Alan Gordon’s *Time Travel: Tourism and the Rise of the Living History Museum in Mid-Twentieth-Century Canada* and Ian McKay and Robert Bates *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in the Twentieth Century*.<sup>40</sup> Both works emphasize the role of public history in the construction of NHS and national historical narratives.

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<sup>37</sup> Many more historians and scholars have written about the history of Parks Canada and the HSMBC, as well as National Parks. See: Ronald Rudin, *Kouchibouguac: Removal, Resistance, and Remembrance at a Canadian National Park*. (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2016); Mason, *Spirits of the Rockies*; Youdelis, Barrientos, Gereffi, and Pickles, ““They Could Take You out for Coffee and Call It Consultation.”; Theodore Binnema and Melanie Niemi, ““Let the Line Be Drawn Now’: Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park in Canada.” *Environmental History* 11, no. 4 (2006).

<sup>38</sup> Medina and Whitla, “(An)Other Canada Is Possible”, 20; Robert M. Macgregor, “I Am Canadian: National Identity in Beer Commercials.” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 37, no. 2 (2003), 277-78, 284; Sylvie Beaudreau, “The Changing Faces of Canada: Images of Canada in National Geographic.” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 4 (2002): 517-8, 523, 529, 531-2.

<sup>39</sup> Campbell, *A Century of Parks Canada*, 3.

<sup>40</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*; Ian McKay, Robin Bates, and Ebrary, Inc., *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public past in Twentieth-century Nova Scotia*. (Montréal; Ithaca [N.Y.]: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

*Time Travel* is an exceptionally thorough overview of the role of “living history” in presenting history to the public and of the role of the public’s perceived desires in influencing how that history is presented.<sup>41</sup> *In the Province of History* works to understand the development of Nova Scotia from a relatively disunified province into a province with a strong, constructed historical narrative, intended to inform a Nova Scotian identity.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, that Nova Scotian identity, while not completely in keeping with Canada’s main national colonial narratives, works quite well with the overall contents of said narratives. Beyond that, these sources demonstrate just how easily organisations like NHS can be utilised in identity constructing endeavours, particularly when they are presenting history. Both works argue very clearly that tourism, and the perceived desires of tourists, play a large role in the way that NHS are developed, especially those with living history programs, an argument which is supported in this thesis.<sup>43</sup> In a similar vein, McKay’s own article “Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1945” is fundamental to understanding the connected development of tourism and provincial identity in Nova Scotia during the twentieth century, particularly as discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.<sup>44</sup>

Other historians have written copiously on the practices of presenting history to the non-expert public. Lyle Dick’s “Public History in Canada: An Introduction” is, indeed, a helpful introduction to the concept of Public History in Canada. In this introduction to *The*

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<sup>41</sup> “Living history” is a method of interpretation in which interpreters are dressed in historical garb and perform historic tasks, sometimes in character. For more information, see works such as: Gordon, *Time Travel*; Jay Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History* (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1984).

<sup>42</sup> McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*, 15, 19.

<sup>43</sup> McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*, 15, 19; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 5-6, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Ian McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954.” *Acadiensis (Fredericton)* 21, no. 2 (1992): 5-47.

*Public Historian*, Dick discusses the growth of the field of public history as well as the growth in the number of professional historians in Canada. This includes those studying and interpreting history for the public through museums, archives, and historic sites, as well as those working in the government and elsewhere. This growth is reflected in discussion of the development of NHS in later chapters of this thesis and the general progression of the historical methods and choices of the Parks Branch and the HSMBC from the 1960s to the present. This period of growth in abilities and skills, as well as in the number of NHS that the government were able and willing to designate and operate at the time had a great deal to do with a perceived need to reinforce Canada's national colonial narratives: "the federal purse strings were loosened in a few instances, with expenditures largely targeted to investments considered to promote nationalistic or 'pan-Canadian concerns,'" including NHS.<sup>45</sup>

In Canada, much of the discussion today necessarily focuses on how the construction of Canadian national colonial narratives has been especially detrimental to Indigenous groups. This thesis agrees with the theories presented by Néstor Médina and Becca Whitla in their work "(An)Other Canada Is Possible: Rethinking Canada's Colonial Legacy". Whitla and Médina argue that in Canada "whiteness remains the ubiquitous feature, framework, and point of reference—though it is absent from the official rhetoric—and is "synthesized into a national we," which decides "on the terms of multiculturalism and the degree to which multicultural others should be tolerated or accommodated."<sup>46</sup> This thesis agrees with Whitla and Médina's statement that "the ugly colonial history of Canada

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<sup>45</sup> Lyle Dick, "Public History in Canada: An Introduction." *The Public Historian* 31, no. 1 (2009), 9-10.

<sup>46</sup> Medina and Whitla, "(An)Other Canada Is Possible", 24.

is intricately woven with (cultural and ethno-racial) whiteness as the preferred (predominant) Eurocentric norm for all its inhabitants. Set in place are social structures and a historical imaginary designed to continually reinforce Canada's colonial identity." This thesis argues that Whitla and Médina's "historical imaginary" is akin to the national colonial narratives discussed throughout this thesis and is in large part created and presented through NHS in Canada.<sup>47</sup> In looking at the role of NHS in the establishment of this narrative/imaginary, this thesis puts forward that the ultimate result of the national colonial narratives created by NHS is the reinforcement of Canada's colonial history as much less violent and much more of a "logical" progression of events than it would otherwise appear. Rather than shying away from its colonial history, Canada attempts to change how that history is understood through selective representation and sanitization.

That kind of control of historical narrative, through the erasure or alteration of stories from marginalized groups, is by no means new. In Canada's national colonial narratives, when elements of Indigenous history are occasionally included, they are presented from the perspective of the colonisers. Rosalind Hampton and Ashley DeMartini's article "We Cannot Call Back Colonial Stories: Storytelling and Critical Land Literacy", postulates that:

While storytelling is a widespread practice across cultures, there is a long-standing Western tradition of creating and telling stories about other peoples' histories, societies, and cultural practices. This tradition is an essential part of imperialism, which has enabled Western Europeans to impose their stories as universal truths, while misrepresenting non-Western narratives as the fantasies, superstitions, and lies of naïve, unsophisticated, and uncivilized less-than-humans (Delgado, 1989; Kabbani, 1986; Ladson-

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 28.

Billings, 2003). However, rather than “truth,” Western European stories—like all stories—represent historically and culturally specific ideas, desires, and socio-political and economic interests.<sup>48</sup>

This thesis argues that the above is an accurate assessment of the national colonial narratives present in Canada and that NHS are vessels through which those narratives are disseminated to the population at large. Not only is such a misrepresentation of history detrimental to the legitimacy of history as a whole, but it also creates a dominant population that, in general, lacks an awareness of the realities of the past and which is unprepared to deal with their ramifications in the present and future. On why this kind of narrative pruning, or complete replacement, is especially dangerous and harmful to Canada’s Indigenous population, Dwayne Donald’s “Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage: Imagining Decolonisation of Aboriginal-Canadian Relations in Educational Contexts” is useful. Donald argues “that the historical prominence of the fort, and the colonial frontier logics that it teaches, traces a social and spatial geography that perpetuates the belief that Aboriginal peoples and Canadians inhabit separate realities.”<sup>49</sup> The creation of a narrative or national identity in which settlers and Indigenous peoples are so separated, for Donald, does nothing but create space for the continued perception of Indigenous peoples as less than, as “uncivilized”.<sup>50</sup> With such a perspective remaining dominant, the chance of achieving any real level of decolonisation or accuracy in Canada’s national colonial narratives, if at all possible, becomes even slimmer and the settler Canadian population remains largely uninformed in a way that keeps Canada’s democratic system from

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<sup>48</sup> Rosalind Hampton and Ashley DeMartini, “We Cannot Call Back Colonial Stories: Storytelling and Critical Land Literacy.” *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne De L’éducation* 40, no. 3 (2017), 250.

<sup>49</sup> Donald, “Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage”, 4-5.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 5-6.

effectively making the changes that would improve Indigenous quality of life and recognize their suffering and mistreatment as a result of historic colonisation and modern settler colonialism.

In this thesis, two case studies are used to demonstrate the role of Canadian NHS in the continuation of Canadian national colonial narratives: the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS and the Halifax Citadel NHS. Both sites date from the period of early colonisation in Canada, with the first iterations of each site being constructed in the early and mid-eighteenth century respectively.<sup>51</sup> Their histories as strongholds for the French and the British, through which those European powers exerted their will and worked to control the region called Mi'kma'ki/Acadie/Nova Scotia, demonstrate precisely the history that is emphasized in Canada's national colonial narratives which lessen or avoid altogether the genocidal elements of that history and thus legitimize the Canadian government. Additionally, their current status as highly visited, very popular NHS makes them ideal tools for conveying history to the public. Modern interpretation at both sites has carefully emphasised the European struggle for dominance that played out in Mi'kma'ki/Acadie/Nova Scotia while minimizing or omitting discussion of the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous groups who were present between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries.<sup>52</sup> Today some changes have been made and are being made to the sites' interpretive programs with the goal of including those histories, as well as the histories of other marginalized groups. Changes made since 2019 have been made in keeping with the

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<sup>51</sup> T.D. MacLean, *Louisbourg Heritage: From Ruins to Reconstruction*. Sydney, N.S.: Cape Breton University Press, (1995), 13-15; John Joseph Greenough, "The Halifax Citadel, 1825-60: a Narrative and Structural History, Parts 1 and 2." Parks Canada Research Report Manuscript Series no. 154, (1974), 104, 129.

<sup>52</sup> McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*", 22-24; Reid, *Nova Scotia: A Pocket History*, 15, 21.

goals laid out in the Parks Canada *Framework for History and Commemoration* from 2019, which in turn was a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's "Calls to Action" from 2015, particularly call to action 79.<sup>53</sup> The overall narrative presented by both sites remains in keeping with Canadian national colonial narratives. Those changes are examined in more detail in the following chapters.

The Fortress of Louisbourg, as the third historic site to be acquired by Parks Canada and the HSMBC, has been the subject of a great deal of research.<sup>54</sup> For details on the foundation of Louisbourg, the development of Louisbourg society, and the sieges of Louisbourg, there is no shortage of research. Of particular use to this thesis were the many works included in *Aspects of Louisbourg; Essays on the History of an Eighteenth-century French Community in North America*, John Stewart McLennan's *Louisbourg, From Its Foundation to Its Fall, 1713-1758*, Raymond Baker's "A Campaign of Amateurs", and several works from Kenneth Donovan, particularly those concerned with the history of slavery on Île Royale and in Louisbourg.<sup>55</sup> One of the difficulties of working with NHS, and therefore Parks Canada, is that much of the existing research done on the history of the sites under the organisation's control has been done either directly by Parks Canada's in house historians, or by researchers who have been hired by Parks Canada. In no way does this thesis question the professionalism or skill of Parks Canada historians; indeed, in many cases, particularly at sites like Louisbourg, their rigorous research has been the driving

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<sup>53</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action," *TRC*, (2015); McKenna, *Framework for History and Commemoration*.

<sup>54</sup> Third after Fort Howe, which is no longer an NHS, and Fort Anne.

<sup>55</sup> E. Krause, C. Corbin, and W. O'Shea, *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays on the History of an Eighteenth-Century French Community in North America*. Sydney, N.S.: University College of Cape Breton Press, (2004); John S. McLennan, *Louisbourg: From its Foundation to its Fall, 1713-1758*. Halifax: The Book Room, (1979); R Baker, "A Campaign of Amateurs: The Siege of Louisbourg, 1745." *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History* 18 (1987); K. Donovan, "Slaves in Île Royale, 1713-1758," *French Colonial History* (2004).



force behind changes in the interpretation of history at the sites. Simultaneously, this thesis is aware that it is necessary to draw source material from a variety of places, something which is more difficult with sites like the Halifax Citadel, where almost all information has been compiled by Parks Canada and remains unpublished. Louisbourg has been both the topic of more independent research and more thorough and published research from Parks Canada historians than the Halifax Citadel and the work done by scholars such as McLennan, Lane-Jonah, and Donovan (amongst others who were employed directly by Parks Canada at various points) has been vital in providing new and important information to the field of history at large and in spurring forward the development of the Louisbourg's interpretive programming.<sup>56</sup> In addition to the work of these historians, much of the history of Louisbourg's development into an NHS that is covered in the first chapter of this thesis is drawn from primary source material. This includes communications between the site's superintendent, the site's management plans, and other bureaucratic documents.<sup>57</sup> There are also discussions of Louisbourg NHS included in many works on the topic of public history, especially living history, across Canada and North America. Alan Gordon's *Time Travel*, mentioned earlier, provides insight into not only the development of the site but also the climate of history and public history in Canada throughout the twentieth century, which has helped to situate the process of developing Louisbourg into an NHS within a broader context.<sup>58</sup> McKay and Bates' *In the Province of History* also contains a wealth of information on not only the period in which Louisbourg was developed but also the role of

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<sup>56</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 54-58.

<sup>57</sup> In the interest of space, see bibliography for full list.

<sup>58</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*.

sites like Louisbourg in the construction of a provincial identity, which is then easily applicable to NHS and Canadian identity more broadly.<sup>59</sup>

Building off of the early history of the sites' development, it is demonstrated in the first chapter that the commemoration of such sites was and is a part of the greater process of attempting to create overarching national colonial narratives through controlled narratives about dominant, settler history. The management of the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS has made efforts to move away from presenting the military elements of its site and towards a more social history since the 1970s and 1980s. Recent changes to programming at Louisbourg include the addition of a Mi'kmaw interpretive centre in 2017. Whether or not the centre was established due to the calls to action of the TRC, published in 2015, is unclear and is discussed further in Chapter One, as is the ability of the changes that have been made to effectively counteract the national colonial narratives. More recent changes to programming at Louisbourg include the addition of a Mi'kmaw interpretive centre in 2017. Erna Macleod's "Decolonizing Interpretation at the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS" acts as an excellent source of information about the efforts that the NHS has made in recent decades towards more representative interpretation. This thesis agrees with her assertion that "as a national monument, Louisbourg represented the civil identity imposed on Canadians by those in power"<sup>60</sup> although this thesis argues that this representation continues today, despite the site management's best efforts. This thesis agrees that "over the years, changes in Louisbourg's focus of interpretation reflect changing values and conceptions of history, but there are questions about the ability of a colonial fortress to

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<sup>59</sup> McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*.

<sup>60</sup> Erna Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation at the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site." In *Canadian Cultural Poesis: Essays on Canadian Culture* Cultural Studies Series, edited by Petty, Sheila, Garry Herald Sherbert, and Annie Gérin. (Waterloo, Ont: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 362, 369.

effectively present a decolonised, multicultural, historical narrative,” which is discussed in-depth in the third chapter.<sup>61</sup>

The process of turning the Halifax Citadel into an NHS is just as, if not more, indicative of the priorities of the Canadian government vis a vis Canada’s historical and national colonial narratives as that at Louisbourg. The second chapter attempts to demonstrate that the process of choosing the Halifax Citadel as an NHS was explicitly a part of an effort at creating specific national colonial narratives in the mid-twentieth century, in this case narratives emphasizing the British. Furthermore, the process of developing the Halifax Citadel’s living history interpretive program is an excellent example of the role of tourism as both a motivation for decision making and as a limitation on the scope of the content.<sup>62</sup> The need to appeal to the broadest possible audience and the desire to create an idealized, sanitized version of history centring the dominant cultural group are represented by the choices made during the site’s development. The site was designated only after the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences (the Massey Commission) “flagged the site as a priority” thanks to its role in Canada’s military history, both during the British colonial period and the First and Second World Wars.<sup>63</sup>

The majority of research done specifically on the Halifax Citadel has come from Parks Canada’s historians or work directly commissioned by Parks Canada, much more so

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<sup>61</sup> Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 362, 369.

<sup>62</sup> Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Science (Massey Commission), “Report.” Ottawa: Government of Canada, (1951), 350.

<sup>63</sup> For more insight on the role of the Massey Commission in the creation of the Halifax Citadel NHS see: Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Science (Massey Commission), “Report.” Ottawa: Government of Canada, (1951); Amanda McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress: The Development of the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site.” Master’s Thesis, Saint Mary’s University, (2018).

with the Citadel than with Louisbourg. External, independent works that make mention of the Citadel tend to be about Halifax generally and feature the Citadel only as an element of the town's history. There are a great many internal Parks Canada research documents compiled by Parks Canada historians which extensively and thoroughly detail the Citadel's history and which were extremely useful throughout the development of this thesis. While well-researched and often exhaustive, these documents remain largely unpublished, meaning that the use of other, varied source material was vital. Having said that, these documents were invaluable and in addition to their utility as secondary sources, they have informed this thesis' timeline of the Citadel's development as an NHS, alongside primary source material such as management plans.<sup>64</sup> John Joseph Greenough's early "Narrative and Structural History" (1974), in various parts, is a helpful review of the history of the Citadel itself and offers very thorough explanations of the structural elements that made up the four iterations of the fortifications.<sup>65</sup> Cameron Pulsifer also compiled several documents on very specific sections of the fortifications, including the specifics of building hardware in "Hinges of Empire: Building Hardware at the Halifax Citadel".<sup>66</sup> Of more use to this thesis are his reports on "British Regiments in Halifax, 1856-1878" and later "The 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders in Halifax" and "The 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders Volume II: The Officers".<sup>67</sup> His histories of the regiments stationed at the Citadel during the nineteenth century provide

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<sup>64</sup> Canada, "Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan Summary." Ottawa: Department of the Environment, 1981.

<sup>65</sup> Greenough, "A Narrative and Structural History".

<sup>66</sup> Cameron W. Pulsifer, "Hinges of Empire: Building Hardware at the Halifax Citadel – A Preliminary Study." Parks Canada Research Report Manuscript, Series no. 380, (1980).

<sup>67</sup> Cameron W. Pulsifer, "British Regiments in Halifax 1856-1878." Unpublished Report, (1980); Cameron W. Pulsifer, "The Southwest Front: Halifax Citadel, a Structural and Narrative History." Parks Canada Research Report Manuscript Series no. 263, (1978); Cameron W. Pulsifer, "The 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders in Halifax." Halifax Defence Complex, Research Division, Unpublished, (1983); Cameron W. Pulsifer, "The 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, Volume II: The Officers." Halifax Defence Complex, Research Division, Unpublished, (1985).

insight on not only the Citadel's history but the processes through which Parks Canada determined which part of history would be interpreted at the site.<sup>68</sup> Changes at the Citadel have been much less noticeable than those at Louisbourg, as indeed, none have been made public at the time of the writing of this thesis. The second chapter takes into account the potential impacts of the 2015 TRC report, the Calls to Action, and Parks Canada's 2019 *Framework* on Indigenous representation at the site while maintaining the argument that at NHS like Louisbourg and the Citadel, it is unclear if truly representative history is viable.

Outside of Nova Scotia and these two specific NHS, the literature is more varied. Katherine McKenna, in "Women's History, Gender Politics and the Interpretation of Canadian Historic Sites", examines the processes through which scholarly research is brought into practice at Canadian NHS, as well as how some Ontario sites responded to calls for equal hiring and better representation during the 1990s. The comparisons between Fort Henry (in Kingston, Ontario) and the Halifax Citadel, particularly regarding the hiring of women and members of marginalized communities, are striking and help to support this thesis' arguments in a larger Canadian context.<sup>69</sup> This thesis also agrees with McKenna's assertion that achievability of historical accuracy through the exclusion of specific groups from certain roles at historic sites, (such as excluding women from roles as soldiers without female-specific alternative roles), is questionable to begin with:

Many of their wives were young, however, since it was common practice for the teenaged daughters of soldiers to be provided for by marrying them off to their father's comrades. This makes the few female university students dressed as women the most historically authentic figures on site. In fact, if total authenticity is desired, then

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<sup>68</sup> McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant"; McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*.

<sup>69</sup> Katherine McKenna, "Women's History, Gender Politics and the Interpretation of Canadian Historic Sites: Some Examples from Ontario." *Atlantis* 30:1 (2005): 22, 24-5.

a faithful re-creation of the true living conditions at Fort Henry in 1867 would probably provoke strong censure from the local Health Unit and Fire Department, so appalling was the hygiene and overcrowded conditions. Historical accuracy, like all sound principles, can be taken to absurd logical conclusions.<sup>70</sup>

McKenna also makes statements about the acceptability of women representing men, in this case, male soldiers, at NHS. McKenna argues that it is lazy to “commit historical anachronisms like dressing women up as men”,<sup>71</sup> instead of creating more roles in which modern women could have represented historical women. This thesis contends that interpretive roles at NHS, and other historic sites, wherein living history is the method of presentation, already require a certain amount of suspension of disbelief. Historical interpreters, already dressed in costume, are playing a role, in keeping with the goals of entertainment that are made necessary by tourism and a requirement to attract visitors.<sup>72</sup> If women are available and want to fill the positions, there is little reason to refuse them, and none at all if the law is taken into account.

Finally, the third chapter elaborates on the role of NHS and national colonial narratives in Indigenous erasure and examines how the issues with NHS and attempts at creating representative, decolonised historical interpretation established in the first two chapters can be addressed, particularly in the context of Indigenous histories. Looking at who can or should be tasked with or allowed to interpret and present Indigenous histories, the third chapter presents a variety of Indigenous viewpoints on both historical interpretation and the processes of decolonisation, making use of research from scholars such as Mercedes Peters, Dwayne Donald, Lance M Foster, and Glen S. Coulthard and

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<sup>70</sup> McKenna, “Women’s History, Gender Politics and the Interpretation of Canadian Historic Sites”, 6-7.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 5; Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 365.

interrogates the role of the TRC and Park's response (in the form of the 2019 *Framework*) going forward.<sup>73</sup> Problematizing the ability of Parks Canada to represent Indigenous nations or other marginalized groups as a branch of the federal, settler government, the third chapter posits that it is irresponsible for federally mandated historic sites, as creators of the nation's national colonial narratives, to present only a colonial history as "Canadian".

This thesis contends that the overpopulation of forts, ports, trading posts, and other military sites in the total count of Canada's NHS, as exemplified by Nova Scotia, is indicative of the Canadian government's efforts at creating identity through carefully curated national colonial narratives. It additionally problematizes the feasibility of representative historical narrative at federal historic sites in a postcolonial or settler colonial nation-state such as Canada, wherein those sites were tools of colonisation and challenges the ability of Parks Canada to implement historical interpretation at existing NHS in the military/colonial categories that fully presents all facets of that colonial history, particularly from Indigenous perspectives. Where they fail to do so, NHS present glorified, nostalgic, and sanitized versions of Canada's history that create an overall Canadian historical narrative wherein the violence of colonisation is minimized, and the interplay of colonial powers is centred.<sup>74</sup> NHS that operate as "living history" museums are particularly complicit in the romanticization of the process of colonisation and Canada's history, as they present simplified, often sanitized versions of specific periods and places that fit well

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<sup>73</sup> Mercedes Peters, "The Future Is Mi'kmaq: Exploring the Merits of Nation-Based Histories as the Future of Indigenous History in Canada." *Acadiensis* 48, no. 2 (2019): 206-16; Donald, "Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage."; Lance M Foster, "Archaeological Outreach and Indigenous Communities." In *Past Meets Present: Archaeologists Partnering with Museum Curators, Teachers and Community Groups*, edited by John H. Jameson and Sherene Baugher, 107-12. (New York: Springer, 2007); Glen S Coulthard, "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada." *Contemporary Political Theory* 6, no. 4 (2007): 437-60.

<sup>74</sup> Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 52-3; Veracini, "Settler Collective, Founding Violence and Disavowal", 371; Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 365-6.

with the overall historical narrative.<sup>75</sup> In successfully creating national colonial narratives like those discussed herein, Canada has avoided having to reckon with realities that would destabilize not only those colonial narratives but the state itself.

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<sup>75</sup> Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 364.



## Chapter One

### Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site

Louisbourg began its life in 1713 as one of several candidates for the new French base of operations in what is now the Canadian Maritimes. Although it was initially overlooked and operated primarily as a fishing village until 1720, Louisbourg became France's main military base in the North Atlantic, renowned for its fortifications. Louisbourg was designated as an NHS in 1920 and has been operated as such since. The site's interpretive program is well developed, and it has not suffered from a lack of invested historians and archaeologists since its designation. Louisbourg's living history program and partially reconstructed town are extensive, and Louisbourg's team have made strides towards representing diverse histories that are reflected in their modern interpretive resources and programming.

Simultaneously, the history presented by the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS is a colonial, heavily military-based narrative in keeping with the overall theme of NHS in Nova Scotia and Canada. Louisbourg's historical narrative contributes to Canada's national colonial narratives which, in turn, centre colonial history and minimize or ignore other histories and experiences, particularly those of Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups.<sup>1</sup> The site itself is inherently colonial, having been the seat of French military and governmental power during the eighteenth century, as is the historical narrative of the site as presented by interpretation at the NHS. Intended to represent a realistic version of life in the small, rudimentary garrison town during the summer of 1744 just before the first of two

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<sup>1</sup> Medina and Whitla. "(An)Other Canada Is Possible", 20, 23-4.

major attacks from British forces, the picture presented at Louisbourg is ultimately one of idealised, sanitized nostalgia, which slots perfectly into Canada's national colonial narratives.<sup>2</sup> Over the past several decades, the site has worked to develop programming more representative of the site's historic reality, to varying degrees of success. Thus, while Louisbourg remains a monument of Canada's violent colonial past, it can also act as an example of how similar sites might be used in ways that can challenge the status quo of historical representation at Canadian NHS, which, in turn, could lead to changes in Canada's national colonial narratives.

To understand just how Louisbourg fits into Canada's national colonial narratives, it is first necessary to look at how it became an NHS. Although recent management at the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS has tried to move the focus of interpretation towards the social history of the site, the initial designation of Louisbourg as an NHS was made primarily thanks to its military history and importance in colonial conflicts, specifically between the French and the British. In the early eighteenth century, signing the Treaty of Utrecht lost the French their colony of Placentia, located in modern Newfoundland. The same treaty allowed them to relocate their remaining settlers to what is now Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and what was then called Île Royale. The island was particularly attractive to the French because it provided the opportunity to continue to defend their existing fisheries in the area and because of its strategic position as the "key to a continent".<sup>3</sup> In 1717, the French turned

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<sup>2</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 362; R. J. Morgan, *Rise Again!: The Story of Cape Breton Island*. Nova Scotia]: Breton Books, (2008), 36.

<sup>3</sup> Parks Canada, "Interpretive Prospectus, Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park, Sept. 1971", Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National and Historic Parks Branch, (1971), iv; MacLean, *Louisbourg Heritage*, 13-15; Bona Arsenault and Conseil De La Vie Française En Amérique, *Louisbourg, 1713-1758*. Québec: Conseil De La Vie Française En Amérique, (1971), 10-11, 16, 21, 26; Morgan, *Rise Again!*, 32-3; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 53.

their attention to Louisbourg, naming it their official seat of power in 1720. This movement of power resulted in the almost immediate reorganization of the somewhat haphazard town into something that the French command felt would better facilitate the needs of their military, although they left plenty of room for fisheries.<sup>4</sup>



*Figure 2. Water level, distanced view of the reconstructed Fortress of Louisbourg NHS.*

As the years passed the French government invested significant funds into the construction and maintenance of the town garrison's defences. The need to protect this last foothold in what they called "Acadie" was clear to the French, who knew that if they were to lose it, they would lose their main point of access to North America and thereafter their

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<sup>4</sup> Krause, et al, *Aspects of Louisbourg*, 3-5, 6-9.; MacLean. *Louisbourg Heritage*, 13-15; Morgan, *Rise Again*, 33-4.

presence there altogether.<sup>5</sup> The Treaty of Utrecht held until the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession in Europe, as a part of which King George's War in 1744 saw the French and the British rekindle their animosity. In Acadie, the French were the first to strike. After attacks on Canso and Annapolis Royal, fearing similar hostilities towards their homes, New Englanders were intent on retaliation and, in theory, prevention of further attacks. They began a weeks-long siege on the fortified town of Louisbourg that would succeed in late June of 1745.<sup>6</sup> In 1748, control of Île Royale, including Louisbourg, was returned to the French. Over the next decade, the town largely returned to its prior operation. With very few improvements to Louisbourg's defences, the next attack from the British was fatal and the French surrendered Louisbourg for the last time on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1758.<sup>7</sup>

These sweeping battles for control of Louisbourg and the continent were exactly the kind of history that the Canadian government was interested in preserving and commemorating in the early twentieth century. As Louisbourg was being developed as an NHS in the 1920s, steps were being taken to create bodies that could deal with suggestions and demands for the commemoration of historically significant locations, resulting in the establishment of the HSMBC as discussed in the introduction.<sup>8</sup> In the 1920s, the HSMBC included two representatives from the Maritime provinces for whom the acquisition of

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<sup>5</sup> Baker, "A Campaign of Amateurs", 7; Arsenault, *Louisbourg, 1713-1758*, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Conrad, *At the Ocean's Edge: A History of Nova Scotia to Confederation*. Studies in Atlantic Canada History. Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, (2020), 116-120; Baker, *A Campaign of Amateurs*, 7-13, 16-27, 35-36.

<sup>7</sup> McLennan, *Louisbourg: From its Foundation to its Fall*, 129, 236-38, 242-43, 284-85; Krause et al. *Aspects of Louisbourg*, 3, 11-12; A.J.B. Johnston, "Preserving History: The Commemoration of 18th Century Louisbourg, 1895-1940." *Acadiensis* 12, no. 2 (1983), 54; A. J. B. Johnston, *Endgame 1758 : The Promise, the Glory, and the Despair of Louisbourg's Last Decade*. France Overseas. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 268-9.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 32, 34-35.

Louisbourg and its designation as an NHS was a top priority and they were able to successfully convey just how well Louisbourg fit into Canada's existing and developing national colonial narratives. The process of acquiring the site, divided by the twentieth century into more than twenty separate plots, began in earnest in 1920.<sup>9</sup>

The first murmurs of interest in Louisbourg's history had already been made in the late nineteenth century, but not by the Canadian government. Despite a general ambivalence felt by many Canadians towards their collective history at the time,<sup>10</sup> the commemoration, or at least remembering, of Louisbourg did spark the interest of a portion of the public, particularly in Cape Breton. This interest was felt by both French and English Canadians during the mid to late nineteenth century and the small number of tourists that came across the abandoned and ruined site of what was once a pivotal town returned with romantic tales of the sorrow and beauty of the site. For a time, these romantic feelings towards the ruins resulted in no concentrated movements or pressure to do anything about it; to restore or even preserve what was there would have taken away from the glamour and mystery of it all, very much in keeping with European sentiments of the period.<sup>11</sup> Until the twentieth century, Canadians left the site well-enough alone, despite the interest that it evoked in some.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 42-43, 56.

<sup>10</sup> Johnston, "Preserving History", 53; Stephen Hornsby, and Graeme Wynn, "Walking Through the Past", *Acadiensis*, 10, no.2, (1981), 152-159.

<sup>11</sup> Johnston, "Preserving History", 54-55; Hornsby and Wynn, "Walking Through the Past"

See also: Carolyn Korsmeyer, "The Triumph of Time: Romanticism Redux." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 72, no. 4 (2014): 429-35; Jonathan Sachs, "The Poetics of Decline in British Romanticism". *Cambridge Studies in Romanticism*; No 118. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, (2018); Anne F. Janowitz, "England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape." Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, (1990).

Odd though it may at first seem, the first physical effort to commemorate Louisbourg came not from Canadians, but Americans. In 1895, New England members of an American organisation, The Society of Colonial Wars, made plans to create a monument to remember their ancestors' attack on the site in 1745, marking the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This caused an outcry amongst eastern Canadians, particularly French-Canadians who felt that this kind of commemoration would be highly inappropriate. Despite the protests from Euro-Canadians, (no mention is made of how the Mi'kmaw community in the area may have felt) whose interest in the active commemoration of the site was now riled in a seemingly direct rush of anti-American sentiment, the erection of a monument continued unabated. The Canadian government could not be made to care about the American organisation's plans, particularly as the monument would be erected on what was at the time private property, despite petitions from citizens and representatives alike.<sup>12</sup> After the erection of this monument, but before the Canadian government began its active involvement in the site, Captain Kennelly, a former member of the Royal Indian Navy and an investor in the industrial development of Cape Breton, bought several of the plots of land that the former site of Louisbourg had become. When his plans of turning Louisbourg into a booming port town to rival New York were thwarted, he turned to a campaign to restore and commemorate the ruins of the old town. By most accounts, despite his passion for the site, and support from other historical enthusiasts in the province, Kennelly appears to have done more harm than good in his amateur attempts at restoration, even posthumously.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Johnston, "Preserving History", 56-58; Gordon. *Time Travel*, 54-55; Maclean, *Louisbourg Heritage*, 16-17.

<sup>13</sup> Johnston, "Preserving History", 60-63; Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 65-67; Gordon. *Time Travel*, 55-56, 58.

By the 1920s, Kennelly's purchase of a number of the plots of land where the ruins of Louisbourg lay proved a major complication for the Parks Branch and the HSMBC. Kennelly had left his share of Louisbourg land to three local men whom he named trustees in an attempt at making the commemoration of the site easier after his death. Instead, this made the process of collecting and combining the land significantly harder than it otherwise would have been. The government's initial acquisitions of parts of the site in 1920 only marked the beginning of a process that would be several decades-long. Finally, by 1928, the Parks Branch had acquired all of the plots of land that made up historic Louisbourg.<sup>14</sup> This process was aided by the Great Depression of the 1920s, as the government saw the growing interest and the existing structures of the Parks Branch and the HSMBC as opportunities for job creation at Louisbourg, amongst other NHS.<sup>15</sup>

It is at this point that it is possible to return to Louisbourg's historical interpretation and its role in the development of Canadian national colonial narratives. Two approaches to the commemoration and preservation of the site were presented to the Parks Branch and the HSMBC around this time. One of the plans consisted mainly of changes in landscaping, intended to make the ruins as visually impactful as possible. This approach would have been a continuation of the late nineteenth-century perception of the site as tragically beautiful and romantic, a spectre of days past, and would have been in keeping with ways of viewing ruins during this period, especially in Europe.<sup>16</sup> The second option proposed more in-depth preservation or restoration of the ruins that would educate the public about

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<sup>14</sup> Johnston, "Preserving History", 71-72; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 61.

<sup>15</sup> Johnston, "Preserving History", 72; Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 105,107; Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity", 28.

<sup>16</sup> See: Johnston, "Preserving History."; Hornsby and Wynn, "Walking Through the Past."; Korsmeyer, "The Triumph of Time: Romanticism Redux."; Sachs, "The Poetics of Decline in British Romanticism."; Janowitz, "England's Ruins."

the “nature, extent and lay of the original town”, which would be possible thanks to the existence of many well-preserved documents, including those of the original town planner that showed exactly how the buildings had been laid out.<sup>17</sup> Despite budgetary constraints, which were not insignificant even during the government’s efforts at economic stimulation, the Parks Branch dedicated itself to the more reconstructive approach.<sup>18</sup> Although it would take longer, the Branch determined that a slower and pricier, but more detailed restoration and development of the site could be both more satisfying and bring in greater numbers of visitors with a greater impact. The majority of the commemorative efforts made at the site between 1895 and 1940 were removed during the early days of the site’s development, most of which had either been poor attempts at restoration, thanks primarily to Captain Kennelly, or direct references to the military history of the site, with particular emphasis on the French/English conflicts of the eighteenth century, something that the government especially wanted to avoid to prevent enflaming cultural conflict between the modern groups, despite those historic conflicts being the main reasons for the site’s designation.

By 1940, the site of historic Louisbourg was labelled a National Historic Park and was named the Fortress of Louisbourg National Park.<sup>19</sup> This name emphasized the military history of the site and drew particular attention to the French versus British nature of conflicts at the site.<sup>20</sup> At the time, this fit very well with the intended messaging of the site as a part of Canada’s national colonial narratives and with the trend in the field of history towards military and great-power focused research.<sup>21</sup> The intended impression of the

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<sup>17</sup> Johnston, “Preserving History”, 64-65, 72; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 165-66.

<sup>18</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 96, 162-3; Johnston, “Preserving History”, 77.

<sup>19</sup> Johnston, “Preserving History”, 77; Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 187-8.

<sup>20</sup> Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 187-8.

<sup>21</sup> Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-century History and Theory*. (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 253, 277, 297.



conflict between the French and British during the eighteenth century led very easily to emphasizing the remaining influence of their culture on the area and to discussions of the merits of the great nations which had built a new nation. That could then, without difficulty, be related to the Canadian government's aims for national colonial narratives.

Interpretive plans created during the late 1960s and 1970s and written by John Lunn, then superintendent of the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS, can provide insight not only into the process of creating the NHS but also into demands from the Canadian government which required the site's interpretation to be in keeping with overall national colonial narratives. Lunn had previously been a part of the curatorial staff at the Royal Ontario Museum before accepting the position of superintendent at Louisbourg in the 1960s.<sup>22</sup> The documents written by Lunn and his co-workers demonstrate their passion for the project. Passion not only for the history of Louisbourg, or for the idea of attracting visitors, although those were both important elements, but also for creating a top-quality, accurate, authentic, informative, and enjoyable historic site. One where a visitor could arrive knowing nothing and leave having spent the day immersed in 'real' eighteenth-century Louisbourg, where they had learned about the history of the place and its people, and about the site's relevance not only to Canada but to themselves and the world around them.<sup>23</sup> While a lofty goal, the available documents do demonstrate legitimate and convincing plans for how it was to be achieved. Whether or not that was successful is another question. The difficulty with goals of accuracy and authenticity in this context lies in the attainability of those concepts, not in any personal qualities of those attempting to create them. Can historic sites, national or

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<sup>22</sup> John H Jameson and Sherene Baugher, *Past Meets Present Archaeologists Partnering with Museum Curators, Teachers and Community Groups*. (New York: Springer, 2007), 21; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 179.

<sup>23</sup> Parks Canada, "Interpretive Prospectus", 9-10; Johnston, "Preserving History", 78-9.

otherwise, truly achieve accuracy in their interpretation when “official versions of history, which begin as cultural and contextual interpretations of events, morph into hegemonic expressions of existing value structures and worldviews of dominant groups in a society” when they are pulled in different directions by government committees, the public, tourism, and money?<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, Lunn and his colleagues were intent on trying. “Interpretation - A Preliminary Report on Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park” is a collection of several documents and contains letters between John Lunn, Park Superintendent during the 1960s and 1970s, and Mr. A.D. Perry, the Project Manager for the restoration of Louisbourg and its development into a National Historic Site. The series of letters is comprised of reports on the site and Lunn’s ideas about how the interpretation of the site should proceed.<sup>25</sup> In 1963, when these letters were written, the development of the site had already been laid out in general terms with the decision to create an in-depth interpretation plan rather than preserve the ruins.<sup>26</sup> These letters fleshed out the details of what that interpretive program would consist of, particularly in the short term. Lunn argued for a program of interpretation that was all-encompassing, consisting of both the form of interpretation used at National Parks which was “primarily confined to self-guiding tours, guided tours, signs and certain publications”, and the National Historic Sites’ version of interpretation which had “a more Museum oriented connotation.”<sup>27</sup> Despite Lunn’s ultimate goal of accuracy and authenticity, he was aware of the need to create programming for the interim. The

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<sup>24</sup> Donald, “Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage”, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Parks Canada, “Interpretation – a Preliminary Report on Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park.” Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National and Historic Parks Branch, (N.d.), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Johnston, “Preserving History”, 72; Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 187-188.

<sup>27</sup> Parks Canada, “Interpretation – a Preliminary Report”, 1.

government had requirements for not only content but time. The need for the site to be at least partially developed as soon as possible created unique considerations for Lunn and his colleagues; running an NHS while it is still under construction is one thing, but running an NHS while the main body of research on its history is ongoing and unlikely to be complete anytime soon is a wholly different beast.<sup>28</sup> While they knew quite well the general history of the site, such as its role in the colonial conflicts that “built” the nation as per the popular national colonial narratives, the specifics had not yet been uncovered. As Lunn stated in a preface to an Interpretive Report written in 1967, “The public have been permitted, all along, to see the Project in evolution.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, the majority of Lunn’s 1963 Preliminary Report was concerned with the short term, particularly with determining how the site should, and could, be operated cost-effectively while providing visitors with something to do and learn other than watching teams of archaeologists excavating areas around the site, although that was also very much a part of what was available to visitors, as it is today.

At this time, Lunn proposed that the programming at Louisbourg the following summer, in 1964, should consist of a museum or visitor reception centre, the completed construction of the Four Belvederes (viewing points), the development of material to be displayed within these belvederes, improvements to the signage around the site, improvements to the existing museum where possible, and the creation of a pamphlet to give to visitors upon arrival.<sup>30</sup> As with any project attached to bureaucracy, things took

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<sup>28</sup> Parks Canada, “Interpretation – a Preliminary Report”, 2-5; Jameson and Baugher, *Past Meets Present*, 22; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 179-81.

<sup>29</sup> John Lunn, “Louisbourg After 1966, A Personal View.” Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National and Historic Parks Branch, (1966), 1.

<sup>30</sup> Parks Canada, “Interpretation – a Preliminary Report”, 2-5; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 180-81.

time, often more time than necessary. Still, in comparison to the long-term intentions for programming at Louisbourg, these projects were, indeed, minimal. The overall goal at this point was to complete a noticeable amount of work on the site by 1967, in time for the hundredth anniversary of Canadian confederation, and to provide employment for “redundant Cape Breton coal miners”.<sup>31</sup> As an NHS, Louisbourg’s success depended on the support of the public and the government in many ways.<sup>32</sup> At the base of it all, it would not exist without the government. If the government did not like the history that was being presented by the NHS, no support or funding would be granted for continued research or operation, and the site risked being closed to the public entirely. The public too held influence over the continued existence of the site; without public interest in the history being presented by the site, there would be no visitation, and little reason from a profit standpoint, to continue to operate the site.

Lunn expressed feeling pressure to have something to show for, at this point, decades of research and work, stating in his letters that he wanted to have a “substantial showing” of their progress by 1967, in the form of at least a fully reconstructed King’s Bastion, Chateau St. Louis, and several houses,<sup>33</sup> although he did not believe that even that would truly be impressive enough. As mentioned earlier, Louisbourg was operational, to some extent, throughout its development.<sup>34</sup> Through these 1963 reports and others over the following decade, Lunn was a vocal advocate for the development of an extensive

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<sup>31</sup> Maclean, *Louisbourg Heritage*, 56-57; Parks Canada, “Interpretation – a Preliminary Report”, 9; Hornsby and Wynn, “Walking Through the Past”, 153.

<sup>32</sup> Parks Canada, “Interpretation – a Preliminary Report”, 1-2, 9; Maclean, *Louisbourg Heritage*, 56-57; Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 361.

<sup>33</sup> Parks Canada, “Interpretation – a Preliminary Report”, 9.

<sup>34</sup> Maclean, *Louisbourg Heritage*, 56-57; Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 361.

interpretive program, which he fully believed would be the main attraction and purpose of the site, and which he went on to develop.<sup>35</sup>

In his introductory letter to the same 1967 Interpretive Report mentioned above, Lunn wrote passionately about the project that he had been at the helm of for so many years. He hoped that the government and population of Canada would have the “intestinal fortitude to see the development through to its logical, and undoubtedly triumphant, conclusion”, despite the financial and practical difficulties that the project had faced since its conception. While individuals cannot always be pointed to as actively playing a role in the development of national colonial narratives, Lunn was well aware of the potential held by his NHS. He particularly emphasizes the “great and immediate need facing our country” for “national unity”. Louisbourg, he felt, could be uniquely qualified to carry out that ‘unification’ of Canada’s people that was so needed: “at this point in Canada’s development her history and traditions must be sold to her people if she is to continue as a viable nation” (emphasis original).<sup>36</sup> Because Louisbourg was the first federal attempt at creating a site on this scale that could achieve this goal, in Lunn’s opinion, it was especially vital that it be a successful venture. Thus, the site had not yet begun its active promotion of a historical narrative, in keeping with national colonial narratives or otherwise, at this point. Even still, the choice of site, based on what was known of its history, played well with the national colonial narratives in place at the time.<sup>37</sup>

A document written by Lunn in 1968, *Interpretation at the Fortress of Louisbourg*, helps to outline how this was to be carried out over the following years. In the brief

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<sup>35</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 179-80; MacLean, *Louisbourg Heritage*, 62-3, 105-14.

<sup>36</sup> Lunn, “Louisbourg After 1966: A Personal View”, 2.

<sup>37</sup> Parks Canada, “Interpretation – a Preliminary Report”, 9; Jameson and Baugher, *Past Meets Present*, 22.

introduction to this document, Lunn quotes a Cabinet Minute from 1961: “The Fortress of Louisbourg is to be restored partially so that future generations can thereby see and understand the role of the Fortress as a Hinge of History. The restoration is to be carried out so that the lessons of history can be animated.” Those lessons were to be codified as “Fortress Louisbourg. Key to a Continent. Twice besieged and captured. Built to defend an empire. Restored to inspire a nation” and would demonstrate to the public that, “Louisbourg stands as a proud symbol, not only of the two great cultures whose interplay made our nation possible but of the traditions that both have bequeathed to us. Without these disparate traditions and the dialogue stimulated by them, Canada would have few claims to nationhood.”<sup>38</sup> These statements are clear examples of the role of NHS in the creation of national colonial narratives that the development of the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS provides. None of these main goals for the “theme” of the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS took into consideration the existence of the Indigenous peoples of Canada or even acknowledge the realities of the relationship between the French and English in Canada, let alone at Louisbourg. No mention is made of the Mi’kmaq, nor of their allies the Maliseet and Abenaki,<sup>39</sup> only of the “two great cultures” whose “interplay” (read conflict) created Canada. This hedging language can be explained by acknowledging the government’s need to tread lightly on potentially explosive inter-cultural relations and a desire to downplay the military elements of the site’s history, as explored earlier in this chapter, but also by the neglect shown towards Indigenous history altogether within the field of history. Additionally, to acknowledge other perspectives and experiences from those accepted by

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<sup>38</sup> John Lunn, “Interpretive Plan, A Pattern for the ‘70s.” Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National and Historic Parks Branch, (Feb. 1970), 8.

<sup>39</sup> McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*, 22-24.

the dominant narrative would endanger the national colonial narratives in which Canada was and always had been a welcoming, multicultural country.<sup>40</sup>

As it had been during the 1920s, much of the Canadian government's attention was focused on nation-building. Only recently having become a state of its own, there was little to unite the disparate populations of the new country. Difficulties were especially prominent in creating a balance between the two "founding" cultures, French and English Canadians, within the narrative of the nation.<sup>41</sup> Seemingly counterintuitively, the focus became the conflict between those two groups, but with the important caveat that the conflict was over and done with, and without a winner. While neither of the colonial powers was assigned a victory or defeat, despite the evident success of the British, Indigenous groups were present in that narrative only as foils to the activities of the main players.<sup>42</sup> As expressed by the HSMBC in 1925, it was "desirable that the fortifications of Quebec and other military posts should be preserved owing to their historic interest and the fact that they are an attraction to travellers and the general public and that their preservation is a stimulus to the growth of a healthy national and patriotic sentiment in our land."<sup>43</sup> According to the approaches to history of the period (the general trend in the field of history

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<sup>40</sup> See: Kristi A. Allain, "'A Good Canadian Boy': Crisis Masculinity, Canadian National Identity, and Nostalgic Longings in Don Cherry's Coach's Corner." *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 52, no. 1 (2015): 107-32; Sylvie Beaudreau, "The Changing Faces of Canada: Images of Canada in National Geographic." *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 4 (2002): 517-46; Laurence Cros, "Canada's Entry into the OAS: Change and Continuity in Canadian Identity." *International Journal (Toronto)* 67, no. 3 (2012): 736.

<sup>41</sup> Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity", 37; Bryan S. R. Grimwood, Meghan L Muldoon, and Zachary M Stevens, "Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Cultures, and the Promotional Landscape of Tourism in Ontario, Canada's 'near North'." *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 14, no. 3 (2019), 241-42.

<sup>42</sup> Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity", 37; Grimwood, et al, "Promotional Landscape of Tourism in Ontario", 234-35.

<sup>43</sup> Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 63-64; Claire Elizabeth Campbell and ProQuest, *Nature, Place, and Story: Rethinking Historic Sites in Canada*. McGill-Queen's Rural, Wildland, and Resource Studies; 8. (Montreal [Quebec]; Kingston; London; Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 4.

was towards dry colonial history and a focus on the actions of ‘Great Men’ and battles) there was little room for any complicating factors, such as Indigenous populations with their own agency, and a focus on the powerplays and military success of European powers was how history was understood.<sup>44</sup>

Even while NHS like Louisbourg were readying to present these histories, the field of academic history was rapidly changing and other historical approaches were being developed, such as a Marxist, or social, approach to the study of history, wherein scholars looked to the lives of the ordinary person and then up to overarching societal structures gained popularity throughout the mid and late twentieth century. Ethnographic histories and anthropology followed shortly thereafter, and, eventually, post-colonial approaches gained popularity, followed by theories and categorizations of colonialism, including settler-colonialism.<sup>45</sup> Yet, in many ways, interpretation at historic sites like Louisbourg stopped progressing with the adoption of social history methods, which are even then applied only sparingly. In the 1970s and 1980s, the opinions of the site’s management changed, as the field of history changed. The official interpretive program at Louisbourg today does make efforts at minimizing the site’s military identity and began to do so at this time. This shift in approach came as historians were making moves towards doing history more broadly, breaking away from the traditional, top-down, great person (man), focused approach. Instead, historians began to carry out their work from new perspectives, making use of social, feminist, and early post/anti-colonial methods. In doing so, historians were not only changing their methodology but changing the focus and topics of history that were

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<sup>44</sup> Green and Troup, *The Houses of History*, 277-84.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 33-41, 172-79.



of importance. At Louisbourg, this resulted in changes to the goal of interpretation. This looked like, and still looks like today, a new focus on the daily lives of the inhabitants of Louisbourg and greater efforts to demonstrate the details of everyday life, while attempting to move away from the focus on the French military, which had begun to be seen by some as problematic in terms of historical appeal. Much of this work was done by Parks Canada historians like A.J.B. Johnston and Kenneth Donovan, who both wrote and published very detailed overviews of different aspects of life, religion, and social class at Louisbourg in the 1980s.<sup>46</sup> Having said that, the achievability of presenting a purely social, non-problematic, history at Louisbourg was always questionable at best. There is the inescapable fact that the site was a “Fortress”, or at least a garrison town, used by the French as they attempted to colonise Mi’kma’ki/Acadie/Nova Scotia and therefore intrinsically military and colonial.

Whether or not one considers the step away from interpreting military history to have been successful, that move does not translate to a move away from colonial history. Although theories surrounding colonialism and imperialism were gaining traction in academia during the 1960s and 1970s, it does not appear that any were taken into consideration in the planning of the site or its interpretation at this time. In large part, this was because the society in which the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS was developed was colonial, as it remains today. The kinds of history deemed of importance to the Canadian national colonial narratives were, and are, those that centre colonial, European history in

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<sup>46</sup> A. J. B Johnston, *Life and Religion at Louisbourg, 1713-1758*. 1st Pbk Ed. 1996.. ed. CEL - Canadian Publishers Collection. (Montreal [Que.]: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); K. Donovan, “Tattered Clothes and Powdered Wigs: Case Studies of the Poor and Well-To-Do in Eighteenth-Century Louisbourg.” In *Cape Breton at 200: Historical Essays in Honour of the Island Bicentennial, 1785-1985*. (Sydney, N.S.: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1985).

North America. Developing national historical narratives based on that history and the cultures that it created without analysis or the inclusion of non-dominant perspectives and realities was a continuation of the process of colonisation, a form of continued colonial violence. In commemorating those histories that seem to idealize, glorify, and justify the actions of Canada's colonisers, the Parks Branch and HSMBC furthered national colonial narratives in which the violence of Canada's inception was/is minimized or ignored, as was necessary to maintain the continued legitimacy of the Canadian government. Or, put another way, "in psychoanalytical terms, idealisation is one crucial defensive mechanism,"<sup>47</sup> of any state. Without the construction of an idealised historical narrative, a version of Canadian-ness wherein the colonisers are the ultimate, "righteous" victors, or in a world where those victors are forced to confront the atrocities of their pasts, the state loses much of its legitimacy, although most people at the time would not have even considered that the Canadian government could be anything but benign and legitimate.

This meant that despite the importance of trade and military alliances between the French and their Indigenous allies to the 'successes' of French colonisation during this period, the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and Abenaki and their role in French activities were not included in any documentation from the Parks Branch at this time. Historian Erna Macleod sums up the Fortress of Louisbourg's program in the 1960s as presenting "Canada's history as a narrative of two founding cultures whose struggles in the new world eventually led to harmonious relations between French and English Canadians in present-day Canada."<sup>48</sup> Even from a military or individual focused methodological approach, this was a glaring

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<sup>47</sup> Veracini, "Settler Collective Founding Violence and Disavowal", 371; Richard Herz, "Legal Protection for Indigenous Cultures: Sacred Sites and Communal Rights." *Virginia Law Review* 79, no. 3 (1993), 692.

<sup>48</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 361-362.

omission; leaving out one, or several, of the key players on the field immediately created a less truthful and less accurate version of history. These relationships were tenuous at best, and while the French were not as extreme or open in their violence as the British, they were colonisers nonetheless; colonisation is violence, regardless of how it comes dressed. In addition to the free people of Louisbourg, who were largely but not homogeneously of French origins, with some Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous people, a portion of the population were enslaved people, usually of various African origins. Between the founding of Louisbourg in 1713 and its final capitulation to the British in 1758, Ile Royale housed at least 266 enslaved people, as many as 87% of whom lived in Louisbourg, where social class was not necessarily a qualifier for who 'owned' enslaved people. Even the relatively poor would often claim ownership of at least one enslaved individual, who would generally be made to do domestic labour such as cooking and cleaning. Because of the nature of enslavement, the presence of these enslaved people is not easy to see at first glance and there were very likely more enslaved individuals in Louisbourg than we will ever know. They were usually counted in property lists rather than in censuses or population counts, making it more difficult for historians to find and tally exact numbers.<sup>49</sup>

In many ways, the period chosen for interpretation at the site would have been ideal for the representation of French and Indigenous interactions, as the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous groups in Acadie worked together with the French in a variety of ways throughout the French occupation, including within the town,<sup>50</sup> or the presence of an enslaved population at Louisbourg (although research was very new on this topic during

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<sup>49</sup> Donovan, "Slaves in Île Royale, 1713-1758", 26-28.

<sup>50</sup> Wysote and Morton. "The Depth of the Plough", 479-481; Veracini, "Settler Collective Founding Violence and Disavowal", 371.

the 1970s at Louisbourg and little could have been done), or to address some of the violence of colonisation. Instead, planners focused on the most palatable elements of French society. The recreation of the detailed daily lives of French colonists at Louisbourg was to be achieved through the reconstruction of a portion of the town based on the original plans, along with some of the defensive elements of the French garrison.<sup>51</sup> One of the main goals of this stage of the reconstruction and interpretive programming was to create an environment that would make a visitor feel as though they had been dropped into a different time and place and in this Louisbourg most definitely succeeded. While this was attempted then, as it is today, with the presence of costumed interpreters, historic buildings and activities, and even scents from the bakeries and workshops around the site, it is fair to say that actually returning to Louisbourg in the summer of 1744 would not have been nearly as pleasant of an experience.<sup>52</sup> What is presented as a historically accurate experience at Louisbourg, a form of time travel, is not precisely untruthful, (the many hours spent by researchers keen on representing and recreating all of the elements present would not allow that to be the case), but nor is it quite accurate.<sup>53</sup> However, neither the original inhabitants (who were far more varied in race, class, and appearance than those who were represented at this point by the NHS with costumed interpreters) nor the original environment were completely accurately recreated, even aside from the exclusion of Indigenous representation.<sup>54</sup> With this sanitization of history, the NHS created a nostalgic version of history, infinitely appealing to the dominant cultural groups in the area, (French and English

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<sup>51</sup> Lunn, "Interpretive Plan, A Pattern for the '70s.", 40.

<sup>52</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 364, MacLean, *Louisbourg Heritage*, 105-6; Lunn, "Interpretive Plan, A Pattern for the '70s.", 40.

<sup>53</sup> Hornsby and Wynn, "Walking Through the Past", 154.

<sup>54</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 181, 183-85; MacLean, *Louisbourg Heritage*, 111-13.

Canadians), and to tourists, who were the only ones actively targeted during the interpretive planning of the site, and a version which perfectly fits within the national colonial narratives that the Canadian government was working to build.

Beyond the issues with historical accuracy raised by this version of history being presented, or perhaps because of them, there were very much tangible, real-world problems created by this narrative and its delivery by the NHS. In 1976, the Fortress of Louisbourg Volunteers Association was created in partnership with the community surrounding Louisbourg. In large part, this partnership was created with the express intent of solving an eternal issue at NHS: employment. For Louisbourg at this time, the problem was two-fold; the overarching lack of budget prohibited some of the more extensive hirings that would be required to fill the reconstructed town with life and activity, and child labour laws meant that there could be no children hired to round out the presentation. The form of living history envisaged for Louisbourg in the 1970s and 1980s required a greater number of employees than most Parks Branch sites were allocated, and the amount who were budgeted for was nowhere near as high as Louisbourg's management had hoped. The Fortress of Louisbourg Volunteers Association was officially founded with the "dual objectives of exposing local school children to a significant part of the nation's history and of increasing employment in the area."<sup>55</sup> Both of those objectives were certainly fulfilled, and the added benefit of plenty of costumed interpreters, as well as the desired "authenticity" of children in historical dress running and playing in the streets, was equally helpful.<sup>56</sup> The Fortress Louisbourg Association, as it is now named, exists today and has not only helped to supply

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<sup>55</sup> Jameson and Baugher, *Past Meets Present*, 27; "About Us." Fortress Louisbourg Association. <https://www.fortressoflouisbourg.ca/about>.

<sup>56</sup> Lunn, "Interpretive Plan, A Pattern for the '70s.", 36-40; Jameson and Baugher, *Past Meets Present*, 27.

the site with enough interpreters since its inception, but also runs portions of the site's daily operations, including Louisbourg's "three period restaurants, bakery, coffee shop, and two gift boutiques" which "help visitors understand, appreciate and enjoy the largest reconstructed 18<sup>th</sup>-century French fortified town in North America."<sup>57</sup>

Notably lacking from these objectives, thanks to the overall narrative goal and general avoidance of the representation of historical realities which would disrupt that narrative, were intentions to hire members of minority groups for roles at the site.<sup>58</sup> In the Interpretive Prospectus from 1971, Lunn placed a great deal of emphasis on the need to connect the history of the Fortress of Louisbourg to modern life.<sup>59</sup> For the period, this was impressively forward-thinking and socially conscious, as the use of 'public' history to impact modern people was relatively new. Maintaining an awareness that an NHS was not an apolitical entity, but a way of informing and influencing a potentially large public audience was a great start. Yet one of the main issues with Louisbourg's attempts to make history relevant to the modern, 1970s or 1980s visitor was the very version of history that they had chosen to represent.<sup>60</sup> Its apparent 'lessons' were designed in such a way that the main feelings conveyed were ones of longing for an imagined past, a 'simpler' time that had never existed for the white Canadians who visited. And for the non-white Canadians? Well, there was nothing at all.<sup>61</sup> In creating a narrative such as that at Louisbourg NHS, not only were marginalized histories excluded from national colonial narratives, marginalized

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<sup>57</sup> "About Us." Fortress Louisbourg Association. <https://www.fortressoflouisbourg.ca/about>.

<sup>58</sup> Debora Ryan and Emily Stokes-Rees, "A Tale of Two Missions: Common Pasts/Divergent Futures at Transnational Historic Sites", *The Public Historian* 39, no. 3 (2017), 15-6, 20; Timothy Baumann, Andrew Hurley, Valerie Altizer, and Victoria Love, "Interpreting Uncomfortable History at the Scott Joplin House State Historic Site in St. Louis, Missouri." *The Public Historian* 33, no. 2 (2011), 38; Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 363, 378; Johnston, "Preserving History", 72.

<sup>59</sup> Parks Canada, "Interpretive Prospectus", 13-14.

<sup>60</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 367-368.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 363; Johnston, "Preserving History", 72.

individuals were excluded from even participating in the portrayal of the dominant history, particularly in cases where “accuracy” in living history interpretation was claimed as a necessity, as it was at Louisbourg for a time.<sup>62</sup>

Because of the need for NHS to appeal to the public, including tourists, (with some calling NHS essentially “recreational tourism developments”),<sup>63</sup> especially those that are living history museums, the process of updating and evolving the history represented by them in any way can be complicated by the perceived need to maintain palatable, easily-understood, ‘fun’ history to experience.<sup>64</sup> That is not to say that there is no ‘serious’ or academic benefit to historic sites - a great deal of research, archaeology, and understanding of history results from the designation of a historic site - only that the main goal of historic sites is not realistically any of those things. Instead, they are means to a variety of ends, those ends being the conveyance of history to broad audiences, the construction of a national historical narrative with which this thesis is concerned, and, at a ground level, the generation of visitation and revenue.<sup>65</sup> In attempting to implement changes to interpretive content which better or more accurately represent the histories and cultures of marginalized groups, NHS and other sites of public history often fail to make meaningful changes out of fear of alienating the tried and true audience that they already have. However, in doing so, they often miss out on new possible visitors.

To further demonstrate that the white centred colonial historical narrative is not merely abstract, but has real-world consequences, in addition to this having potentially

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<sup>62</sup> McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 58-60.

<sup>63</sup> Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 363

<sup>64</sup> Baumann, et al, “Interpreting Uncomfortable History”, 38; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 5.

<sup>65</sup> Frits Pannekoek, “Canada’s Historic Sites: Reflections on a Quarter Century, 1980–2005.” *The Public Historian* 31, no. 1 (2009), 73.

impacted a visitor's enjoyment of their visit to the NHS, a lack of reality in historical narrative and subsequently national colonial narratives can have meaningful impacts on society at large. As expressed by Erna Macleod, "by refusing to assign responsibility for past ideologies and atrocities . . . historic sites can obstruct change and sustain the existing social system."<sup>66</sup> By excluding those ideologies and atrocities from the national colonial narratives altogether, Canada has, until recently, often been able to proceed without confronting the past. Making changes to the content that is being presented does not necessarily mean that visitors in the group that had previously been catered to, in this case, white Canadians, will no longer be interested in visiting the site; in fact, some tourists are open to learning about reality, pleasant or not, so long as it is presented in an interesting and relevant way.<sup>67</sup> In Canada, where continued belief in the historical narrative created by sites like Louisbourg is necessary for the maintenance of national colonial narratives, deep and meaningful changes to interpretation have been slow to be realized. For example, in contrast to many other Canadian NHS, the first real efforts at including Indigenous history in Louisbourg's interpretation began in the 1970s, (unusually early even compared to the field of academic history), with a program that employed members of the Mi'kmaw community in Cape Breton to play the parts of military scouts arriving at Louisbourg.<sup>68</sup> While this was a ground-breaking program, it suffered from the national colonial narratives that were already in place.

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<sup>66</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 368; McKenna, "Women's History, Gender Politics and the Interpretation of Canadian Historic Sites", 2.

<sup>67</sup> Ryan and Stokes-Rees, "A Tale of Two Missions", 11, 16; Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 368; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 13.

<sup>68</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 368



Indigenous people had been excluded from the existing national colonial narratives, resulting in a population with little to no knowledge of Indigenous groups like the Mi'kmaq, who reacted with confusion or even hostility when faced with Mi'kmaw interpreters. When the program ended due to a lack of funding in the early 1980s, the administration was somewhat surprised to learn that Mi'kmaw individuals who had participated in the program were less than satisfied with the experience, having been harassed or treated unfairly both by members of the public and by their non-Indigenous co-workers.<sup>69</sup> Despite the shortcomings of this program, there were positive outcomes, namely a greater awareness of the need for better representation of Mi'kmaw history, and representation done in such a way that it would not harm anyone involved. Additionally, considering the period, any attempts at employing Indigenous interpreters to tell their own stories was groundbreaking. The program also eventually saw the formation of the Unama'ki Committee, demonstrating the potential that NHS hold for establishing real relationships and making changes on a practical, ground level when changes are allowed in the overall narrative. Writing in the late 1990s, Macleod said, "Since the 1970s, fortress historians and representative members of Mi'kmaq communities in Cape Breton have formed the Unama'ki Committee and collaborated on the development of the Mi'kmaq Trail, which opened in conjunction with Louisbourg's commemorative celebrations of 1995."<sup>70</sup> Outside of this trail, little had been done to improve Mi'kmaq representation by the 1990s or early 2000s, although not for a lack of awareness. Some of the difficulties lay with administrators who were reluctant to make changes to interpretation that might interfere with the fun and

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<sup>69</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 370-72.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 370.

inviting atmosphere of a tourist attraction reliant on visitors, as discussed above.<sup>71</sup> Others lay in legitimate concerns about getting it right, a need to avoid tokenization and actively harming present-day Indigenous people by exposing them to the kinds of racism and harassment that had previously been experienced with the short-lived military scout program in the 1970s, concerns echoed elsewhere in the world at the same time.<sup>72</sup>

Further efforts from Louisbourg's management at changing the narratives presented and contributed to by the site can be seen with modern interpretive material and physical changes that have been made. "The Louisbourg Primer" is the introductory document provided to employees of the historic site today. The current document, which is updated as needed, is an overview of the history of Louisbourg and does its best to cover all the elements of the history of the site that might be of interest to the public, as well as those parts of the history that are important to the narrative being presented. One of the most important aspects of the primer is the inclusion of several suggestions for further reading in each section. The primer, while it does discuss Louisbourg's garrison and the two sieges, focuses primarily on the economic and social aspects of historic Louisbourg. In other words, the Interpretive Primer demonstrates change since the 1960s and 1970s. The primer presents Louisbourg in the context of its national and North American importance. The first section of the primer covers Mi'kmaw history in Cape Breton and broader Nova Scotia, as well as their interactions with the French settlers.<sup>73</sup> This section, while only consisting of half a page of information, also addresses the fact that the NHS, like all other Historic Sites

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<sup>71</sup> Betts, "Decolonization", 33; Margo Shea, Maryann Zujewski, and Jonathan Parker, "Resuscitating the Promise: Reflections on Implementing Innovative and Collaborative History from the Nation's First National Historic Site." *The Public Historian* 38, no. 4 (2016), 135.

<sup>72</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 370-371; Baumann, et al, "Interpreting Uncomfortable History", 38, 44.

<sup>73</sup> Parks Canada, *The Louisbourg Primer*, Canada, Parks Canada, (2019), 3.

in Nova Scotia, is located on unceded Mi'kmaw territory.<sup>74</sup> At only half a page, such a short section reads as tokenism; the inclusion of the history only because it is expected. The following section quickly returns to the safer “officially” accepted ground of European history in Canada and provides an overview of early European history concerning Canada, from the first Norse explorers and settlement at L'Anse Aux Meadows in Newfoundland to interactions between the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the French and English.<sup>75</sup> Following these brief but informative sections on the broader context, the primer turns to the history of Louisbourg, although this section is smaller than one might expect. Expanding upon the town's history outside of its military role, the primer dedicates several sections to overviews of life and society in Louisbourg. This includes specific mention of the roles of women and children, not only the presence of enslaved people in Louisbourg but reference to more in-depth documents about their lives, a discussion of clothing, food, and religion, and the economy and role of merchants and fisheries, all of which demonstrates a continued dedication to presenting a social history.<sup>76</sup>

Today, the Mi'kmaq are represented on site at Louisbourg NHS, although not in the same way that eighteenth-century French society is represented, nor as they briefly were in the 1970s. There is a “Mi'kmaq Guide” available to interpreters, which covers the information provided in the Interpretive Primer's summary and which was written in 2004. There are displays located around the site that discuss the history of the Mi'kmaq, particularly via their relationship with the French. The Mi'kmaw Interpretive Center,

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<sup>74</sup> Conrad, *At the Ocean's Edge*, 125-6, 137; “Add Mi'kmaq Name to Welcome Sign: Mayor.” *Chronicle-herald (Halifax, N.S.)* (Halifax, N.S.), 2018; Parks Canada, *The Louisbourg Primer*, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Parks Canada, *The Louisbourg Primer*, 4-5.

<sup>76</sup> Parks Canada, *The Louisbourg Primer*, 6-13, 17-26; Medina and Whitla, “(An)Other Canada Is Possible”, 20, 23-4; Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 363.

opened in 2017, is minimally represented in the various digital properties of Louisbourg, including on the site's website and the official Parks Canada website for the NHS. At the Mi'kmaw interpretive centre, a visitor can interact with Mi'kmaw employees, see artefacts from the French period, and learn not only about French and Mi'kmaq interactions but also about modern Mi'kmaw communities. While working to create the Mi'kmaw interpretive centre, Parks Canada and Louisbourg's administration worked with "all five Cape Breton First Nations communities," as well as the Unama'ki-Parks Canada Advisory Committee.<sup>77</sup> The construction of this centre and the commitment to working with the Mi'kmaw communities of Cape Breton shows intent to change further.



**The ribbon's cut - the Mi'kmaw Interpretive Centre has officially opened! (Photo: Parks Canada)**

*Figure 3. Photo from the opening of the Mi'kmaw Interpretive Centre from Parks Canada article, 2017.*

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<sup>77</sup> "New Mi'kmaq Interpretive Centre opens in Cape Breton." *CTV Atlantic*, September 23, 2017. <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/new-mi-kmaq-interpretive-centre-opens-in-cape-breton-1.3603454>.

In between the development of the “Mi’kmaq Guide” in 2004 and the opening of the Mi’kmaw interpretive centre in 2017, the Truth and Reconciliation Committee published its “Calls to Action” in 2015. Call to Action 79 specifically calls for “the federal government, in collaborations with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration.”<sup>78</sup> While the team responsible for the production of the Mi’kmaw interpretive centre were certainly at least aware of this Call to Action, the centre’s development was almost certainly already well underway in 2015, and not a direct result of the TRC’s report, nor of Parks Canada’s *Framework for History and Commemoration*, which was published in 2019.<sup>79</sup> Having said that, the inclusion of such a centre is very much in keeping with the goals laid out both by the TRC’s “Calls to Action”, and by Parks Canada in their *Framework*.

According to Macleod, the site was in the process of developing a committee, like the Unama’ki Committee, with members of the local African Nova Scotian community in 2006, when her work was published.<sup>80</sup> Today, the enslaved population of Louisbourg is primarily represented through the story of Marie Marguerite Rose, a woman who was eventually freed by her “owners” and went on to own a tavern in Louisbourg. Her story acting as the lens through which slavery is discussed at Louisbourg, while it is fascinating and important, paints at best an incomplete picture of reality. Very few of the enslaved people living at Louisbourg were ever freed, and the choice of Rose as a representation for all enslaved people in the town works to soften the harsh realities of the period and

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<sup>78</sup> TRC, “Calls to Action”, 9.

<sup>79</sup> McKenna, *Framework for History and Commemoration*.

<sup>80</sup> Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 372-73.

contributes to creating an image of the French as uncommonly kind and generous when, in reality, they were just as complicit in the slave trade and subjugation of enslaved people as Europeans elsewhere. Work to understand the history of slavery at Louisbourg began in earnest in the 1980s. Much of this work was done by Ken Donovan, and his findings have been integrated into the Interpretive Primer that is given to new employees. In 2009, a “Slavery Tour” began running at Louisbourg, written by Ken Donovan,<sup>81</sup> led by African Nova Scotians, and following a route based on Rose’s life. This tour is no longer listed on the NHS’s websites, and does not appear to be in operation, but was full of information about the realities of slavery and the presence of enslaved people in Louisbourg that was shocking to many.<sup>82</sup> The success of this program when it was operational is an indication of the willingness of visitors, locals and tourists alike, to learn about supposedly “difficult” histories and a demonstration of the good that an NHS can do in relaying a marginalized or previously unknown history.

While the development of the interpretive program at Louisbourg, and indeed the planning of the entire site, has always been approached with the utmost care by those in charge and has certainly become significantly more representative today, the history of the site itself is unavoidably colonial and military. No matter how many changes are made to the program presented by the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS, the site is a French fortress, conquered by the British. It is inherently and inextricably colonial and “the best intentions can never completely decolonize representations constructed within a colonial site.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ken Donovan, *Marie Marguerite Rose and Slavery in Louisbourg, 1713-1768: A Guided Tour*. (N.p.: Unpublished, N.d); Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 363, 369, 371-3.

<sup>82</sup> “Slavery Tour opens at Fortress of Louisbourg.” *CBC News*, July 30, 2009.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/slavery-tour-opens-at-fortress-of-louisbourg-1.808836>.

<sup>83</sup> Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 372; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 13; Herz, “Legal Protection for Indigenous Cultures”, 692.

While the narrative built by the site's efforts is abstract, as are the Canadian government's national colonial narratives, Louisbourg demonstrates both the role of NHS in national colonial narratives and some of the concrete, real-world impacts that the exclusion of marginalized histories from said narratives can have. It is to be hoped that the site will continue to make changes in line with the plan laid out in the 2019 *Framework and Call to Action 79*.

## Chapter Two

### Halifax Citadel National Historic Site

The Halifax Citadel operates as a National Historic Site of Canada and attracts upwards of 500 000 visitors a year, making it the most visited NHS in Canada, outside of Canada's many historic canals, as well as one of the most direct and influential ways that history is conveyed to the public in the country.<sup>1</sup> The main draw for visitors is the site's living history program, replete with red coats and kilted interpreters, but the site also offers several static exhibits on topics both specific to the Citadel and related to the general history of the British in what is now Nova Scotia.<sup>2</sup> As with the Fortress of Louisbourg, the history of the Halifax Citadel is decidedly military and colonial; the four iterations of the fort served as seats of power for the British military for two centuries as they steadily took control of North America. While the first Citadel was the most directly linked to violence against Indigenous groups,<sup>3</sup> the following three worked to maintain the presence of the British and continued colonisation, directly and indirectly.

Today, the fourth Citadel still stands as a physical representation of British colonisation. The very presence of the fortifications underlines their colonial past and the Citadel's lasting impacts on the Mi'kmaq who were displaced to make way for its construction. In addition to the presence of the fort, which acts as a constant reminder of

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<sup>1</sup> "Parks Canada attendance 2019-20." Open Canada. Last modified December 17, 2020. <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/96d26ef3-bf21-4ea5-a9c9-80b909fbc2>.

<sup>2</sup> Parks Canada, "Brochure, Halifax Citadel National Historic Site." Halifax Defence Complex, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Having been built in 1749, with the foundation of Halifax, the first Citadel was the town's defence during the extended, unofficial conflict between the French and British, wherein the British often fought the French's Indigenous allies, as well as conflicts such as King George's War. See: Reid, *A Pocket History*, 71-4, 76-8; Conrad, *At Ocean's Edge*, 96-7, 108-11, 116-20.



the violence of colonisation (both as a base for imperial forces and as a constant threat of retaliation from said forces), the historical narrative that has been and is presented through the Halifax Citadel NHS plays an active role in upholding national colonial narratives in Canada, narratives which subsequently contribute to injustices against Indigenous peoples and legitimize the power of the Canadian government. Like the Fortress of Louisbourg, the Citadel was singled out by Parks Canada for its colonial history and, like dozens of other military NHS, works to sanitize and simplify the colonial violence both physical and institutional, that led to the creation of Canada through the history that it presents and represents. The selection of the site, and its continued operation as an NHS presently, by a branch of the Canadian government which the British established with the use of forces stationed at sites such as the Halifax Citadel, continues to reinforce colonial history as the dominant history, colonial experiences as the important experiences, and any other history or people as unworthy of notice.

The main goal of designating an NHS is to preserve and draw attention to the historical value of the location. In the case of the Halifax Citadel, the HSMBC determined this historical value to be the fort's status as a military base on the coast of the Atlantic and its subsequent role in the domination of North America through conflict with the French.<sup>4</sup> Today, this history is presented mainly through the site's living history program and its collection of permanent exhibits. The living history program represents the years 1869-1871, between which the 78<sup>th</sup> Highland Regiment of Foot was garrisoned at Halifax. The general intention of the living history program is to provide visitors with a glimpse into the past, making them feel as though they have truly stepped back in time, similarly to how

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<sup>4</sup> Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 63, 106; Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity", 25

programming operates at Louisbourg.<sup>5</sup> The static exhibits aim to support this programming with some of the more foundational information that is relevant to the site's history, including simplified versions of British colonisation and brief mentions of the Mi'kmaq as background characters, in keeping with national colonial narratives.<sup>6</sup> Despite the implicit emphasis on social history created by the existence of a living history program, the Halifax Citadel focuses much of its interpretive material on the physical and military elements of its history, including the construction details of the fourth Citadel and its three predecessors, and the many different types of ordnance used at the fort throughout the centuries.<sup>7</sup> Overall, this fits well within Canada's national colonial narratives as it avoids dealing with the complexities of the site's history.



Figure 4. Aerial view of the Halifax Citadel NHS, 2011.

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<sup>5</sup> Parks Canada, *The Louisbourg Primer*, 4-5; Lunn, "Interpretive Plan, A Pattern for the '70s.", 8; Pulsifer, "British Regiments in Halifax", 1, 28; Canada, "Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan Summary.", 20, 22, 26-27; Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", Gordon, *Time Travel*, 5, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Canada, "Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan", 15-17, 26-9.

<sup>7</sup> A.J.B. Johnston. "Defending Halifax: Ordnance 1825-1906." Parks Canada Research Report Manuscript, Series no. 234, (1977), 1; Greenough, "A Narrative and Structural History", 24.

It should be noted that the majority of research done on the topic of the Halifax Citadel and its history has come directly from Parks Canada and their internal historians. While professionally researched and thorough, the material is in the form of reports and management plans rather than peer-reviewed, published books or articles, thus necessitating the addition of corroborating information. Where external research does exist, it is generally in the form of passing mentions in histories of Halifax City, or of Canada as a whole. It is the fourth Citadel that has been the focus of most of the research done by Parks Canada. The fourth Citadel is the only version of the fort that has left historians and archaeologists with a bounty of material, including the fortifications themselves, thus making it the logical choice for interpretation. This is partially thanks to the work of Parks Canada in restoring and preserving what remained of the fortifications, but many, if not most, of the original walls also remained present, (if not necessarily standing), at the time of the Citadel's designation as an NHS.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike Louisbourg and many other NHS, the Citadel was in use almost constantly up until it became an NHS, and therefore its more recent history is also the history of how it was designated. During the First World War, the Citadel continued to be used as barracks for Canadian forces but was also partially transformed into a prisoner-of-war camp that housed captured Germans, many of whom had been taken from their ships just off the coast of Nova Scotia.<sup>9</sup> Other than this, activities at the Citadel continued essentially as usual during this period, with signals and the drilling of troops carrying on despite the presence

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<sup>8</sup> Canada, "Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan", 17-8; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 96-7.

<sup>9</sup> At this time, the Citadel was under the control of the Department of Militia and Defence which would eventually join with the Department of the Naval Service and the Air Board to become the Department of Defence in 1923. See: Brenda Dunn, "The Halifax Citadel, 1906-51: The Canadian Period." Parks Canada Research Report Manuscript, Series no. 284, (1977), 1.

of the prisoners.<sup>10</sup> For some time after the First World War, the Canadian military remained at the Citadel, until removing troops in 1931, leaving the site empty for the first time since the first Citadel was built in 1749. At this point in the Citadel's existence, it simply did not seem worth the effort of maintenance, nor was it a logical place to operate out of, with newer and more secure bases having been built elsewhere. Yet, already at this point, the utility of the site for representing the kind of history that Canada's national colonial narratives required was clear to many. There was general agreement, both in the military and government and amongst the population of Halifax, that the old fort was important. The age of the fort and the fact that almost every regiment in the British military had passed through at some point or another made the Citadel a fascinating draw for the historically minded tourist. However, the old fort would require maintenance or repair to be operated as a tourist attraction and where the funds for that were to be found was unclear. The Citadel was therefore left to deteriorate for several years, only interrupted by its brief use as space for an Unemployment Relief Project during the 1930s.<sup>11</sup> After the program's end in 1936, there was a general renewal of concerns for the well being of the fortifications amongst Halifaxians and historians. The worry was that if left alone, the fort would once again deteriorate and be vulnerable to vandalism.

It was at this point that the first suggestions were made to transfer the Citadel to the possession of the Department of the Interior, because of its military history and importance, where it could be made into a National Historic Park of some kind. The Department of the Interior refused the transfer, stating mainly budgetary restraints as their reasoning, and for

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<sup>10</sup> Dunn, "The Canadian Period, 2-3, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Canada, "Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan", 10; Dunn, "The Canadian Period", 6-7.

the time being, the Citadel remained under the purview of the Department of Defence.<sup>12</sup> While the Depression had resulted in funds from the government for use at sites like Louisbourg, those funds had largely been depleted by the time the Citadel came into the picture.<sup>13</sup> In 1938, the city of Halifax and the Department of Defence began to attempt a restoration of the now decrepit site, but those efforts were quickly interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War. The Citadel was immediately reoccupied by Canadian forces and the military quickly set about repurposing existing buildings and constructing new ones to suit their purposes. The Canadian military almost immediately vacated the premises after the war, leaving in 1946, but continued to use various parts of the Citadel as storage for about a year afterwards.<sup>14</sup>

After the departure of the troops, the city of Halifax was keen to determine what would happen to the large, semi-ruined fort on their hill, which had become something of an eyesore. Eventually, the Parks Branch would take control of the old Citadel.<sup>15</sup> At this point, there was another suggested transferral of the Citadel, this time to the Department of Mines and Resources. The HSMBC, by now well acquainted with the process of designating sites of historical importance, acknowledged the importance of the Citadel but did not support this proposed transfer, again on the basis that there was a lack of funds.<sup>16</sup> This was followed up with the suggestion that control of the site be transferred to the city of Halifax, a proposition favoured by some enthusiastic Haligonians. While this idea was

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<sup>12</sup> Dunn, "The Canadian Period", 15-18; Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 34-35.

<sup>13</sup> Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity", 35; Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 105; McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*, 338.

<sup>14</sup> Canada, "Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan", 10; Dunn, "The Canadian Period", 19-20.

<sup>15</sup> Campbell, *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011*, 7; Dunn, "The Canadian Period", 20.

<sup>16</sup> Dunn, "The Canadian Period", 20.; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 97.

still under discussion, there were a variety of possible uses proposed for the Citadel and the hill that it was located on. These suggestions included a ““Nova Scotia Parliament Hill” with legislative buildings, landscaped slopes and an elevator built into the side of the hill” and a wax museum within the walls of the Citadel, as well as the possibility of simply razing the hilltop and using it for commercial development.<sup>17</sup> None of these plans were carried out, although there are wax figures in certain exhibits at the Citadel today.<sup>18</sup>

It was not until the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, (the Massey Commission), “flagged the site as a priority and recommended it be given serious attention,” in 1951 that anything was done with the Citadel.<sup>19</sup> The Commission singled out the Citadel for restoration because:

The Halifax Citadel, one of the great military monuments of Canada, the last view of the country to so many thousands of soldiers outward bound and the first landmark to those who returned, is in a semi-ruined state which brings discredit to the nation and which invites the derision of visitors from countries where national memorials are cherished. This Citadel, of great historic and architectural interest, could be completely and permanently restored for less than the cost of one small escort naval vessel.<sup>20</sup>

The Citadel and the history of military “glory” that it represented fit perfectly with nation-building and identity creating efforts like those that Canada’s cabinet felt Louisbourg could aid in. While Louisbourg was “a key to a continent”, the Citadel could stand in for both its British history and the early days of Canada’s independent development post-confederation. The Massey Commission singling this out, as a body intended to determine

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<sup>17</sup> Dunn, “The Canadian Period”, 21, McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*, 338.

<sup>18</sup> *Fortress Halifax: Warden of the North*, Halifax Citadel National Historic Site, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

<sup>19</sup> McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 11.

<sup>20</sup> Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Science (Massey Commission), “Report.” (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1951), 350.

precisely what in Canada was most “Canadian”, points clearly to the version of history being constructed in national colonial narratives.

At this time, the Commission proposed three possible options for the future of the fort. It could be fully restored, partially restored and the rest maintained or maintained just enough to make it safe to walk through while leaving what had already crumbled where it lay.<sup>21</sup> Thanks to an “Order-in-Council” in 1951, the Halifax Citadel was transferred to the Department of Resources and Development, with the Department of Defence retaining their leases to certain buildings for continued use.<sup>22</sup> With this transfer, after around two decades of effort, the Halifax Citadel was officially recognized for its national historical significance by the HSMBC and named a National Historic Park by the Parks Branch. At this time, it was decided that the site would be restored as completely as possible to a period before Canadian occupation, “removing all vestiges of the Canadian period,” thus focusing the Citadel’s historical narrative even more firmly on the romanticized version of colonisation and British power needed for the national colonial narratives that the government was striving to create.<sup>23</sup> While the restoration and establishment of the Citadel as an NHS had ideological, abstract motivations, its physical restoration was impactful from a professional historical standpoint as well. Visitors continued to seek out the Citadel throughout its restoration, just as they had during the “Canadian Period”, and just as they had during the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> The main difference was the absence of a soldier to act as a guide, as had been the custom during the fort’s military operation. In addition to a slightly different tour experience, visitors would have been witnesses to the impressive

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<sup>21</sup> McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 11; Dunn, “The Canadian Period”, 23-24.

<sup>22</sup> Dunn, “The Canadian Period”, 23-24.

<sup>23</sup> Dunn, “The Canadian Period”, 25; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 96-7.

<sup>24</sup> Dunn, “The Canadian Period”, 1.

series of excavations and archaeological digs that were taking place within and around the Citadel after its transferal to the Department of Resources and Development. The main part of these began during the 1960s and were carried out with funds from the same government initiative that helped to continue construction at Louisbourg and contributed to the “five-year clean up and repair program” that was intended to make the site presentable before the more in-depth work began.<sup>25</sup> It appears that little progress towards the complete restoration that was called for was made over the following two decades, but the information which historians and archaeologists were finding was impactful in its own right, demonstrating the potential utility of NHS for archaeological advancements.<sup>26</sup>

In 1976, a team of historians and other professionals was gathered to determine what further work needed to be done. They had completed their deliberations by 1977, and a “Public Participation” period followed, wherein members of the public were able to express both their concerns and desires for the site. The professional prescription for the Citadel’s future was in essence that “Parks Canada planned to restore the fort to the appearance and character it had in the mid-nineteenth century.” While the public did support this period of history as the topic of interpretation at the Citadel, there were also calls from Haligonians for the period after 1906, when the Citadel became a Canadian fort, to be the focus. That proposal suggested including this period through the construction of an exhibit spanning from 1906 to the end of the Second World War, although some of that history was already represented in the Army Museum.<sup>27</sup> It is interesting to note the variation between the goals and desires of the local population and those of the government as

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<sup>25</sup> Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 170; Canada, “Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan”, 11-13; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 103.

<sup>26</sup> Dunn, “The Canadian Period”, 25; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 96-7.

<sup>27</sup> Canada, “Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan”, 14 -15.



expressed through the actions of the Parks Branch and the HSMBC, which demonstrates quite clearly the overall aims of the government in relation to the creation of national colonial narratives at the time. Suggestions during this planning phase for what a visitor might experience included walking up to the fort or taking a shuttle bus, taking in the views of the city and harbour, walking past an armed sentry “wearing the uniform of one of the many regiments which manned the Citadel”, reading through a pamphlet, taking a guided tour, seeing scheduled drill exercises or parades, and even a children’s activity centre. A coffee bar was intended to provide both an example of a downtime activity for Victorian soldiers, and a place for visitors to sample foods and drinks they may have consumed.<sup>28</sup>

All of these ideas for interpretation and more were based on information that was coming to light thanks to the various ongoing research projects around the site. Excavation on the west front of the Citadel began in 1977 and ended in 1978. Archaeologists were intent on finding information that was not available through the paper sources that were already in use and needed to find material that would help in understanding the history of the site before any of it was destroyed in the restoration process. The findings from these digs were summarized and internally published in a document simply titled “Archaeological Excavations, Halifax Citadel, 1978.”<sup>29</sup> Other research carried out and written up during the 1970s and 1980s included the “Door and Window Study, Halifax Citadel”, and the cleverly titled “Hinges of Empire: Building Hardware at the Halifax Citadel – a Preliminary Study” and “Out of Sight Out of Mind: Drainage Plan Study

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<sup>28</sup> Canada, “Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan”, 18.

<sup>29</sup> John J Connolly, “Archaeological Excavations, Halifax Citadel, 1978.” Parks Canada Research Report Manuscript Series, no. 340, (1978).

(Halifax Citadel)”, all of which range between 140 and 330 pages in length.<sup>30</sup> Multiple documents were researched and written on the armaments of the Citadel, particularly focusing on the fourth Citadel, with the longest, “Defending Halifax: Ordnance 1825-1906”, sitting at 251 pages.<sup>31</sup> The length and detail of these documents, many of which are about seemingly innocuous or relatively unexciting parts of the Citadel, demonstrates a desire to be as thorough as possible in this early stage of research and an impressive level of attention to detail. Those involved in the early stages of the restoration were intent on developing the best possible basis for that restoration, and no detail was too small or insignificant.

While those archaeologists and historians worked to determine the details of the fort that they were restoring, others were beginning to develop a history of the people who had lived and worked in the Citadel throughout the nineteenth century, who would be represented via costumed interpreters stationed around the site as a part of the living history program. Documents explaining why, exactly, living history or “animation” was chosen as the method of interpretation at the Citadel are either unavailable or non-existent. However, it seems likely that the decision was at least in some part inspired by the successful development of a similar program at Louisbourg and the national and international excitement about living history museums in general. The emphasis on the entertainment aspects of historic sites, which Ian McKay and Robin Bates argue grew out of the “second quarter of the twentieth century, connected both to the province’s profound socio-economic

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<sup>30</sup> John Joseph Greenough, “Door and Window Study, Halifax Citadel.” Parks Canada Research Report Manuscript, Series no. 447, (1980).; Pulsifer, “Hinges of Empire.”; Esperanza Maria Razzolini, “Out of Sight Out of Mind: Drainage Plan Study (Halifax Citadel).” Parks Canada Research Report Manuscript, Series no. 347, (1979).

<sup>31</sup> Johnston, “Defending Halifax.”

crises and to the correlative rise of a new consumer capitalism exemplified above all by the advent of tourism” was certainly an element at play in the creation of the Halifax Citadel’s programming.<sup>32</sup> In particular, the Citadel aimed to make itself appealing to children, as did many other NHS and historic sites across North America during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>33</sup> Whether consciously or not, the choice of living history as the method for interpretation at the site was also beneficial to the development of Canada’s national colonial narratives. Living history was particularly good for the simplification of history and the creation of nostalgia, as well as being appealing to a broad audience.

No matter the reasoning, in 1980 the choice to have an “animated garrison” had already been made.<sup>34</sup> In the 1981 Management Plan for the site, there is mention made of visitors walking past an armed, uniformed sentry as they entered the site, and even opportunities for a visitor to see “a woman with a small child carrying laundry to the barracks below the hill,” as they made their way around the restored Citadel.<sup>35</sup> While the plans were detailed in some ways, with specific points made about what visitors would see as they toured the site, some important specifics had yet to be fleshed out. The living history program required a period to represent, and the process of determining which period that was hinged more on the people that would be represented, the regiment, than on the span of years. Since the Citadel was being restored to its nineteenth-century state, the most logical choice as so much of it remained intact, the choice of periods to represent had already been somewhat narrowed. To hone it further, the period of 1856 to 1878 was

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<sup>32</sup> McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*, 19.

<sup>33</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 102-3; Betts, “Decolonization”, 33; Donald, “Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage”, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Pulsifer, “British Regiments in Halifax”, 1; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 96-7.

<sup>35</sup> Canada, “Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan”, 1981, 18, 20.

chosen, the construction of the fourth Citadel having been completed in 1856 and the officers housing and dining halls having been removed from the fort and relocated in 1878. Management further limited their options with the requirement that the regiment needed to have been in Halifax for at least two years, with a minimum of six months spent in garrison at the Citadel. The historians making these decisions felt that this was the “minimum amount of time required for a regiment to establish a presence in Halifax, as well as a legitimate historical association with the Citadel.”<sup>36</sup> In choosing the regiment, it was important for the Parks Branch that the chosen group be appealing to visitors and family-friendly enough to fit within Canada’s national colonial narratives, which the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders generally were.

This left them with a list of eleven regiments to choose from, and a very detailed report on the histories of those regiments was drawn up by a Parks Branch historian, Cameron Pulsifer, titled “British Regiments in Halifax, 1856-1878.”<sup>37</sup> While Pulsifer provided similar levels of detail about each of the eleven regiments included in his report, there is a clear favouring in the document for the 78<sup>th</sup> Highland Regiment of Foot, which was stationed in Halifax between 1869 and 1871.<sup>38</sup> Today, we know that they were indeed chosen as the regiment to represent at the Citadel.<sup>39</sup> There are a few possible explanations for the choice: firstly, the 78<sup>th</sup> Highland Regiment of Foot, also commonly referred to as the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders or simply the 78<sup>th</sup>, have a well-documented history, thus making them easier to represent without as much intensive original research and with more certainty. Conveyed in part through the 1901 *History and Services of the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders*, by an

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<sup>36</sup> Pulsifer, “British Regiments in Halifax”, 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 4, 11.

<sup>39</sup> Parks Canada, “Brochure”, 2017.

H.C. Wylly, the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders had a long and eventful history as a regiment.<sup>40</sup> Within Canada, they fit nicely into the simplified success story of British colonisation that makes up Canadian national colonial narratives. In addition to that history of the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, there was a great deal of available documentation, both written and photographic, of the regiment. In choosing the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, the Halifax Citadel would not want for historical material to interpret.

Secondly, the choice of regiment was made sometime during the peak of what Ian McKay calls “tartanism”, that is the constructed ‘Scottishness’ of Nova Scotia for political or tourism purposes.<sup>41</sup> Although Nova Scotia was only very briefly a tenuous Scottish colony (between 1629 and 1632) and had never been in possession of a majority Scottish descent population, either then or in the 1980s, modern Nova Scotia is often sold as an almost perfect replica of Scotland. This reimagining of Nova Scotian identity as being inherently Scottish began in the 1930s, with a great deal of help along the way from Premier Angus L. Macdonald. When Macdonald was elected in 1934, tourism was one of the main focuses of his government. The goal was to draw as many people to the small maritime province as possible, particularly from the nearby USA. While there was no shortage of beautiful scenery to view, or “quaint” fishing towns to visit,<sup>42</sup> which Macdonald and the NS Tourist Advisory certainly played up, Macdonald appears to have felt that something

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<sup>40</sup> Pulsifer, “British Regiments in Halifax”, 4. See also: Angus Fairrie, *“Cuidich’n Righ”: A History of the Queen’s Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons)*. (Inverness: Regimental Headquarters, Queen’s Own Highlanders. 1998); Kenneth Mcneil, ““Petticoated Devils”: Scottish Highland Soldiers in British Accounts of the Indian Rebellion.” *Prose Studies* 23, no. 3 (2000): 77-94.

<sup>41</sup> McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant”, 6.

<sup>42</sup> This itself playing into the construction of a Nova Scotian identity, certainly, but also into a larger image of descendants of European colonisers as harmless, “quaint”, farmers and fisherfolk, once again failing to ensure that the reality of how those places and people came to be is clear.

was missing.<sup>43</sup> While Macdonald initially acknowledged and promised to represent to tourists “the distinctive habits and customs that characterize the various races represented in our population”, (meaning, of course, the “races” of English, Irish, Scottish, “Hanoverian”, and Acadian; in other words the victorious European colonisers, and some late comers, with no mention of an Indigenous or Black and African Nova Scotian population), this commitment did not last long.<sup>44</sup>

Over the next several decades, through various campaigns, political actions, and marketing decisions, Macdonald and his government moved firmly in the direction of a “Scottish” Nova Scotia. The version of “Scottish” Nova Scotia that was created during this period fit very nicely with the wider trends of tourism at the time towards nostalgic, anti-modern experiences, and with only some difficulty into the overall Canadian national colonial narratives being created at the same time. In addition to, or sometimes instead of, the allure of the fishing village and its brightly painted houses, there were ceilidhs, bagpipers, the romanticization of the Gaelic language, (even as actual Gaelic speakers lost more and more of their language every year), and kilts to experience in this version of Nova Scotia. The triumph of Macdonald’s dreams of a Scottish Nova Scotia, was the development and naming of a Nova Scotian tartan in 1953-4, making Nova Scotia the first province to have its own unique tartan, despite the greater percentage of Scottish Canadians in other provinces, like Ontario.<sup>45</sup> While there was very much a Scottish population in Nova

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<sup>43</sup> Ian Tyrrell, “America’s National Parks: The Transnational Creation of National Space in the Progressive Era.” *Journal of American Studies* 46, no. 1 (2012), 9; Ian McKay, Canadian Electronic Library, and American Council of Learned Societies. *The Quest of the Folk Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-century Nova Scotia*. Canadian Electronic Library. Canadian Publishers Collection. (Montreal; Buffalo: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), xv-xvi, 12; Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 366.

<sup>44</sup> McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant”, 17.

<sup>45</sup> McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant”, 18, 20-22, 44-45; Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 366; McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*, 12.

Scotia, with a higher concentration in Cape Breton, this was manufactured supremacy of Scottish culture and traditions, some of which had very little to do with legitimate Scottish traditions at all.<sup>46</sup>

It should be noted that Macdonald, while powerful, was not the only factor in the creation of a Scottish Nova Scotian identity. Of particular relevance to the Halifax Citadel were several Highland Regiments called up during the First World War and afterwards. The men in their regimental kilts sparked enthusiasm from most who saw them; why not take that enthusiasm and apply it to the representation of an earlier period?<sup>47</sup> While it would be unreasonable to say that taking advantage of the Scottish-based image that the Nova Scotian government had developed of the province was the sole reason for choosing to represent the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, it would be equally unreasonable to pretend that it played no role in the decision. Being able to list highlanders as one of the Citadel's attractions was a clever way of drawing attention to the site, the revenue from which was much needed for the site's reconstruction and maintenance. The other benefits of constructing such an identity within Canada's national colonial narratives is undeniable. On a larger, Canada-wide scale the Scottish have not become part of the country's national identity in the same sense as the French and – as a composite grouping – the British. However, the Scottish fit well into that larger narrative and allowed a level of unique identity to develop in Nova Scotia, such as that which already existed with Acadians, without threatening the national colonial narratives in the way that a focus on Indigenous or otherwise marginalized histories and identities would. In creating a narrative in which the Scottish are the dominant

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<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Jones, *Gentlemen and Jesuits*. (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2000), 240-50.

<sup>47</sup> McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant", 15.

culture in Nova Scotia, the experiences of the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous groups were almost entirely erased.<sup>48</sup> As expressed by Ian McKay:

To claim that Nova Scotia is Scottish in origin (and therefore is in some sense essentially or foundationally Scottish) is to commit oneself to three hazardous procedures going well beyond the empirical evidence: first, that of explaining why the “original” peoples should not be considered to be those who were in the area first (namely the native peoples of the region); second, that of arguing that a “New Scotland” which was more ephemeral than Acadia and of less economic significance than the Basque presence in the fisheries should still be considered the most “foundational” European presence; and third, that of attempting to construct a post-17th-century pattern of Scottish continuity from empirical evidence of stark discontinuity. To suggest that the contested claim of Scots over lands populated by natives somehow made the peninsula “Scottish” is surely to confuse Scottish ambitions with obdurate North American realities...<sup>49</sup>

The addition of a kilted regiment of soldiers, real or not, in the centre of the city thus worked, and works, to centre the dominant historical narrative once again, whilst ignoring the much less pleasant realities of Nova Scotia and Canada’s actual colonial past, not to mention the realities of Scotland as a nation within the British Empire.<sup>50</sup>

Once the decision had been made to select the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders as the main group to represent at the Citadel, the rest of what would be interpreted began to fall into place. In addition to the fourth Citadel being easier to learn about because of its physical remains, primary source material from the mid to late-nineteenth century is far more abundant than that from earlier periods, meaning that there was a great deal of information available to

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<sup>48</sup> Médina and Whitla, “(An)Other Canada is Possible”, 20; Hampton and DeMartini, “We Cannot Call Back Colonial Stories”, 250.

<sup>49</sup> McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant”, 6-7.

<sup>50</sup> Médina and Whitla, “(An)Other Canada is Possible”, 20; Hampton and DeMartini, “We Cannot Call Back Colonial Stories”, 250; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 6, 11-12.





Figure 5. Image of military interpreters dressed as members of the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, 2017.

researchers about both the fort itself and the lives of those who built and lived in it.<sup>51</sup> The overall goal of interpretation, or the Level I messaging of the site, was to impress upon visitors first the importance of the Halifax harbour in British naval dominance, and second, the role of the Halifax Citadel in defending the harbour and naval base within, all of which was and is very much in keeping with Canada's national colonial narratives.<sup>52</sup>

While the static exhibits were intended to take care of some of the dryer, base information and provide visitors with an introduction to the history of the site, the role of human interpretation at the fort was to bring it to life. Interpreters were therefore expected

<sup>51</sup> Connolly, "Archaeological Excavations, Halifax Citadel, 1978.", v; McKenna, "Women's History, Gender Politics and the Interpretation of Canadian Historic Sites", 4-6.

<sup>52</sup> Canada, "Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan", 12; Conrad, *At the Ocean's Edge*, 124-5.

to know all of the basic history of the fort, including everything explained in previous sections of this chapter, as well as understand the social history specific to the Citadel and the regiments that had been chosen. This was no small task for the interpreters, with the early interpretive handbooks being in excess of 250 pages.<sup>53</sup> Once interpreters had familiarized themselves with the extensive history of the site, the regiments, and their individual roles, they would be ready to present history to the public. For the most part, after the initial establishment of the program, this took the form of recreating drills and military exercises for the military interpreters. Individual rooms were recreated in parts of the fort, including a barracks room and a tailor shop, and interpreters were stationed in those rooms to demonstrate their history and function, a fairly standard practice at living history museums, both in Canada and internationally.<sup>54</sup> This manner of daily operation and interpretation, combined with more typical guided tours of the site, continued unchanged for several years, as did the exhibits and historical rooms that had been recreated within restored sections of the Citadel's walls.

At the time, it was common practice to hire “authentically” for roles in living history programs; for example, to hire someone to represent a member of the 78th Highlanders “authentically” according to the standards set by these historic sites, the individual would need to be male and white. This presented some issues. In a modern world, where there were institutions such as the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Public Service Employment Act, refusing to hire people based on their race or gender in the name

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<sup>53</sup> Halifax Defence Complex Visitor Services, “Manuel de Guide – 1984: Données Historiques sur le Complexe de Défense de Halifax.” Halifax: Parks Canada, (1984), i-iii.; “Guide Handbook - 1985”, i-iii.

<sup>54</sup> Hal Thompson, *Restored Interior Mini Manual No. 3: Regimental Tailor Shop* (Halifax: Unpublished, 2011); Canada, “Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan”, 22; Gordon, *Time Travel*, 9; Ryan and Stokes-Rees, “A Tale of Two Missions”, 11, 16-7; McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*, 347.

of “authenticity” was simply not acceptable, nor should it have been. It was also entirely illegal.<sup>55</sup> The first real challenge to those practices came in 1990 with a complaint filed by Haamid Rasheed, who “spoke out against the lack of black history presented at the Citadel.”<sup>56</sup> Rasheed’s complaint was quickly followed by Yvonne Atwell, Spokesperson for the Afro-Canadian Caucus of Nova Scotia. She was focused on the discriminatory hiring practices of the Halifax Citadel, regarding both race and gender. Once again, as with Louisbourg, the interpretive program had created something of a dilemma for itself. With an all-white, all colonial narrative, there was no room for hiring individuals who did not fit those descriptions for roles representing that history, if the site was intent on maintaining “accuracy”. Their presence would be starkly noticeable in a place where the narrative had excluded them. Thus, the theoretically abstract nature of the Canadian national colonial narratives once again had very real-world impacts.

There were other complaints about diversity in hiring at the Citadel, after Atwell’s official complaint, as well as proposed solutions. Interestingly, what was generally proposed by those raising the issue was not that women and people of colour be hired to represent members of the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, but that different roles should be created for them. While being able to portray members of the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders may have appealed to some members of those groups, it was not the main suggestion. For women, these new roles could have been portraying soldier’s wives, while Black people could have been hired to represent the Jamaican Maroons who had contributed to the construction of certain parts of the third fort, or members of “a five-member contingent of the Royal Naval Brigade which

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<sup>55</sup> McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 58-60.

<sup>56</sup> McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 58-60; LAC, RG84-A-2, series R5747-6-9-E, accession 94-0514-00 HFRC, file A05274, “Enclosure 2: Letter to P.A. Thompson from Gordon Fairweather of the Canadian Human Rights Commission,” February 21, 1979.

served at the Citadel during its interpretive time period”, and so on.<sup>57</sup> The Halifax Citadel did not implement any of those suggestions. Instead, the military interpretation was opened to employees regardless of gender or race.<sup>58</sup> While on the surface a progressive choice, this decision was the lowest effort solution and had little impact on the program. It also worked perfectly within the national colonial narratives of the Canadian government; to create the suggested roles, particularly in the case of members of minority communities, would have required a direct acknowledgement of the violence of the colonial past. Not only did this move avoid the issue of a more nuanced interpretation and representation of the period in question, which would likely have improved the site,<sup>59</sup> but it also had little real impact on the program for many years. Even when the Citadel briefly developed a small section of the program to represent the aforementioned “five-member contingent of the Royal Naval Brigade which served at the Citadel during its interpretive time period,” which was known to have had some Black soldiers, only one Black individual applied and was hired.<sup>60</sup>

These issues, the concrete consequences of the national colonial narratives that ignored so much of reality, were encountered at other NHS as well. Within Nova Scotia, there was Louisbourg, where attempts at creating a program for Indigenous interpretation have been discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>61</sup> Reaching outside of the province, several Ontario NHS were running into modern problems with the limits of their chosen historical narrative. As with Nova Scotia, Ontario NHS were largely “dominated by military themes

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<sup>57</sup> John N. Grant, *The Maroons in Nova Scotia*. (Halifax, N.S.: Formac, 2002); McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 58, 63, 66.

<sup>58</sup> McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 63, 65-66.

<sup>59</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 11, 13; Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 363, 369-70; Ryan and Stokes-Rees, “A Tale of Two Missions”, 11, 16, 19-20.

<sup>60</sup> McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 66.

<sup>61</sup> Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 370-72.

and male interpreters,” during the 1990s.<sup>62</sup> At these military-based NHS, the hiring practices were generally male and white, just as they were at Louisbourg and the Halifax Citadel, and the sites’ management claimed the same reasoning: “authenticity”.<sup>63</sup> Certain sites, like Fort Henry, did employ a few women each season to act as soldier’s wives, but the roles were distinctly limited in number compared to the positions available to men. Fort Henry is the most easily applicable to the Halifax Citadel, as their trajectories as NHS and their interpretive programs are and were very similar, aside from Fort Henry’s earlier inclusion of women in its interpretive program.<sup>64</sup>

While Fort Henry never weathered any official complaints about race in its hiring practices, it did, like the Citadel, have to deal with complaints about the ratio of male to female employees. Like the Citadel, their solution, rather than expanding their interpretation to include deeper, more diverse history with historically female roles, was to open representation of soldiers up to women as well as men, thus avoiding dealing with the gaps in their historical narrative. Including more historically female roles at Fort Henry would have been particularly easy, as the regiment stationed there during the period they represent, also the mid-nineteenth century, was one of the few British units that were allowed a greater percentage of wives.<sup>65</sup> This meant that they had a robust social life, with women and children living with their husbands and fathers, working within the fort, and

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<sup>62</sup> McKenna, “Women’s History, Gender Politics and the Interpretation of Canadian Historic Sites”, 1.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>65</sup> British Regiments during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were generally allowed a ratio of 6 wives to 100 men. Certain regiments, such as the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment, or regiments being sent to Australia or India, were allowed a ratio of 12 wives to 100 men. This was a moveable rule, which is clearly demonstrated by sites like Fort Henry and the Halifax Citadel. See: Stephen D. McCreedy, “The Plight of Tommy’s Wife: Women in the British Army in the Nineteenth Century.” (July 1990). *Fort Henry*, 4; Adjutant-General’s Office, Great Britain, *The Queen’s Regulations and Orders for the Army*. (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1868); Adjutant-General’s Office, Great Britain, *The Queen’s Regulations and Orders for the Army, First of December 1859, Pocket Edition*. (W. H. Allen & Co., 1860).

leaving a great deal of evidence of their presence.<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, in excluding women from the historical narrative (including them would have opened the door for members of minority communities) the site lost an opportunity to further the dominant national colonial narratives as well, by representing happy, colonial families in the vein of Louisbourg's program. Even at the Halifax Citadel, the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders had a greater percentage of women and children with them than was standard during the nineteenth century.<sup>67</sup> In refusing to include roles for people of colour and women in interpretive programs at these NHS, the management did a disservice to people belonging to those groups, as well as the history that they were representing, and the quality of the programming.

Indigenous history has been omitted at the Citadel to remain in keeping with the overall national colonial narratives to an even greater extent than the histories of other marginalized groups. The period that is represented at the Citadel today falls after the conclusion to open conflict between the British and the French in Mi'kma'ki/Acadie/Nova Scotia. It also falls after the unofficial conflict between the British and the Indigenous allies of the French (the Mi'kmaq, as well as the Maliseet and Abenaki), which defined the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, had petered out.<sup>68</sup> Even if the interpretive program was intended to represent the earlier period, there would be some clear difficulties in including Mi'kmaw or other Indigenous interpreters in the living history program within the Citadel itself. When changes were made to hiring practices at the Citadel in the 1990s, Indigenous men and women were encompassed by the new inclusive hiring practices. They could, if they chose to, apply to represent members of the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders or the 3<sup>rd</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> McKenna, "Women's History, Gender Politics and the Interpretation of Canadian Historic Sites", 6-7.

<sup>67</sup> Elise Blacker, "Women and the Army, 1749-1949." Halifax Citadel Society, Unpublished, (2020), 7.

<sup>68</sup> Canada, "Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan", 27; McKay and Bates, *In the Province of History*, 31-33.

Brigade of the Royal Artillery, and certainly, some Indigenous individuals have done so since.<sup>69</sup> Whether or not most Indigenous people had or have any desire to participate in representing a site that played such a role in colonisation is another question, which is addressed in detail in the conclusion. For many Indigenous people, there would not be a feasible, appropriate, or respectful way to include Indigenous history or culture in what is interpreted at the Citadel. While there were examples of Indigenous history being included in NHS and other historic sites' living history programs at the time, those ways of doing history came with their own problems. Additionally, as Indigenous scholar Dwayne Donald points out regarding Fort Edmonton, a living history site in Alberta:

In this reconstructed site, the space outside the fort walls was clearly an anthropological realm—a museum- like exhibit presumably depicting authentic renditions of Indian people and culture. Inside the walls was a more industrious place where newcomers laboured in the interests of civilizing a country and building a nation. Peers (1995) noted that virtually all major historic fur trade sites in Canada replicate this pattern of displaying Aboriginal peoples and Europeans on opposite sides of the palisades.<sup>70</sup>

This kind of “inclusion” of Indigenous history does not serve to do anything but further entrench the national colonial narratives which erase Indigenous history, by quite literally excluding Indigenous people, placing their perspectives physically separate from the dominant narrative, along with their bodies.

Even outside of the living history program at the Halifax Citadel, there was little to no Indigenous history represented during this period of interpretation. That is not to say that management was unaware of that history. Information about the roles of Indigenous

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<sup>69</sup> McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 63, 65-66.

<sup>70</sup> Donald, “Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage”, 2.

groups in aiding the French against the British in early research reports and even in early guide handbooks and interpretive resources. Before the inauguration of the living history program in the 1980s, the brochures given to visitors at least mentioned that the first Citadel was “designed to protect the settlers from the Indians.”<sup>71</sup> While there are obvious issues with terminology and connotation, it does demonstrate an awareness of the historical context of the Citadel. The information was there, and available for use in the portions of the fort used for exhibits which provided introductions and background history, particularly about the foundation of the city of Halifax and the construction of the first Citadel. It was also there to be included in interpretation from employees.<sup>72</sup> Researchers were aware that the city and its defences were built on Indigenous land in the 1960s and 1970s, even if historical research about Indigenous history was not prevalent in academic circles at the time. Moving into the 1990s and early 2000s, no postcolonial thought or updated social history were included in the contents of interpretation, despite a general movement towards acknowledging Indigenous rights in their unceded territory and changes to the field of history.<sup>73</sup> So, in keeping with the government’s national colonial narratives, to maintain its legitimacy, the Halifax Citadel NHS excluded marginalized history, not because they did not have an understanding of it, but because it would complicate the existing narrative.

In 1993, the running of the interpretive program at the NHS was taken over by the newly formed Halifax Citadel Regimental Association (HRCA) in partnership with Parks

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<sup>71</sup> Parks Canada, “Booklet, The Halifax Citadel National Historic Park, Halifax, Nova Scotia.” Halifax Defence Complex, (1973), 3.

<sup>72</sup> Greenough, “A Narrative and Structural History”, 11, 13

<sup>73</sup> Ruth Holmes Whitehead, *The Old Man Told Us*. Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, (2000), 1; Reid, *Nova Scotia: A Pocket History*, 15, 21; Conrad, *At the Ocean’s Edge*, 125-6, 137; “Add Mi’kmaq Name to Welcome Sign: Mayor.” *Chronicle-herald (Halifax, N.S.)* (Halifax, N.S.), 2018; Parks Canada, *The Louisbourg Primer*, 3.



Canada. The HCRA underwent a name change in 2018 and became the Halifax Citadel Society (HCS) but continues to manage the daily operations of the Citadel today, including both interpretation and visitor services at the site.<sup>74</sup> In terms of race and gender representation in the living history program, some things have been altered since the 1990s. The main change that was made to the program itself was the inclusion of “Civilian Interpretation” in the form of soldier’s wives, as proposed in some of the earlier planning documents. In the 1990s, interpreters representing soldiers’ wives completed a variety of tasks around the site, including re-enacting things like doing laundry for soldiers, or helping as tailors assistants, while informing the public about their historical basis. The book *Halifax Citadel: Portrait of a Military Fortress*, includes images of “soldier’s wives” demonstrating these activities around the site during the 1990s.<sup>75</sup> While important representation of women and women’s history, it should be noted that this very much still fits into the Canadian government’s national colonial narratives and the sanitized, friendly version of Canada’s colonial history that they present. While the presence of women challenged ideas about women and the military, it did not challenge the supremacy of the dominant, military and colonial history that was and is accepted as “Canadian”.

Indigenous representation at the Halifax Citadel continues to be minimal. By 1999, the exhibit “Fortress Halifax – Warden of the North” had been opened in the Citadel’s Redan. The exhibit, still there today, tells the story of Halifax, from the foundation of the town to the construction of the fourth Citadel, and does mention the presence of Indigenous

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<sup>74</sup> Brian Cuthbertson and Julian Beveridge, *The Halifax Citadel: Portrait of a Military Fortress*. Canadian Electronic Library. Books Collection. (Halifax, N.S.: Formac Pub., 2000), 4; “Background.” Halifax Citadel Society. <https://www.halifaxcitadel.ca/about-hcs/background.html>.

<sup>75</sup> Cuthbertson and Beveridge, *Portrait of a Military Fortress*, 9, 25; Pulsifer, “British Regiments in Halifax”, 12, 23-27; Canada, “Halifax Citadel National Historic Park Management Plan”, 21; McKenzie, “Creating a Living Fortress”, 76.

people in the area, as well as their role in the early history of the settlement. The work of the Jamaican Maroons on the third Citadel is also included in this exhibit.<sup>76</sup> The exhibit does represent an effort at more thorough historical representation but does so in such a way that only minimally engages with those histories. They are presented alongside history that fits in with the national colonial narratives and therefore relegated to side roles. In the interpretation material provided to employees, there is currently no discussion of Indigenous or other histories.<sup>77</sup> Interpretive documents cover topics such as the history of the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, specifics on recreated historic rooms such as the Guard Room, schools in the British army, the history of Georges Island both as a fort for the British and as a holding place for Acadians during the Deportation, and an abundance of material about ordnance and armaments, as well as several documents created by Parks Canada historians, such as Cameron Pulsifer.<sup>78</sup> None of the documents mention nor engage with the existence of the Indigenous population of Nova Scotia or the areas surrounding the fort, or specifically the Mi'kmaq or their allies.

A Mi'kmaq focused exhibit has been in production and under construction to replace a former exhibit since 2015, the same year that the TRC's "Calls to Action" were published. As of the completion of this thesis, the exhibit was unopened, having been delayed by COVID-19 after a lengthy development process. It is not possible to include an analysis or review of the contents of this exhibit at all, nor to provide an assessment of its representation of Indigenous history, as it has yet to open, and is only briefly mentioned in

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<sup>76</sup> Parks Canada, "Brochure, Halifax Citadel National Historic Site, 1999." Halifax Defence Complex, (1999), 3.

<sup>77</sup> *Fortress Halifax: Warden of the North*, Halifax Citadel National Historic Site, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

<sup>78</sup> Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, "Acadians in Halifax and on Georges Island, 1755-1764", Internal Document; Brenda Dunn, "Schools in the British Army in the 1860s: Draft", Unpublished; Pulsifer, "The 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders in Halifax"; Bill Naftel, "The Guard Room and the Guard." Halifax, Unpublished, N.d.

the 2020 Halifax Defence Complex Management Plan as a new exhibit: “Fortress Halifax: A City Shaped by Conflict”.<sup>79</sup> Park’s Canada’s *Framework* from 2019 suggests that the exhibit will be respectful and informative, once it has opened. While the creation of this exhibit is a strong step in the direction of representation, in its current, unopened state, it mainly serves to highlight the lack of Indigenous information elsewhere in the site’s programming.

The existence of the Halifax Citadel NHS directly contributes to the maintenance of a Canadian historical narrative that centres colonial activities and glorifies colonisation.<sup>80</sup> The Citadel was in active military use in some way until its designation as an NHS in 1951, with its main operational years falling during the period of British colonisation and conflict between the French and British.<sup>81</sup> In designating the fort an NHS because of that history, Parks Canada and the HSMBC further legitimized the site’s existence and the current national colonial narratives. Little to no new research has been done to alleviate or provide a counterbalance to the colonial and violently military nature of the site, although changes are beginning to be made in keeping with the 2019 *Framework* and the TRC’s “Calls to Action”.<sup>82</sup> In short, the Citadel, like Louisbourg and the many other colonial NHS in Canada, represents and interprets precisely the kind of history that the Canadian government has created with its national colonial narratives. Without that narrative being upheld by NHS like the Citadel, it would be much more difficult for the

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<sup>79</sup> “Halifax Defence Complex Management Plan 2020.” Parks Canada. Last modified September 14, 2020. <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/ns/halifax/info/planning/gestion-management-2020#map-2>.

<sup>80</sup> Médina and Whitla, “(An)Other Canada is Possible”, 20, 23, 24; Veracini, “Settler Collective Founding Violence and Disavowal”, 371.

<sup>81</sup> Conrad, *At the Ocean’s Edge*, 121-5; Dunn, “The Canadian Period, 2-3, 6.

<sup>82</sup> Macleod, “Decolonizing Interpretation”, 372.

Canadian government to ignore and avoid acknowledging the colonial brutalities of the country's past and to uphold the desired national colonial narratives.

## Chapter Three

### Moving Forward, Indigenous Perspectives

As demonstrated by the cases of the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS and the Halifax Citadel NHS, government-owned and operated historic sites in Canada and the histories that they present actively contribute to and create Canada's national colonial narratives. Because the ultimate goal of any state is to continue to exist in perpetuity, properly challenging and changing the narratives of the historic sites that support the existence of Canada and its government is difficult. Although both sites discussed herein have attempted to update their historical narrative to varying degrees, whether success is viable is questionable. Out of the two NHS discussed within, the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS, so named for a military role that its management now tries to disavow in favour of representing its social history, has made the most attempts at altering its programming since its designation. Despite those changes, and despite the sincerity of the site's management in intending to improve both the historical narrative's representation of diverse history and to hire more diversely, the site remains a colonial place with a colonial past.

In her piece "*Total Archives for Land, Law, and Sovereignty in Settler Canada*", J.J. Ghaddar explains that "all of us on this land should know its history and the Indigenous nations and laws that govern it, yet few do."<sup>1</sup> Ghaddar is occupied with the study of archives and particularly interrogates how the Canadian population remains so unaware of the history and traditions of Canada's First peoples. This piece specifically looks at the oddity that is the lack of Indigenous history and information kept in Canada's national archives,

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<sup>1</sup> Ghaddar, "Total Archives", 60.

or Library and Archives Canada (LAC), which otherwise purports to contain just about everything that there is to know about Canada's past and its people, barring of course materials that have not withstood the test of time or humanity. Amongst those documents that have been lost to the rigours of humanity, or at least to the fact that "Canadian archives have been designed by and for settler society", are the majority of documents which refer to or explain Indigenous cultures, beliefs and "the alternative modes of land tenure and governance" that are expressed within Indigenous history.<sup>2</sup> In part the lack of Indigenous records held by LAC is attributable to the nature of Indigenous record-keeping, in that Indigenous laws and traditional practices, as well as histories, tend to be passed down through oral traditions, (or in other, non-written ways), which are often perceived as incompatible with Western/European written record-keeping. Yet, as Ghaddar points out, LAC prioritization of "written over oral traditions" was not actually a foregone conclusion. Not only has LAC not preserved Indigenous histories in the same way that it has preserved the histories of the rest of Canada, but the archives also played a role in "the creation of "legal fictions: documents purporting evidence of mutual expressions of rights and titles [between Indigenous nations and Europeans] where none existed."<sup>3</sup> Thus, Canada's official, government-controlled system for recording and remembering Canadian history has, since the beginning, been used to actively erase Indigenous knowledge and to create false information (through the creation of false treaties and agreements, or what Ghaddar refers to as "archival fictions"<sup>4</sup>), both to justify the existence of the state and to force the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ghaddar, "Total Archives", 61.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

cultural assimilation of the Indigenous groups that the Canadian government was actively displacing.

Victoria Freeman, in ““Toronto Has No History!” Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Historical Memory in Canada’s Largest City”, discusses the extent to which Toronto’s population, both settler and Indigenous, remains unaware of the Indigenous history of the area and the role of the Canadian government in the displacement of the Indigenous groups who had traditionally made their homes in the area, at least for portions of the year. Instead, Freeman argues, the population of the city (both Indigenous and settler) are wrapped up in the unavoidably settler colonial idea that Toronto is “the “consummation of empire,”” a perfect example of a colonial city, modern and technologically advanced, built in the tamed wilderness of the “New World”.<sup>5</sup> The point that Freeman makes is that Indigenous people are not born inherently knowing their history or cultural practices, and so while misrepresentation or non-representation of that history in national colonial narratives can and does impact the ability of Indigenous communities as a whole to remember those practices, it can also give Indigenous people who are not attached to communities the mistaken impression that they have no history in certain geographical areas at all, the example being Toronto.

While Ghaddar focuses mainly on the Canadian government’s erasure of Indigenous knowledge and histories from pre-colonial times, and Freeman presents an analysis of the impacts of Indigenous erasure on the population of Toronto, “Canada’s largest city”, scholars like Sean Carleton point to the attempted erasure the many injustices that have been imposed on Indigenous peoples since the establishment of Canada as a

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<sup>5</sup> Freeman, ““Toronto Has No History!””, 21.

country. In particular, in his article “‘I don’t need any more education’: Senator Lynn Beyak, residential school denialism, and attacks on truth and reconciliation in Canada”, Carleton covers some of the many attempts at denying and downplaying the realities of Canada’s Indian Residential Schools. As expressed by Carleton, “like other kinds of denialism, residential school denialism is not the outright denial of the system’s existence, but rather the rejection or misrepresentation of basic facts about residential schooling to undermine truth and reconciliation efforts in Canada.”<sup>6</sup> While Carleton’s article was inspired by the comments of one Senator in 2017, just two years after the publication of the TRC’s final report and calls to action, denial of the realities of Residential Schools is unfortunately neither new nor unique.

Nor has such denial and attempted erasure been limited to individual members of the Canadian government or private Canadian citizens. The TRC’s *What We Have Learned, Principles of Truth and Reconciliation*, opens as such: “For over a century, the central goals of Canada’s Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada.”<sup>7</sup> This thesis has endeavoured to demonstrate that, outside of the hopefully very obvious residential school system, one of the main but less evident methods through which the Canadian government has attempted to erase Indigenous culture is through the creation of national colonial narratives, which are in turn disseminated to the public through avenues such as NHS. As demonstrated in part by Freeman’s overview of

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<sup>6</sup> Carleton, “‘I Don’t Need Any More Education’”, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Sinclair, Littlechild, and Wilson, *What We Have Learned*, 1.



Torontonian's perceptions of their city's past, it is not only settler Canadians whose understanding of Canadian history is misinformed by national colonial narratives and the ways that they are presented.

Jesse Thistle, an Indigenous scholar, and his colleagues Anders Sandberg and Martha Stiegman demonstrate the impact that a misrepresented history, or the total erasure of a part of the history being presented, can have on young Indigenous people. Their collective chapter, "'But where am I?' Reflections on digital activism promoting Indigenous People's presence in a Canadian heritage village" is one piece of a three-part project intended to demonstrate the lack of Indigenous representation at the Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto, Ontario. The other two pieces of the project are a video with narration by Thistle, and a website dedicated to a letter that Thistle wrote in university to the Pioneer Village explaining the pain that the exclusion of Indigenous history had caused him as a child, and photos of the Village.<sup>8</sup> As expressed by the authors in this chapter, heritage sites tend to "have a nostalgic and moral message that tells us more about the present than the history they purport to describe," and at the Black Creek Pioneer Village, "the present denies the place of Indigenous nations, justifies Canadian claims of sovereignty, bolsters the myth of terra nullius, and refuses a space for Indigenous claims for recognition of lands and resources."<sup>9</sup> As with the representation of history at sites like Louisbourg, the history presented at the Village presents to the public, "the majority of whom are school children, families with young children, and pensioners," is a sanitized, nostalgia-based version of a past that never really existed. The staff at the Village were

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<sup>8</sup> Sandberg, Thistle, and Stiegman, "'But where am I?'" 300, 307.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

willing to admit that the history the Village presented was not necessarily truthful, but would not commit to changing it, particularly not to include history about Indigenous people who they claimed were not in the area at the time of European settlement.<sup>10</sup> This is not correct and, as the authors express, “more broadly and fundamentally, the Black Creek Pioneer Village narrative speaks against persistent efforts to make connections between historic treaties and other agreements between settler society and Indigenous peoples,” something that this thesis argues is true of all museums and NHS that interpret history in such a way that it fits within the national colonial narratives.<sup>11</sup>

Within the larger picture of Indigenous erasure, this thesis has attempted to demonstrate that the Halifax Citadel has made fewer alterations to its programming since its development as an NHS than the Fortress of Louisbourg, although not without reason. While both sites are former military installations, the Fortress of Louisbourg was a town and port as well as a garrison. The Citadel was a thoroughly military location, and its historical narrative and interpretation remain so today, and as such are more difficult to change. In addition, this thesis has demonstrated that in choosing the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders to represent, the Halifax Citadel has only further settled into its colonial nature and further conformed to the Canadian government’s national colonial narratives. Representing Indigenous history, or that of other marginalized groups, at the Citadel has been demonstrated to be difficult, although there have been some recent developments in Mi’kmaw representation, mainly in apparent response to the TRC’s “Calls to Action” and in keeping with Parks Canada’s 2019 *Framework*.

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<sup>10</sup> Sandberg, Thistle, and Stiegman, ““But where am I?””, 303, 304.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 304.

Having established that both NHS exemplify the extent to which Parks Canada has created and continues to create narratives focused on white, military, colonial history in keeping with the Canadian government's national colonial narratives, this thesis now turns outwards. It is both helpful and necessary to look to current scholarship on the decolonisation of Canadian NHS and other museums and work from the fields of history, education, and archaeology when considering what steps can be taken in the future to further the representation of Indigenous groups and other marginalized cultures in sites currently forwarding Canada's historical narrative if any. It is also important to note that such representation may not be possible. In particular, this thesis suggests that precedence be given to Indigenous scholars in the field when considering how to move forward.

Several elements complicate the representation of Indigenous history through settler heritage sites, especially those that are federally mandated and run, beyond the clear threat posed to the dominant narrative by such inclusions. Dramatic internal change to the contents of interpretation and the inclusion of Indigenous history, or that of other marginalized groups, is difficult to inspire. Consciously or not, the Canadian government as a whole has operated under the assumption that including information that destabilizes Canada's national colonial narratives, such as Indigenous history, is a threat to their continued hegemony.<sup>12</sup> This is, of course, not necessarily the case with Parks Canada historians, but rather with the system within which they operate. As legal scholar Richard Herz points out:

In short, cultural minorities can threaten the state's very legitimacy.

Although this holds true for many kinds of minority groups,

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<sup>12</sup> Youdelis, "The Colonial Antipolitics", 1375; Veracini, "Settler Collective, Founding Violence and Disavowal", 364.

indigenous cultures are especially threatening to the state's legitimacy, and thus are particularly endangered by the state's efforts to maintain its legitimacy...<sup>13</sup>

While Herz refers to a broader socio-political context, his points can very much be applied to historical representation and narrative. If confronted with new information about the past, the population will be given the opportunity to think critically about the state in a way that they otherwise may not have been able to. If that information is introduced through the official vehicle for Canada's history, (NHS), and thus seen as legitimate, it is even more likely to destabilize the status quo. Despite the government's reluctance to discuss those histories, and their many decades of actively erasing not only Indigenous histories and perspectives but entire cultures, some recent moves have been made. With the TRC's 2015 "Calls to Action" that have already been briefly discussed, the Canadian government, including branches like Parks Canada, were called to take action on a variety of Indigenous topics. Parks Canada's 2019 *Framework* outlines their intentions moving forward for meeting the report's demands. This thesis puts forward that while the *Framework* does demonstrate intent to change on the part of Parks Canada, it includes little by way of concrete examples of how changes will be or are being made, aside from the expectation that sites' find ways to address "conflict and controversy" in their interpretation.<sup>14</sup> Having said that, the *Framework*'s explicit recognition of Indigenous history as a priority, as well as its acknowledgement of colonialism and the assertion that the HSMBC is keeping up with, and making changes according to, the current and evolving field of history is promising.<sup>15</sup> Outside of the potential for change offered by the Parks Canada 2019

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<sup>13</sup> Herz, "Legal Protection for Indigenous Cultures", 692.

<sup>14</sup> McKenna, *Framework for History and Commemoration*, 25, 30.

<sup>15</sup> McKenna, *Framework for History and Commemoration*, 40.

*Framework*, there are plenty of discussions surrounding the topics from elsewhere, both within the field of heritage and without.

Sainte-Marie among the Hurons NHS, discussed by Debora Ryan and Emily Stokes-Rees in their article “A Tale of Two Missions: Common Pasts/Divergent Futures at Transnational Historic Sites”, provides insight into the processes of developing more representative programming.<sup>16</sup> At Saint-Marie among the Hurons, according to Ryan and Stokes-Rees, the programming has “broadened its focus by adding layers of indigenous context to the well-established story of St. Jean de Brebeuf as a martyr and French Canadian hero and the story of Jesuit contact with the Wendat” in recent years and provides an example of how changes might be made to other NHS to broaden their representation.<sup>17</sup> Attempts at providing a greater level of Indigenous representation at the site were Indigenous-led and began in the 1980s, when:

some of the first Native employees—a couple of local Ojibwe women—working as tour guides at the site decided they wanted to wear period clothing rather than uniforms. Then, and today, the Huron people have been represented predominantly by local Ojibwe, who had relocated to the region after the surviving Huron fled with the French to Quebec in the 1650s. For the first time, the questions arose: did Sainte-Marie want to represent the Huron, and was it possible to do it effectively? How would Native interpreters deal with stereotypes and expectations?<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Sainte-Marie among the Hurons NHS is a historic site in what is now Midland, Ontario. The NHS is on the site of a “seventeenth century Jesuit mission to the First Nations of “Huronnia”, the country of the Hurons.” It is a site of colonisation and eventual violence between the Wendat/French alliance and the Iroquois. Ryan and Stokes-Rees, “A Tale of Two Missions”, 11-12.

<sup>17</sup> Ryan and Stokes-Rees, “A Tale of Two Missions”, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Ryan and Stokes-Rees, “A Tale of Two Missions”, 16.

Sainte-Marie among the Hurons thus provides an example of organically created change, which came directly from Indigenous employees of the site. However, the quote above also raises important questions about how Indigenous representation should be done efficiently, and without placing Indigenous interpreters in danger of harassment (such as with the initial Mi'kmaw Scout program at Louisbourg in the 1970s and 1980s). Site management and historians at the time worried that the use of Indigenous interpreters in historic costumes might run “the risk of casting them as artefacts” stating that “if a historic site focuses solely on the preservation of past ways of life, it risks limiting the possibilities for thinking about new understandings of cultural heritage and expressions of contemporary identities.”<sup>19</sup> It would also very much at least seem to place the interpretation of Indigenous history squarely within the borders of Canada’s national colonial narratives. Today, the Indigenous interpretive program is led by an Ojibwe man, Del Taylor, who was an interpreter when the first attempts at having Indigenous employees in historical dress were made. Despite the successes of this program at this specific site, there remain issues and risks to consider when discussing similar ideas elsewhere.<sup>20</sup> While the Indigenous interpretive program at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons originated with Indigenous people and can certainly be considered to fall into the category of work that is “*theirs*”,<sup>21</sup> it is also a program operated through an existing NHS, within Canada’s colonial framework.

Some Indigenous historians argue that the representation of Indigenous history through internationally recognized systems, including Canadian NHS like Saint Marie among the Hurons, is the path forward. In “Commemoration and reconciliation: the

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<sup>19</sup> Ryan and Stoke-Rees, “A Tale of Two Missions:”, 19-20.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 16-18.

<sup>21</sup> Peters, “The Future Is Mi'kmaq”, 216.

Mohawk Institute as a World Heritage Site” Coady Groat calls for the naming of the Mohawk Residential School in Brantford Ontario as a World Heritage Site. He argues that the Institute, which already operates as a museum that offers guided tours and context around one of the most horrifying events and systems in Canadian history, more than fits the requirements for what UNESCO considers historically important. Groat argues that the naming of the Mohawk Institute as a WHS could play a part in working towards reconciliation and would ensure that the Institute would serve as a reminder and monument to the Canadian government’s genocide of the First Nations peoples, unlike with Saint Marie among the Hurons.<sup>22</sup> In going outside of Canada’s systems for recognising locations



Figure 6. The Mohawk Institute museum, formerly Residential School, in 2013.

of historical importance, the Mohawk Institute would avoid any pushback from the government and circumvent the issue of having to adhere to Canada’s national colonial narratives. Perhaps, then, achieving international recognition is the way forward for

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<sup>22</sup> Cody Groat, “Commemoration and Reconciliation: The Mohawk Institute as a World Heritage Site.” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 31, no. 2 (2018), 196-98.

Indigenous groups, forcing the Canadian government to recognize their needs and rights or lose face on an international scale.

Yet, simultaneously, scholars such as Glen Sean Coulthard in *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition. Indigenous Americas* problematize the utility of the concept of “recognition” for Indigenous peoples. Coulthard questions whether “nation to nation” recognition means anything in a settler state and whether First Nations *need* recognition from the government that colonised them.<sup>23</sup> In the context of a program like that at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, the question becomes whether or not the program represents Indigenous agency and Indigenous-led efforts at decolonising the establishment, or if it is simply another way that Canada has offered “recognition”, with little to back it. For a site such as the Mohawk Institute, although going beyond the Canadian colonial context, perhaps achieving international recognition is something impactful; external pressure could theoretically help to create change within Canada.

Further than that, some Indigenous historians bring into question the possibility of appropriately representing Indigenous history at NHS, or in any settler run museum, at all.<sup>24</sup> These historians argue that the representation of their culture within governmental, colonial structures is unnecessary and even impossible. They emphasize that the importance of Indigenous autonomy in how they are represented is key, and caution anyone generalizing about what Indigenous peoples want. Mi’kmaq historian Mercedes Peters explains that:

the importance of Indigenous scholars writing histories that are distinctly *theirs*, and non-Indigenous scholars honouring unique Indigenous worldviews and historical experiences and focusing on

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<sup>23</sup> Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 17, 154.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 11, 19-22.



reinforcing the unique experiences of individual Indigenous nations, cannot be overstated. Maybe our answer to the question of how we decolonize, how we do reconciliation, and how we do Indigenous history is not found in making broad strokes or claims about reality. Maybe the answer exists in the individual nations themselves. The future of Indigenous history, then, of reconciliation, is Mi'kmaq. It is Wolastoqiyik. It is Peskotomuhkati. It lies not in seeing Indigenous as singular, but plural, and letting the changes in thinking that come with that dictate our actions and our work in the field.<sup>25</sup>

While Peters is discussing the work of Indigenous historians within academia, it is fair to say that the same concepts can be applied to Indigenous representation in public history and should certainly be applied to that history if it is represented through NHS.

Similarly, Angela Cavender Wilson, in “Reclaiming Our Humanity: Decolonizing and the Recovery of Indigenous Knowledge”, argues for the importance of enacting ‘decolonisation’ through the acquisition of knowledge and emphasizes the necessity of remembering and returning to historic ways of being for Indigenous peoples. Wilson points out that the coloniser/settler view of nature and culture as separate things that can have no connection is almost always incompatible with the views of Indigenous peoples for whom their cultural practices are given by spirits or the divine. Culture in many Indigenous contexts *is* nature.<sup>26</sup> The idea of humans and culture as being separate from nature is a decidedly European concept, adding yet another layer to the coloniality of Canada’s

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<sup>25</sup> Peters, “The Future Is Mi'kmaq”, 216.

<sup>26</sup> Angela Cavender Wilson, “Reclaiming Our Humanity: Decolonization and the Recovery of Indigenous Knowledge.” *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*, Ed. Devon A. Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson. (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 70.

national narratives and their expression through National Historic Sites, rather than National Parks. Wilson also discusses the loss of Indigenous knowledge due to colonial government practices, in particular the loss of language through indoctrination programs like the Boarding or Residential School systems in Canada and the United States. Working with that understanding it is easy to see how Indigenous people could feel uncomfortable working within a governmental system. While she feels that many parts of Indigenous cultures should not be shared outside of Indigenous communities, particularly sacred and ceremonial elements and activism tactics, Wilson argues strongly that there needs to be space for and acceptance of all forms of Indigenous knowledge in academia, not only information that academic circles will accept as legitimate.<sup>27</sup> How that level of understanding and acceptance of Indigenous methods could be applied to NHS without fully dismantling the system remains to be seen, particularly considering the role of NHS and the Canadian government in the erasure of Indigenous cultures, histories, perspectives, languages, and traditions since their respective establishments.

Like Peters and Wilson, Lance M Foster, an Indigenous archaeologist, emphasizes that “in short, there is no one “Native Perspective” when it comes to archaeology, but that there is a “unified Native concern over the treatment of the past” and cautions those who would look for collaboration from Indigenous groups that “your project is always in competition for time and money with other issues, like water, sovereignty, health care, and education. Why should the tribe care?”<sup>28</sup> However, this advice should not be taken as a suggestion for inaction - Foster is clear that he believes in collaborative efforts between

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<sup>27</sup> Wilson, “Reclaiming our Humanity”, 72-74, 77, 79.

<sup>28</sup> Jameson and Baugher, *Past Meets Present*, 110, 112.

settler archaeologists and Indigenous groups.<sup>29</sup> Instead, his advice, which can be easily applied to work at historic sites, is intended to prepare historians and archaeologists for respectful and helpful work with and for Indigenous groups.

Dwayne Donald, in “Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage: Imagining Decolonization of Aboriginal-Canadian Relations in Educational Contexts”, contends that the traditional, dominant history presented at forts and other historic sites presents two fully separate narratives, which translates to the idea of settlers and Indigenous peoples existing in separate realities. However, rather than proposing a separate method of conveying Indigenous realities outside of the NHS or historic site, Donald suggests a combining of those two narratives within the same space to present a more truthful narrative, using a method that he has labelled “Indigenous Métissage” and which “involves the purposeful juxtaposition of mythic historical perspectives (often framed as commonsense) with Aboriginal historical perspectives.”<sup>30</sup> This, this thesis argues, is precisely the kind of change to NHS that the Canadian government cannot or will not allow, despite Parks Canada’s 2019 *Framework*, while attempting to maintain Canada’s national colonial narratives, but which is the clearest route to disrupting that narrative.

How that balance might translate to the context of NHS and other historic sites has been discussed both within and outside of the Canadian context. Kaye Walker and Gianna Moscardo’s “Moving beyond Sense of Place to Care of Place: The Role of Indigenous Values and Interpretation in Promoting Transformative Change in Tourists' Place Images and Personal Values” is an article focused on ‘Indigenous Tourism’. Walker and Moscardo

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Donald, “Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage”, 5.

explain that “Hinch and Butler (2007, p. 5) defined Indigenous tourism as “tourism activities in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction.”<sup>31</sup> This is a definition the authors agree with and one that is useful when applied to the analysis of Canadian National Parks and Historic Sites; it is necessary to tread thoughtfully when asking Indigenous people to participate in Indigenous tourism for many reasons. Is what they are doing of their own volition? Is it tokenizing? Is it demeaning or simplifying? All of these are important questions to keep in mind while determining how or if Indigenous peoples want their histories or current realities represented by Parks Canada, as Parks Canada is a branch of the Canadian government that has spent well over a century creating a narrative that has completely excluded them, aside from the violence in the very act of creating “Canada”.

Australian scholar Jenifer Carter tackles the issue of Indigenous representation via a World Heritage Area in Australia in “Displacing Indigenous Cultural Landscapes: The Naturalistic Gaze at Fraser Island World Heritage Area”. The way in which agencies that advertise historic and heritage areas operate often promotes a way of viewing Indigenous peoples that distances or disallows them from playing active roles in the management of said places. The general perception and understanding held by white people is that Indigenous peoples are intrinsically linked to nature and the natural world and that the natural world and heritage are two separate things. Carter argues that “some of this disjuncture occurs in the world heritage arena because the terminology of separate natural and cultural values is pervasive in planning for and in managing such sites, without a critical

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<sup>31</sup> Kaye Walker and Gianna Moscardo, “Moving beyond Sense of Place to Care of Place: The Role of Indigenous Values and Interpretation in Promoting Transformative Change in Tourists' Place Images and Personal Values.” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 24, no. 8-9 (2016), 1244.

analysis of its implications.”<sup>32</sup> As discussed earlier by Wilson, this concept of Indigenous peoples as being ‘natural’ and therefore disconnected from heritage or culture is present in the promotional tactics of Canadian tourism and of the thought processes behind the creation and marketing of National Parks and Historic Sites as separate spaces with little to no overlap. In doing this, Canada has also managed to create another level of separation between the country’s national colonial narratives and Indigenous peoples. If Indigenous groups are a “part of nature” then there is no need to consider them or their suffering along with the “rest” of Canada’s history.

Within the Canadian context, Indigenous populations also have more than enough reason to be suspicious of Parks Canada, and not only because it is a branch of the Canadian government and responsible in part for the erasure of their histories, cultures, and practices. Theodore Binnema and Melanie Niemi’s “‘Let the Line be Drawn Now’: Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park in Canada”, covers the removal of the Nakoda people from Banff National Park before the park’s designation. Binnema and Niemi argue that in Canada (and the United States) Indigenous peoples were excluded from the land claimed by the government for National Parks not for the preservation of the environment or a return to “pristine nature” as claimed by the Parks Branch, but for “game (not wildlife) conservation, sport hunting, tourism, and aboriginal civilization”.<sup>33</sup> In other words, the goal was to ‘civilize’ the Indigenous peoples who relied on the land by removing them from the bounds of the new parks and in the process ensure that they would no longer be depleting the ‘stocks’ of game that white

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<sup>32</sup> Jennifer Carter, “Displacing Indigenous Cultural Landscapes: The Naturalistic Gaze at Fraser Island World Heritage Area.” *Geographical Research* 48, no. 4 (2010), 399.

<sup>33</sup> Binnema and Niemi, “‘Let the Line Be Drawn Now’”, 725.

tourists and hunters would want to shoot. This was not done because of a belief that National Parks needed to be uninhabited.<sup>34</sup> The authors conclude that they do not aim to pass judgement on the management of Banff National Park but argue that a great deal of Indigenous knowledge about what is now Banff has been lost in large part due to the removal and exclusion of Indigenous peoples. In doing so, Parks Canada further separates Indigenous people from its operations and therefore from NHS and the Canadian national colonial narratives. When they were “allowed” by the government to return to the park, it was in ways that reinforced their assigned role in the colonial narrative as “part of nature”, side roles in the main story of European colonisation and culture.

Courtney Wade Mason argues throughout *Spirit of the Rockies: Reasserting an Indigenous Presence in Banff National Park* that the Nakoda were and are used as a part of the “production of ‘naturalness’ in Banff”. This involved elements such as participating in “Banff Indian Days” throughout the twentieth century, wherein their culture and customs, as well as their appearance, were used to draw tourists. Nakoda also worked as tour guides, using traditional skills and knowledge to help guide tourists through the woods. While efforts are being made at including present-day Nakoda people in the running of Banff, amongst other changes that could be viewed as ways for the Nakoda to use Banff National Park and reassert their presence, Mason argues that it is also important that tokenization is avoided in the attempt to include them.<sup>35</sup> When considering the inclusion of Nakoda within the existing Parks structure, it is difficult to see how this could be done in a non-tokenizing fashion; “including” people in colonial operations on land that they were expropriated from

*Figure 7. Stoney First Nations entering Banff Park, 1957, to participate in Banff Indian Days.*

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<sup>34</sup> Binnema and Niemi, ““Let the Line be Drawn Now””, 724.

<sup>35</sup> Mason, *Spirit of the Rockies*, 84, 87-92, 99-103.



is the bare minimum of effort, particularly done in such a way that does not disrupt national colonial narratives or the status quo.

It is also necessary to consider how the introduction of Indigenous cultures and histories in the interpretation of existing NHS might harm the people of those Indigenous groups. Avoiding harmful stereotypes and damaging narratives has already proven difficult for Canadian tourism boards. In their article “Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Cultures, and the Promotional Landscape of Tourism in Ontario, Canada’s Near North” Bryan Grimwood, Meghan Muldoon, and Zachary M Stevens argue that “indeed, tourism promotions tend to code Indigenous peoples as the remaining vestiges of a ‘dying breed’ whose cultural dress, ceremonies, and customs can be preserved and celebrated through

tourism.”<sup>36</sup> The authors argue that the promotion of Indigenous peoples as objects of interest never includes their current realities and only situates their cultures as “traditional” and “ancient”, therefore distanced from the present and reality. This mythicization is particularly noticeable in descriptions of Indigenous histories; the authors use the example of using the word “myth” to describe anything that comes from an Indigenous way of knowing and of an informational sign at Algonquin National Park. The sign details a version of the history of the National Park in which the Algonquin people were players in the larger conflict between the French, Dutch, and English, mere allies to the French and collateral damage in their triumphant colonisation story.<sup>37</sup> Inaccurate or oversimplified representations of this type are precisely what makes up the national colonial narratives in Canada, and what continues to erase actual Indigenous histories and cultures.

In ““They Could Take You out for Coffee and Call It Consultation!”: The Colonial Antipolitics of Indigenous Consultation in Jasper National Park” Megan Youdelis partially covers the history of another large National Park, Jasper. The focus of her article is on the consultation, or lack thereof, between the Canadian government (through Parks Canada) and the Indigenous peoples who lived in what is now called Jasper National Park. The Canadian government and Parks Canada are praised internationally for their partnership with Indigenous peoples when establishing new National Parks, but Youdelis argues that this praise is misdirected. Instead, she sees the interaction between Parks Canada and Indigenous peoples in this context as a way of reinforcing colonial power relations. The Canadian government is ultimately in the position of power, is under no real obligation to

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<sup>36</sup> Grimwood, et al, “Promotional Landscape of Tourism in Ontario”, 233-234.

<sup>37</sup> Grimwood, et al, “Promotional Landscape of Tourism in Ontario”, 241-243.



agree with or enact the recommendations of Indigenous peoples and has the ultimate power. ‘Consulting’ with Indigenous peoples in this way is more about saving face than actually taking into consideration the wishes or needs of Indigenous people.<sup>38</sup> To truly take into consideration the needs of Indigenous peoples, the government would risk destabilizing Canada’s national colonial narratives and the power and security granted by them. As colonialism was not an “event” that has now ended but remains an ongoing process in Canada, Youdelis argues that “the idea that First Nations need to negotiate for free access to their own territories is itself unjust.”<sup>39</sup> While NHS may not be conceived as “nature” in the same ways as National Parks, and therefore are not seen by colonisers as Indigenous in the same way, the reality is that both the Fortress of Louisbourg and the Halifax Citadel were and are in unceded Mi’kmaw territory, as other NHS are located on variously ancestral and unceded land across modern Canada.<sup>40</sup>

While this thesis is unable to provide concrete suggestions for how to move forward, it is hoped that the above review of some existing efforts at the inclusion of Indigenous history in settler heritage organisations, and more importantly the discussion of a portion of the different perspectives held by Indigenous scholars, has provided some basis for future actions. This thesis has provided histories and analyses of two of Nova Scotia’s NHS, and in doing so, the goal has been to demonstrate the inherent problems in representing colonial history from colonial perspectives through colonial sites as the official history of the country of Canada. However, more investigation of such sites, both

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<sup>38</sup> Youdelis, et al, “The Colonial Antipolitics”, 1375-1376.

<sup>39</sup> Youdelis, et al, “The Colonial Antipolitics”, 1380.

<sup>40</sup> Conrad, *At the Ocean’s Edge*, 125-6, 137; “Add Mi’kmaq Name to Welcome Sign: Mayor.” *Chronicle-herald (Halifax, N.S.)* (Halifax, N.S), 2018.

within Nova Scotia and across Canada, would be very beneficial to the fields of history and public history in Canada.

## Conclusion

As a country that takes pride in openness, multiculturalism, and justice, Canada has attempted to construct national colonial narratives that are equally as sanitized and friendly to support those claims. In the process of creating that historical narrative, the Canadian government has made use of certain official methods of transferring information to the public, including Canadian NHS. Through what was, at the time, the Parks Branch of the Department of the Interior, the Canadian government began to develop Historic Sites in earnest in the 1910s and 1920s, beginning with Fort Howe in New Brunswick.<sup>1</sup> Before long, the Parks Branch had acquired sites in various parts of the country, including Nova Scotia, and was working to determine how best to represent the new country's history through those sites, as well as how they might be used to aid in efforts at the construction of national identity.

The Fortress of Louisbourg and the Halifax Citadel NHS are two of the most popular historic sites in Canada. As one of the first NHS in Canada, Louisbourg was ground-breaking, both as a part of a relatively new program and because of its own programming. When the process of designing and administering an NHS like Louisbourg is examined, it is possible to see, as this thesis has argued, that Louisbourg demonstrates precisely the kind of history that the Canadian government and members of the Parks Branch want to convey to the general public and has since its designation. Not only was the site's history deeply entrenched in European colonial endeavours, but it also played a pivotal role in determining the outcome of colonial conflict in the "New World", as the "key to a continent."<sup>2</sup> The emphasis of exactly that kind of concept, purposeful on the part of Louisbourg's administration, was echoed in all decision

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, *Time Travel*, 58; Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> Parks Canada, "Interpretation – a Preliminary Report", 9.

making regarding the site during the full of the early and mid-twentieth century. By the 1960s and 1970s, as site management moved away from emphasizing the military nature of Louisbourg's history, the site was well on its way to being the perfect snapshot of sanitized eighteenth-century domestic life and French culture that it remains today.<sup>3</sup> Even as the administration has made changes to the site's programming and expanded the history conveyed through interpretation at Louisbourg since the 1960s and 1970s, including the addition of Mi'kmaq-led programming and information about the history of slavery in Cape Breton,<sup>4</sup> Louisbourg very much contributes to Canada's national colonial narratives.

The Halifax Citadel NHS, now re-enacting a portion of the long history of British colonisation in Mi'kma'ki/Acadie/Nova Scotia, was singled out for designation as an NHS by the Massey Commission precisely because of the patriotic sentiment and national fervour that it was hoped it would inspire.<sup>5</sup> This thesis has argued that the current interpretive program at the Citadel, and is conveyed through living history, which represents a portion of the late nineteenth century, fits well within Canadian national colonial narratives. While scholars of nationalism would rightly take issue with the conflation of Scottish national identity with British, in the case of the Citadel, that has very much been done. Despite "charming" cultural differences, the nature of the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders as a unit within the British Army, as well as within a province that has wholeheartedly embraced a "Scottishness", results in the focus being simultaneously on "tartanism" and the exploits of British colonisation in the vein of Canadian national colonial narratives.<sup>6</sup> Of course, as this thesis has attempted to demonstrate, the

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<sup>3</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 361-362; Morgan, *Rise Again*, 36.

<sup>4</sup> Macleod, "Decolonizing Interpretation", 370-72; Donovan, "Slaves in Île Royale, 1713-1758", 26-28.

<sup>5</sup> Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Science (Massey Commission). "Report." Ottawa: Government of Canada, (1951).

<sup>6</sup> McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant", 17.

acceptance of this kind of “different” nation (which in reality falls well within the created parameters of Canada’s national colonial narratives) offers no threat to the legitimacy of the Canadian state in the way that an acceptance of Indigenous nations would. There have been fewer overall changes to the Halifax Citadel’s interpretive material and programming than at the Fortress of Louisbourg, and today the site’s historical narrative remains very much in keeping with Canada’s national colonial narratives.

Having attempted to demonstrate that these two NHS illustrate the role of Canadian NHS in the creation and maintenance of national colonial narratives, the question of what could or should be done about this remains. The fact that neither of the sites discussed herein make a concerted effort at conveying the violent realities of the site’s pasts, or at including Indigenous perspectives within the main narrative, is used throughout this thesis as a criticism. However, this thesis also acknowledges that Indigenous peoples may not necessarily consider NHS to be appropriate vehicles for the conveyance of their histories and experiences, particularly when taking into account their role in the erasure of Indigenous cultures and histories. Simultaneously, this thesis points to the seeming impossibility of truly including Indigenous histories within interpretation at NHS when the acknowledgement of such history would inherently destabilize Canadian national colonial narratives and bring up a variety of uncomfortable realities for settler descendants. In exploring a variety of literature on the topic of Indigenous inclusion and “recognition” within colonial spaces, as well as the thoughts of several Indigenous scholars on the possibility of Indigenous representation through colonial, western historic sites and museums, this thesis hopes to have provided a glimpse at a much larger discussion about decolonisation in the fields of history and public history, amongst others.

Further work on the topic of Indigenous and other marginalized groups' representation in NHS and other museums, specifically from or in collaboration with Indigenous scholars, would be beneficial to everyone involved in Canadian public history, and by extension everyone living in Canada. While it is unlikely that a transformation of the contents of interpretation at NHS would or could completely alter the way that all Canadians understand Canada's history, it is to be hoped that a more thorough understanding of Canada's past and its roots in colonial violence could result in real, concrete changes not only to Canadian national colonial narratives but to the treatment of Indigenous peoples/nations and other marginalized groups within Canada today. Of course, all of that is reliant on the willingness of the Canadian government to accept changes to its national colonial narratives, which would undoubtedly weaken the government's legitimacy. Should it be determined that change in the historical narratives presented by NHS is unachievable, or undesirable, this thesis sees no reason that changes to Canadian understanding of the country's history must come through the "official" channel.

As it stands, it is clear that NHS are vehicles for the dissemination and creation of national colonial narratives that simplify and sanitize history. By erasing or sidelining Indigenous and other marginalized histories, NHS historical narratives avoid dealing with the violent reality of Canada's past and present; in doing so, they support Canada's constructed national colonial narratives which claim kindness, inclusivity, and respect as inherent, while contributing to the oppression of Indigenous peoples and other marginalized communities.

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### **Images**

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