

French Vernacular Architecture in Pre-Deportation Acadia

By
Aaron Taylor

A Thesis Submitted to
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in Atlantic Canada Studies

April 2012, Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Abstract

Traditional historiography maintains that the early French settlers to Nova Scotia forged a distinct ethnic identity through communal labour and unique farming practises, and the Acadian deportees of 1755 were considered a homogenous ethnic group. Through the examination of an element of this emerging culture: vernacular architecture, this thesis compliments the work of more recent researchers who argue that this group of settlers were more autonomous of one another. Rather than the emergence of common traits and practices the early colonists instead fostered a great amount of architectural diversity. With an understanding of theoretical perspectives such as critical cartography and post-processual archaeology, this thesis provides analysis of Acadian colonial architecture through primary documents, extant buildings in North America and the archaeological record. The results also show that tracing early settlers back to specific regions in their country of origin, as in the example of Belleisle, provides a richer understanding of who these people were and offers explanations why architectural diversity existed. Finally, the real value of this thesis is not that it ends the conversation on Acadian ethnogenesis but instead adds to the important conversation now underway.

April 16th, 2012

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Definitions

Ethnic identity: that aspect of a person's self-conceptualization which results from identification with a broader group in opposition to others on the basis of perceived cultural differentiation and/or common descent.

Ethnic group: any group of people who set themselves apart and/or are set apart by others with whom they interact or co-exist on the basis of their perceptions of cultural differentiation and/or common descent.

Ethnicity: all those social and psychological phenomena associated with a culturally constructed group identity as defined above. The concept of ethnicity focuses on the ways in which social and cultural processes intersect with one another in the identification of, and interaction between, ethnic groups.

Siân Jones (1997: xiii)

Vernacular architecture: a house built using local materials by local craftsmen who combined tradition, individuality and utility to produce a graceful house.

Heather Davidson (1988: 250)

Vernacular architecture: a) though built to cultural standards, not usually physically standardized, b) reflects inhabitants', and often the builders' own needs, and c) is not typically the product of designers or construction workers who have no intentions of occupying their handiwork.

David and Kramer 2001: 28

Introduction

Buildings, like poems and rituals, realize culture. Their designers rationalize their actions differently. Some say they design and build as they do because it is the ancient way of their people and place. Others claim that their practice correctly manifests the universally valid laws of science. But all of them create out of the smallness of their own experience.

Henry Glassie, *Vernacular Architecture* (2000)

*Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and of hemlock,
Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign of the Henries.
Thatched roofs with dormers-windows; and gables projecting
Over the basement below protected and shaded the door-way.*

Longfellow, *Evangeline* (1847)

During *Le Grand Dérangement*, (1755-1762), thousands of French colonists, men women and children were ordered on to ships, allowed to take only what they could carry, and were either transported to Europe or were scattered along the eastern and southern seaboard of North America. In order to dissuade any of those who may have survived this great upheaval (many did not) from returning, Colonel John Winslow, the New England officer ordered by Governor Charles Lawrence to carry out the deportation at Grand-Pré took drastic measures. It is recorded in his journal that "...after Confering

with Majr Murray it is agreed that the Villages in our different districts be destroyed immediately and the Grand-Pré when the inhabitants are removed” (Winslow 1755:182). As a result of this order, and the abandonment and subsequent deterioration of houses in other regions there exists no confirmed pre-expulsion French vernacular architecture. This leaves only primary source descriptions, historical cartography and archaeological evidence from which to attempt to reconstruct an accurate image of this landscape.

Without an understanding of this colonial architecture it is difficult to understand fully the evolving culture in 18th century Nova Scotia. Griffiths, a leading historian, has looked at this most closely and has established the dominant interpretation and which other historians and commentators have followed. They suggested that the French settlers who arrived in Acadia during the 17th and 18th centuries forged an ethnic identity distinct from the other early settlers of North America “from the daily rhythm of activity and the changing relationships between the migrant and the new world” (Griffiths 1992: 4; cf. Laxer, 2006; Ross and Deveau, 1992; Faragher, 2005). For the most part, they settled around salt marshes. Through hard work and communal effort they turned these marginal lands into one of the most fertile agricultural regions in the Maritimes. Did this unique style of settlement also lead to a distinct style of architecture? If so, did this architectural style, the building materials used, and construction techniques implemented reflect this new, emerging ethnic group?



Figure 1: *The Home of Evangeline* 1860 by Frances Flora Palmer. Courtesy of Musée Acadian of the Université de Moncton.

Figure 1, a 1860 painting entitled *The Home of Evangeline*, depicts a quaint Acadian hamlet and is but one example of many images “romanticizing” the French settlers in pre-deportation Acadia (Johnston 2004: 109). Not surprisingly, this painting was commissioned by one of the leading lithography companies in Philadelphia who were so inspired by the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem, *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* (1847) that they wanted to give the readers of this “epic” poem a visual companion (McKay and Bates 2010: 80). Unfortunately, as Ian McKay and Robin Bates describe in their book, *In the Province of History, The Making of the Public Past in*

Twentieth Century Nova Scotia, this Acadian hamlet more resembled “a sort of Switzerland or Bavaria” (McKay and Bates 2010: 80). Their chapter, “This is the Province Primeval” dissects effectively the influence *Evangeline* has had in shaping the historiography of 18th century Nova Scotia. They believe that because “we have remarkably little original documentation of Acadia [due to the] destruction of Acadian architecture, the absence of visual representations of Acadians and the lack of any literature offering eyewitness Acadian testimony about the events of 1755 allowed Longfellow and his successors to project whatever they imagined onto the relatively blank screen of the past” (McKay and Bates 2010: 78).

It is this “projection” that has among many other things, created a dim and fog-like picture of the early French settlers. This “projection”, I would contend, has sadly over-simplified these early settlers. This over-simplification naturally flows over and colours the understanding and interpretation of their architecture. Lifting this fog to establish a clearer “view” is important for many reasons. The examination of the vernacular architecture is one of the ways of achieving this goal. A focus on architectural practices, Voss explains, is crucial in understanding a culture as it “affords an important perspective on ethnogenesis because it sheds light on the choices and strategies used by members of a community to establish their physical presence in the landscape” (Voss 2008: 173). With a more thorough understanding of the types of dwellings that existed in the Acadian cultural landscape it is hoped that one might get a more comprehensive and richer understanding of who these diverse, resilient and enterprising people were. To

further this point, author and professor of architecture Henry Glassie suggests that the value in examining vernacular architecture lies in the conviction that:

architecture gives physical form to claims and names, to memories and hopes. As a conceptual activity, architecture is a matter of forming ideas into plans, plans into things that others can see. Architecture shapes relations between people. It is a kind of communication. The mode of its thinking connects architecture to all of culture, but its mode of realization distinguishes it from other varieties of communication. To be architecture, it must be realized in materials. (Glassie 2000: 22).

This thesis examines the diversity of pre-deportation vernacular architecture in the province of Nova Scotia. This will be done through the examination of primary and secondary texts, historical cartography, illustrations, extant architecture and an analysis of the archaeological record. It is not my intention to provide a complete, exhaustive inventory of all references to the architecture found in the literature, cartography or the archaeological record. The following texts and illustrations were chosen based on the quality of their descriptions and depictions of pre-deportation French vernacular architecture. A particular focus will be placed on the stylistic elements such as pitch and length of roof line, as well as the placement of the chimney, windows and doors because these features exemplified the “individuality of the builder or owner” (Davidson 1988: 250). I have decided to restrict the scope of this research mainly to the province of Nova Scotia (except in regards to extant architecture) because the Nova Scotian examples provide sufficient evidence of architectural diversity from which to make an historiographical contribution.

The first chapter will explore and discuss the descriptions and depictions of primary texts, and illustrations. It will not only pay close attention to the stylistic elements of the vernacular buildings and what they represent but the theory of critical cartography will be implemented as a tool to gauge if these texts and illustrations might have a deeper significance other than merely description.

Due to the dearth of pre-deportation vernacular architecture, early extant French buildings in North America will be examined in chapter two to determine whether there might have been any transference of styles, techniques and materials and if so what might the reasons be.

The third and final chapter will examine the archaeological record pertaining to pre-deportation sites in Nova Scotia. Does the archaeological record confirm or contrast what has been discussed in the two previous chapters?

The purpose of this examination is to provide the reader with an inventory or evidence of the architectural diversity found in 17th and 18th century. It is also intended to update and add to the work previously undertaken by historians and archaeologists (Crépeau and Christianson, 1995; cf. Deveau, 1982; Maygarden, 2006; Cullen, 1983). The conversation regarding these early French colonists is far from being concluded and it is hoped that this thesis will provide further insight and aid in its continuation.

Chapter 1

-Primary Sources-

Geography is so necessary to illustrate history that they ought to be inseparably connected.

(Jacques-Nicholas Bellin 1746. As cited in Lennox 2007)

The primary sources dealing with the architecture of 17th and 18th century Acadia can be considered sparse at best. Very little exists in the way of eyewitness descriptions in the primary texts, cartography or illustrations that accurately and conclusively depict the dwellings of the French inhabitants. What they do provide, however limited, is a tantalizing glimpse of the *variety* of buildings from this time period.

This chapter examines the first-hand accounts of travellers to the area. Their journals, diaries and letters include many references to the architecture of the period. It is accompanied by an analysis of illustrated documentation: the works of cartographers and artists who, while drawing maps and landscapes enhanced them with sketches of houses, barns and outbuildings.

However vague the drawing may be they are still valuable in providing the observer a sense of the style of buildings and the types of materials used. They must, again, be properly contextualized and examined with a critical eye in order to be fully appreciated and the lens of critical cartography must be employed. This critical eye must also be directed towards primary text in the same way. It is equally important to examine who was writing what as it is to examine what was being written.

Critical cartography emerged in the late 1980s, rising to prominence in the 1990s as a “one-two punch of new mapping practices and theoretical critique. Critical cartography challenges academic cartography by linking geographic knowledge with power and thus is political” (Crampton and Krygier 2006: 11). This is an effective theoretical stance to adopt when interpreting visual materials depicting contested landscapes of Acadie. For instance, Lennox uses critical cartography to examine how maps were used to advance the agenda of those in power, marginalize those threatening this power and convince and manipulate the British populace into believing this new colony, Nova Scotia, was a peaceful, hospitable land full of opportunity. “Mapping”, he writes, “and its cartographic evidence were key independent variables in the socio-political organization of power that situated early modern Canada in a British Atlantic world (Lennox 2007: 373).

The point Lennox is stressing is that, however detailed these maps may appear, they are not merely neutral or objective depictions of geography and culturally modified landscapes. Early maps of Halifax are manipulated through both omissions (leaving Native representations off the maps) and additions (making the British settlements appear

more robust than they actually were) to help frame the idea or concept of colonization in North America for the population back home. Support for this fledgling colony was not guaranteed as the British at Halifax inhabited a place beyond which lay a geography dominated by Natives with their own understanding and representations of space (Lennox 2007: 395). The British desperately wanted an influx of immigrants and they needed to make the new colony as appealing as possible in order to establish a sense of permanency in the eyes of both the Native population and equally important their long time French adversaries. These maps, or “tools of empire”, as John Brian Harley has argued, “create knowledge and power through their representative functions” (Harley 2005, as cited in Lennox 2007: 374). In our use of maps as sources, we must take care to avoid literalism.

Primary text

Imagination plays too important a role in the writing of history, and what is imagination but the projection of the author's personality?

Pieter Geyl (hnn.us/articles/1328.html)

After hearing two eyewitness accounts of the same accident, you begin to wonder about history.

Unknown (jimpoz.com/quotes/category:History)

The following texts are taken from the journals, letters and manuscripts of voyagers/travelers who visited Acadia up until the time of the expulsion of 1755 to 1763. It should be noted that many of these accounts have been summarized by other writers (Christianson and Crépeau 1995; cf. Daigle 1982; Cullen 1983), and in fact, there exists several other primary accounts that have not been included in this thesis. I believe it is

important to reiterate that the focus of this thesis is not to simply repeat the inventory of primary accounts, but to re-examine them as to how they pertain to vernacular architecture. The examples discussed here demonstrate the existence of diverse vernacular architectural styles in pre-Deportation Acadie.

While describing this new landscape the sources occasionally and briefly mentioned French architecture. Some references occur in court documents, where in the outlining of certain disputes between the government and a French inhabitant some details of the house are given (Moody 2004: 131). None of these provide very much architectural detail when taken alone, but when they are pieced together, one can infer from this information that a diversity of structures existed and the creation of a sort of architectural inventory is possible.

While one might be confident in writing that the homes colonists built were hardly elaborate or palatial, it should be remembered, particularly when reading the primary source description, that there exists a discourse in these early texts. Men such as Dièreville, who was either a surgeon, merchant or military officer-perhaps dabbling in all three (Webster 1933: 2) voyaged to Acadia in 1699 and viewed Acadians from the vantage point of privilege. He writes that the French need “to raise themselves from misery” (Dièreville 1708: 100) as though this was something accomplished merely through strength of will or desire. This etic view was not uncommon at that time, or even today for that matter, and one can see that Dièreville fell into this trap of ethnocentrism- believing that one’s own cultural norms are the benchmark and that those living in other ways are lesser persons. For the researcher, this unfortunately paints an

inaccurate or skewed historical picture. This negative view is well illustrated by one of Dièreville's poems:

To what a Wilderness, Oh Heaven,
 Have I come! Nothing before my eyes
 But streams and Forests, Huts of mud
 And Cottages; though well prepared
 For the condition of this place,
 How one can live here I don't know.
 Oh what a scene of poverty! Already I, with but a taste,
 Have had enough of this new France,
 And here, what penance for the Old I'll do.

(Dièreville 1708: 82)

While disparaging the settlers' houses and living conditions he does acknowledge their practicality. It is unfortunate that Dièreville does not provide any specific dimensional information which would aid in determining the size of the French houses. The description of these "huts" is not the only value in Dièreville's poem. It is interesting that he mentions them at all. Why would someone familiar with this type of architecture (peasant houses) take the time to put them in his journal? Was it because Dièreville had never seen such structures in France? A second point to keep in mind is that the community he was describing was relatively well established. These dwellings had not been quickly assembled to provide temporary shelter from a fast approaching winter. Port Royal had been permanently settled for over sixty years. These were people's homes. It should be noted that some of these houses may be newer and perhaps more crudely fashioned than others due to the 1690 raid by the New England adventurer Sir William Phips. Briefly, Phips, in retaliation for the looting of a storehouse by French

troops ordered the settlement pillaged. “The New Englanders levelled what there was of Saccardy’s fort, removed the cannons, and burned the palisades and other wood that had been assembled for its construction. They destroyed the large free-standing cross, looted the church, [and] killed the inhabitants’ livestock” (Dunn 2004: 38). To what extent the French houses were damaged or destroyed is not clearly stated.

This description contrasts with that of Governor Cornwallis, who in a report to the Lords of Trade in 1749, describes the French houses around present day Lunenburg as “very comfortable wooden houses covered with bark” (as cited in Campbell 1873: 101). Unlike Dièreville, Cornwallis was not merely reporting on what he saw on his travels. His purpose was to resettle Acadia with people other than French Catholics. It would appear that by describing this area as a place where nice homes and ample pasture lands existed potential settlers would find it more appealing. Were these two disparate descriptions accurate reflections or were they products of two men with different agendas?

Historian Alphonse Deveau quotes several primary sources describing French architecture in his 1982 article, *L’architecture acadienne avant l’Expulsion*. These primary sources, such as Le Marquis de la Boische de Beauharnois, who describes the French houses around Port Royal as “misérables logis de bois, sans commodités et sans ornements, à peine contenant le meuble le plus élémentaire” (Deveau 1982: 41) echo the critical tone of Dièreville. Captain John Knox had a similar perspective describing the houses of Annapolis Royal as “miserable and generally constructed of wood” (As cited in Deveau 1982: 41). These two first person accounts, although lacking dimensions, do

provide another important fact. Bois (wood) implies a more substantial dwelling than the “huts of mud” described by Dièreville. Gargas, traveling to Acadia in the years 1687 and 1688, provides a little more insight into how these dwellings were constructed, writing, “[a]ll the houses are low, made of pieces (logs) of wood, one on top of another covered with thatch, that in which the Governor lives being only one covered with planks (Morse 1935: 179). Charles Morris, a New England officer, describes briefly some French houses at Grand-Pré in 1747-1748, and in particular their chimneys: “Low houses framed in timber and their chimney framed with the building of wood and bond with clay except their fireplace below” (as cited in Deveau 1982: 41). Also interestingly, he mentions a stone house being found in the centre of the village. Daniel Beaujeu, a French officer and participant in the attack on Grand Pré in 1747, also makes mention of a stone house located in the village in his journal (As cited in Cagrain 1889: 66). Andrew Clark describes the stone house as “being in the centre of town” (Clark 1968: 217). Again, unfortunately, specifics on this stone house are not available. Was it made completely of stone or were stones embedded into the walls? Was it someone’s residence or a business requiring fortification? How large was it? It would appear that only through locating it and subsequent archaeological investigation that these questions might be addressed. As will be discussed later, archaeological evidence indicates that stone houses were quite rare and virtually unknown in pre-Deportation Acadia. The fact is we haven’t seen any stone houses in the archaeological record. They may have been used for more commercial purposes as opposed to dwellings. This Grand-Pré case does, however, add to the architectural diversity found in 17th and 18 century Acadia.

In 1881, the New York Historical Society published *The Montresor Journals*. These journals describe the journeys of John Montresor, a New England officer, who travelled throughout north-eastern North America during the mid 18th century. Of interest to this research, in 1758 Montresor, during the siege of Louisbourg, went into the French landscape when “the 22nd and 40th Regiments decamped and were quartered in the houses belonging to the French Inhabitants fitted up for Barracks” (Montresor 1758: 175). Although the deportation of the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia had begun in 1755, this process had not reached Cape Breton until the fall of Louisbourg in 1758. In March of 1759 Montresor reports that “40 men were detached from ye Garrison...to proceed on an Inland Scout directing to Lake LaBrador, from thence to Pointe la Jeunesse...where there is a small straggling settlement, near the Saw Mill River, to bring in what French we could find inhabiting those parts” (Montresor 1758: 188). They eventually arrived at a French village he calls “Village Roulen...(where) these houses were built with logs and plastered with clay. small [sic] Enclosures picketed in and parallel to the Road” (Montresor 1758: 190). Further along Montresor and his men “observed a creek that ran into the River well dammed up with a very good saw mill there on with a good dwelling house in repair-two rooms in it and but one fireplace, with an Oven” (Montresor 1758: 191). It is interesting he would make this observation regarding the fireplace. Was a house with one fireplace an oddity or was the oven a sign of more refinement in the house? Montresor continues his description of the rest of the house: “there were several good Berths or bed places built in the house, supposed for the Sawyers and people belonging to the mill and a large Iron Kettle capable of containing four Gallons. This house is built with logs squared and has a Loft, it is situated on a point

of land and the River and creek form a kind of fork, there is several foot boards and slabs-the quantity not specified as the snow covered a great part of it”(Montresor 1758: 191). Are these “foot boards” some sort of decking?

The following lengthy account of French architecture prior to the deportation is taken from the manuscript of Reverend, Dr. Andrew Brown, who made a report entitled, *Removal of the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia by Lieut. Governor & His Majesty’s Council in October 1755*. The manuscript is discussed in detail in a recent Master’s thesis (Beanlands 2010). This piece of work has been brought to my attention by several historians familiar with this historic document. They point out its detailed description of an “Acadian” house from which one can make several conclusions about what was being built by the French prior to their expulsion. This is problematic because it is a description of *a* house and therefore should not be understood as *the* Acadian house. However, as Sara Beanlands writes, Brown “appears to have based his description on the homes of Acadians he visited in the later eighteenth century, in particular, as he states later in the text, one in the Annapolis Valley” (Beanlands 2010: 179). That is not to say that there is no value in Dr. Brown’s work, but instead to be aware memories fade, and change over time and their accuracy should cause at least some hesitation. The annotated edition by Ms. Beanlands puts these descriptions into context:

These villages would have pleased the poet of the year, being placed, between the breathing forest & the sounding shore, on the first brow of the upland, near a brook that seldom failed in summer & that continued to flow during the severest frost. A Cabin of rough logs, standing East & West & about twenty four feet square, satisfied the modest wishes of the Cultivator. Some used a roof of battened deals ingeniously fortified by a coating of birch bark; while others

preferred the warmer covering of wheaten thatch, under which their forefathers had lived & died. The common people had only a single apartment, seven feet high & surmounted with a loft, in which they deposited their valuables. Only the Priests & Elders built houses of larger dimensions with sitting rooms & sleeping closets. With these slight exceptions, the architecture & distribution of the family dwelling were regulated by [conformed to] a single pattern.

The chimney rose in the East gable. There was a door near the center of each side wall, & one in the West end of the house. Each side wall contained two neat windows of clear glass trimmed with some care. Three beds, of the finest feathers & a sheeting of white linen, occupied part of the _____ Area; the two first so disposed of on the opposite side walls as to leave an open space of Eight feet in the length in front of the fire; & the third on the north of the west door but placed on purpose to form a small recess between it & the other bed on the same side, which being closed in with a screen and having a communication with the court yard by the North door, held the milk & daily provisions of the family. The free space to the front of the fire, which served at once as a kitchen & a parlour seemed to have been arranged by the genius of the Scottish part of the population.

A shelf, the exact counterpart of what may still be seen in the pastoral districts of Perth & Sterling, exhibited many bright rows of Pewter dishes and a full assortment of wooden trenchers & horn spoons. The chests which contained the clothing of the household were well finished, and being covered with the shaggy hide of the Moose or black bear served as seats for the family & its guests. These seats were generally crowded, every house swarming [as every family swarmed] with inhabitants. A circumstance so pleasing in its nature did not pass unobserved; and the officers of the New England troops used to say in their letters to their friends, 'You may perhaps be pleased to hear what is meant by a family among the happy people of this _____ land. They have no servants.

Indeed there is not now, & there never has been in their community a single instance of an individual living by the wages of labour. All are independent; all are land workers; all are nearly equal – and when the Elder children of a house are married, it generally happens that one of the younger children takes the home settlement, & the old people, being past labour [reposing from their toils], have the singular felicity of being cherished & soothed by the latest objects of their tenderness. Hence a family frequently consists not only of a man's wife & children, but of his parents & younger brothers & sisters, whose stock of cattle is rapidly increasing for their future Establishment. The length to which this custom is carried, will appear from the Census of the river Annapolis. We reckon it at

two hundred families. But of these only a hundred & thirty six consist of the husband & wife & their children; the rest being composed in the manner now mentioned; so that it is no rare thing to find a house with four men capable of bearing arms, for they are fruitful, and multiply fast, and live to a great age.'

Easily as these numerous inmates were accommodated, one part of their dwelling always engaged particular attention. The severe winter of North America taught the first colonists the value of the cave or cellar & its dryness & security from the frost were duly consulted. For the purpose of preserving vegetables as well as liquors, it usually occupied the whole area of the cabin, & was dry to the depth of several feet, & faced with a stone wall firmly bound together by long moss. A lode of soft water filled to the brim was often found in one of the corners.

No street was ever thought of in Akadia. The village stretched in a single row, & on the opposite side of the Common path way an oven of Antique form & considerable elevation faced the South door. The under part of the building which discovered much ingenuity was appropriated for the reception of the more favoured poultry a branch of economical management in which the matrons both delighted & excelled. Their domestic flock often displayed a mixture of wild fowls of different species. Outards, Canards & Partridges repaid the assiduity of vigilant protestors, and some of these even propagated their young. The barn, stables & low houses stood at a small distance in the rear of the house, & generally retired a little towards the West. (Brown, as cited in Beanlands 2010: 179)

Brown's work, when understood in the correct context, provides an important (and rare) account of a pre-deportation French settlement. However, Brown must be considered a "lumper". He routinely speaks of the Acadians as one people, with one type of settlement pattern and one type of societal construct solely based on his recollections of time spent in one area of the province. Fowler points out that Brown also synthesized a great deal of information from numerous sources, but agrees that they all seemed to have the same bias toward lumping (Fowler, J. Personal communication. 2012).

Acadia University professor Dr. Barry Moody offers an interesting piece of primary text in his essay *Making a British Nova Scotia*. It comes from a 1724 judgement by the governing Council "concerning a fire that had recently destroyed a house" in the town of

Annapolis (Moody 2004: 131). The scarcity of primary source descriptions of French villages and houses, including the layout, makes any text particularly valuable. According to Moody:

The physical appearance of Annapolis showed more continuity than change. The layout and configuration of the town remained much as it had been under the French. Streets, lot boundaries, and buildings would be largely unchanged as a result of the conquest. The fort still dominated the town from its position on a slight rise, with most of the houses and shops straggling down the hill and along the waterside. The only significant change was in the name of the main thoroughfare-from Rue Dauphin to St George Street-which ran from 'Land's End' to the cape. Most of the houses had survived the siege of 1710, and were utilized by the conquerors. In appearance and layout the town consequently more closely resembled an English or European medieval village than an eighteenth-century New England town. Something of the medieval flavour of the community is given in a 1724 judgement of the governing Council concerning a fire that had recently destroyed a house in the town 'Agree That Said Mrs Rice Should pay five pounds for presuming to make fire in a place where there was no funnel (chimney) to Carry the fire or Smoke through the Thatch'...

"In general appearance", Moody concludes, "the town remained very much as the French had created it" (Moody 2004: 131).

The thatched roof and apparent lack of a chimney is particularly interesting and will be discussed more thoroughly in a later chapter.

A further observation, not without contention, is that by Father Maillard, a missionary serving in Acadia from 1746 to 1768. It offers insight into the process by which some of the dwellings are constructed:

Their dwellings are almost all built in a uniform manner; the inhabitants themselves it was who built them, each for himself, there being but few or no mechanics in the country. They had sawmills for their timber, and with a plane and knife an Acadian would build his house and barn, and even make all his wooden domestic furniture (As cited in Bourque 1971: 25).

There still exists ambiguity in the statement with respect to the meaning of "uniform manner". Is Father Maillard suggesting that all the houses are of the same style or are

constructed using the same skills, materials and techniques? Perhaps they are uniform not in style, but in the sense that they are all built by their owners.

A final piece of primary text has been included because it is one of the few descriptions of the inside of a pre-Deportation dwelling. It comes from the journal of Robert Hale, who, while traveling in the Beaubassin area in 1731, writes “they have but one Room in y^r Houses besides a Cockloft, Cellar, and Sometimes a Closet. Their Bedrooms are made something after y^e Bed, except one little hole on the foreside, just big eno’ ti crawl into, before which is a Curtain drawn and as a Step to get into it, there stands a Chest. They have not above 2 or 3 chairs in a house and those wooden ones, bottom and all” (Hale 1731: 217-244).

To conclude, the primary text evidence must be considered patchy and discourse bound. Its value though can be found in the variety of architectural elements listed.

Houses are described as being constructed from logs, clay, sawed boards, rough hewn timbers, birch bark and stone to name a few. Although some of the primary sources imply uniformity in the domestic architecture, it is difficult to determine if this is an objective observation or an effect of bias.

Maps and illustrations

The following twelve maps and illustrations will be examined in an attempt to catalogue the various French vernacular buildings focusing on the different styles and building materials. These maps and illustrations were selected because they gave the best

depictions of pre-Deportation vernacular architecture in Nova Scotia and were produced by British, New England and French cartographers and artists.

The following map is by New England officer, privateer and cartographer Cyprian Southack (Chard 1974: 596). The map (Figure 3) has a lot of text and briefly describes harbours, settlements, fishing and farming, “Indian” and French settlements throughout Nova Scotia. He has drawn small, square boxes that are meant to represent houses. Near these “houses” he has written “French Inhabitants”. This map is a perfect example of the stylization of the French communities most often found in the cartography of the time. It clearly is not the intention of the cartographer to depict an accurate representation of these communities and as the Southack maps demonstrates, aspects such as soundings, rock formations and settlement distribution take precedence.

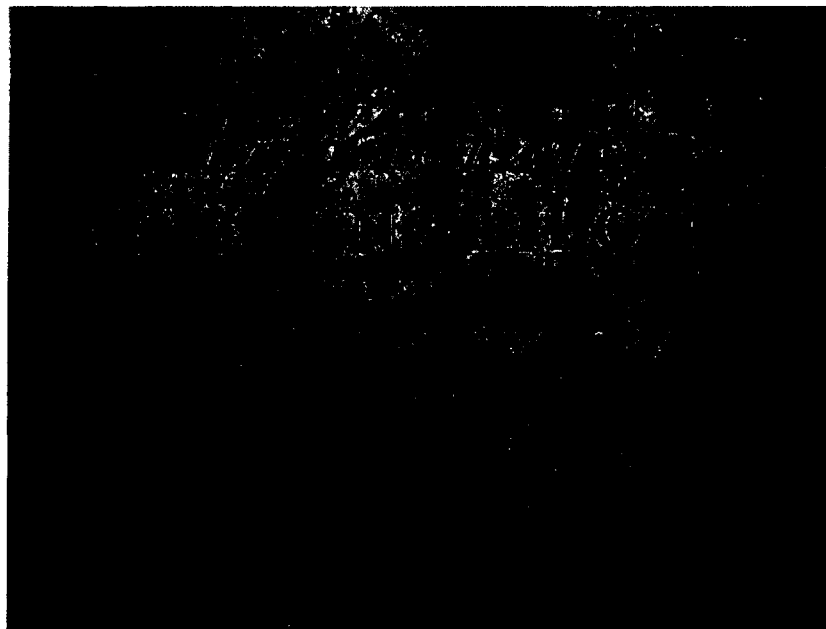


Figure 2: Cyprian Southack ca. 1730. Courtesy of the Bodleian Libraries. F6: a.1

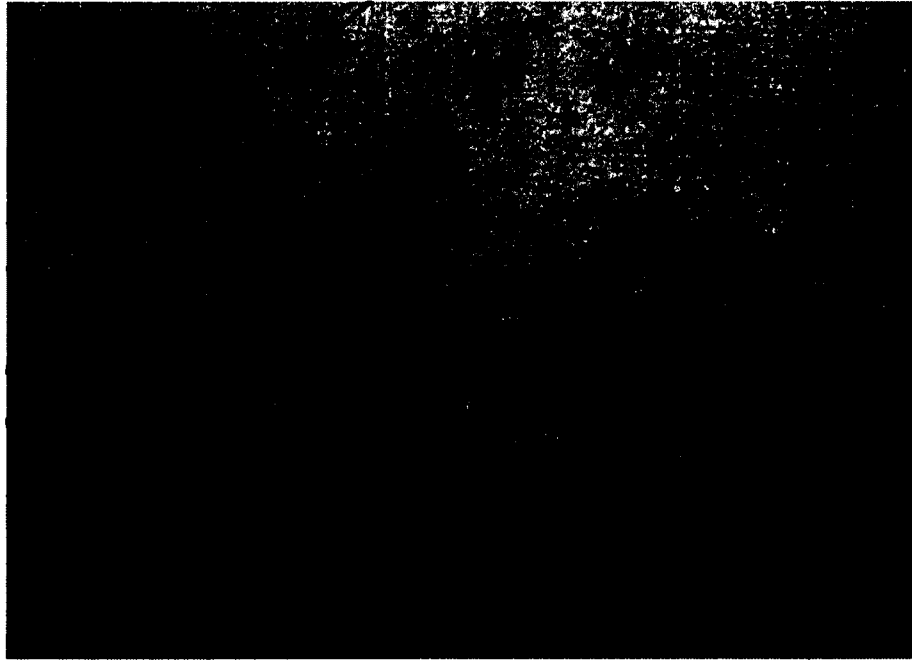


Figure 3: Cyprian Southack ca. 1730. Courtesy of the Bodleian Libraries. F6: a.1

Again, this Southack map is intended to help frame the examination of the cartography and illustrations to be discussed in this chapter. Where are the farmers working their fields or the labourers, building and repairing dykes? There are no children playing around the property and no women tending to their domestic chores. It is a landscape bereft of almost any sense of humanity. The explorer, George Vancouver “disposed of Natives by not including them in his map. As an imperial tool, 18th century Pacific cartography anticipated expansion into North America and Vancouver contributed to the process by creating an imperial space through his maps” (Lennox 2007: 378). Were 17th and 18th century cartographers doing the same thing in Acadia? Were these small quantities of vague, impersonal sketches of the French landscapes by New England

and British artists and cartographers deliberate attempts to portray the region as largely unsettled thereby making the possible (and soon realized) mass deportation of its inhabitants more palatable? This question may never be answered; however, there is historical precedent as “quite often geographical detail was sacrificed for both aesthetic appeal and imperial objectives; instead of a simple reflection of regional geography, these maps provide an idealized image aimed at striking an imperial chord in the metropole” (Lennox 2007: 403,404).

Viewing the maps and drawings depicting 17th and 18th century French architecture through the lens of critical cartography is a tool for a more complete understanding of the landscape being presented. It is not meant to invalidate the work entirely but, as mentioned earlier, when understood in the right context it can be a valuable resource and the information may still provide insight.

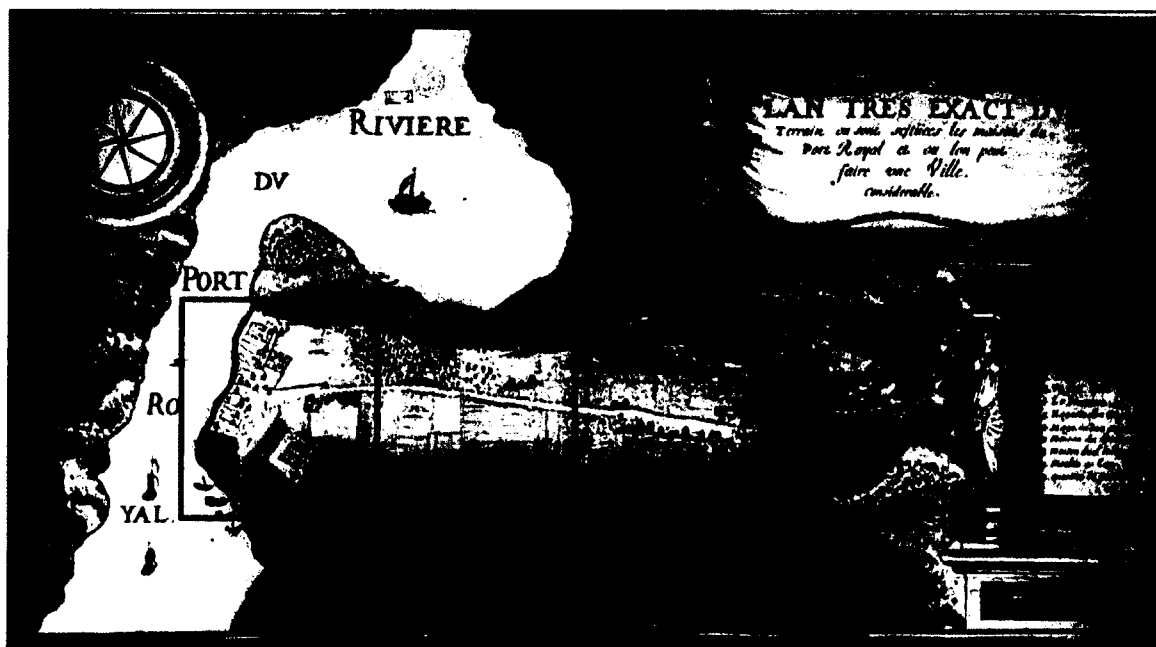


Figure 4: 1686 Franquelin, Plan Tres Exact du Terrain ou Sont scituees les maisons du Port Royal et ou lon puet farie un Ville considerable. Boxes indicate upper and lower town and are enlarged in the follow two maps. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada.

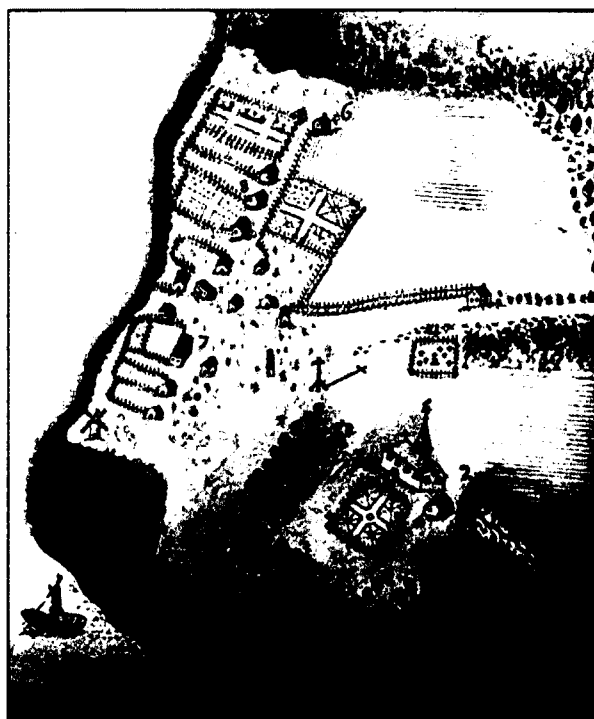


Figure 5: 1686 Franquelin, Detail of *Plan Tres Exact du Terrain ou Sont scituees les maisons du Port Royal et ou lon puet farie un Ville considerable*. The lower town. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada

The three maps (Figures 4, 5, 6) are different perspectives of the same map by Franquelin drawn in 1686 of Port Royal titled *Plan Tres Exact Du Terrain ou Sont scituees les maisons du Port Royal et ou lon puet faire un Ville considerable*. Although the accuracy of the three maps cannot be ascertained they do depict single story dwellings, sometimes with two small windows on either side of a small, central door. The chimneys are generally located on one end of the structures, and appear to be incorporated inside the dwellings. There is also a noticeable flaring of several of the roofs. There are also structures that are perhaps barns or other outbuildings because they do not have chimneys and the windows and doors are located on the ends of the buildings. Upon closer observation a few points of interest arise. For example, what is

the significance of the lines indicating the roof covering? Several seem to have lines parallel to the ridge-lines. Others have lines perpendicular to the ridge and one has no lines at all. Many have chimneys on the gable end but most seem to be an afterthought, and one has what appears to be a central chimney. Chimney location would have a dramatic telling effect on the houses occupants. A centrally located chimney would form a “heating core for the house...while locating the chimney at the ends of the house would dissipate the heat generated in the summer by the constant need for cooking fires” (Deetz 1977: 152). Was it possible that those houses, with central chimneys were constructed by French settlers from the northern regions of France, who needed to heat their homes in the colder months while those with end chimneys originated in the south of France where dissipation of heat was a concern?



Figure 6: 1686 Franquelin, Detail of *Plan Tres Exact du Terrain ou Sont scituees les maisons du Port Royal et ou lon puet farie un Ville considerable*. The uppertown. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada

The bird's eye perspective, from which this image is drawn, indicates that it was done from Franquelin's memory and/or imagination. One might wonder if this map

accurately depicts buildings from the Port Royal area. Perhaps they may be sketches of standard house types that Franquelin learned to draw in Europe (Fowler, J. Personal communication. 2012). The general layout of the community offered by Franquelin matches the layout depicted on later maps by cartographers such as Delabat (Dunn 2004: 68). That said, they are situated along the river which has been a well documented standard of French building practices (Kennedy, G. Personal communication. 2011) and therefore this drawing should not be dismissed entirely. Examining the map (Figure 5), House 7 is designated in the legend as the “Maison du Gouverneur” and is a hipped roof structure appearing much larger than the other homes. (Perhaps a clue that suggests Franquelin’s depiction is rooted in realism). It also has a much larger fenced in garden plot. There are not many hipped roof style houses found in either the literature or cartography of the time.

This lone hipped roof dwelling would appear to have a centrally located chimney. The remaining houses all appear to be one and a half story structures. The chimneys on these houses appear to be on both the eastern and western sides of the buildings, which is of interest because one would assume that the chimney would be located in relation to the prevailing winds. This is important particularly because the roofs appear to be made of thatch (due to their yellow colouring) which could easily pose as a fire hazard if ignited from burning embers emitted from the chimney. House number 8 belonged to Alexandre le Borgne de Belle-Isle, who was the son of one of the early householders in Acadia, and later became the seigneur of Port Royal (Cormier 1974: 436). Structure number 6 is a “Magasin du Anglois”- a storehouse belonging to an English merchant. There is a second

English merchant further down the river designated on the map by a 5. This is a single story building with a steep, almost cone-shaped roof with what appears to be a flag flying from its peak. There is no way of knowing if these two buildings were constructed by the French inhabitants and later re-occupied by the English or built new by the merchants.

The following two images offer different perspectives of the Melanson Settlement; a French hamlet located about 6 kilometers down river from Annapolis Royal.

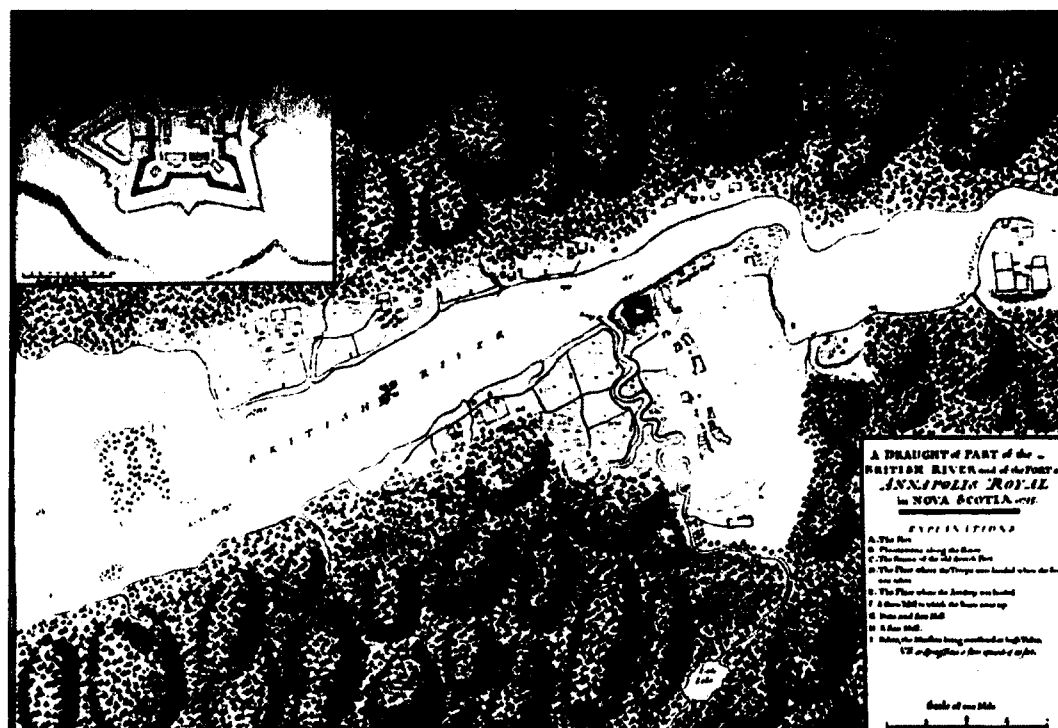


Figure 7: Anonymous. "A Draught of Part of the British River and of the Fort Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia" 1725. Courtesy of the British Library Board. Maps K. Top.119.80.

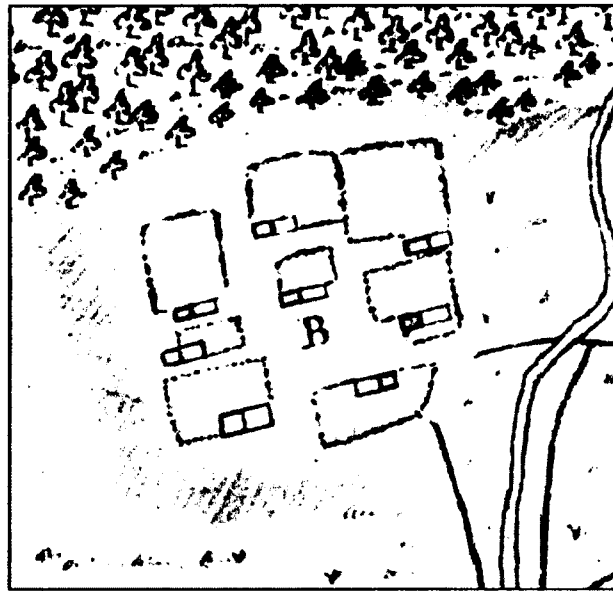


Figure 8: Anonymous. Detail of “A Draught of Part of the British River and of the Fort Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia” 1725. Courtesy of the British Library Board. Maps K. Top.119.80.

The houses are treated abstractly, except for two small rectangles side by side, possibly indicating the living area and the chimney. While it lacks in detail, it does provide information regarding the settlement pattern and it is for this reason that they were selected. There are clearly six houses circling one central house and this should not be surprising as “four generations [of Melansons] occupied the settlement between its founding and December of 1755 when its residents were deported from the Annapolis Royal area” (Dunn 2007: 1). This may add to the idea of the French settlers living in a sort of “clanscape” due to their close proximity to one another (Fowler, J. Personal communication. 2010). This might help to explain why the architecture in these “clanscapes” appears to have some sort of uniformity. Another point of interest is the layout of the gardens. Saint Mary’s University professor Richard Field conjectures that the design of these square/rectangle gardens located on one side of the house was quite possibly styled after that of the British (Field, R. Personal communication. 2010). This would make sense since we know that “Charles Melanson came to Acadia when he was a

boy of about fourteen, accompanying his parents on their voyage from England in 1657. His father was Pierre Laverdure, a Huguenot, who had moved to England from France before 1632; his mother, whose first name was Priscilla was English” (Crépeau and Dunn 1: 1986). This point may be tenuous, however it is something to consider when contemplating the various reasons for the amount of architectural diversity encountered.

The next image, drawn by British officer, J.H. Bastide, titled, *A Prospect of Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia Taken on the Spot by J.H. Bastide of His Majesty's 40th Reg't Foot 1751* has an almost ghostly look to it.



Figure 9: A Prospect of Annapolis Royal 1731 by Bastide Courtesy of NSARM NAC C002706

In the foreground, he draws four sailing ships of various size and types with sea birds hovering about. Clearly the harbour and the ships are the important subjects. The land is only a backdrop. On the distant shore, Bastide shows the outline of the Fort at Annapolis

Royal high on a hill. To the left of the fort he draws several houses, most of which are single story dwellings with two, small front windows and a small central door. This is in fact the lower town area drawn by Franquelin forty five years earlier. Due to the quality of the drawing, it is difficult to determine the location of the chimneys. There is a lone house that appears to be a two and a half story dwelling with a hipped roof. Might this be the same house drawn in the Franquelin map? Unlike the single story dwellings facing the river, it is the side of this house that is facing the river.

The following image drawn by Captain John Hamilton, *Taken on the Spot by Capt. J. Hamilton of His Majesty's 40th Reg't of Foot c. 1753* offers another view of Annapolis Royal.



Figure 10: Hamilton. View of the Town and fort of Annapolis Royal 1753. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada. C-002706.

This depicts many more houses than the 1751 drawing by Bastide, giving one a greater sense of the variety of buildings in the settlement. However, while the view has the town as its subject, again it is the water that dominates the drawing and the vessels are given more prominence than the houses. There are several single story houses but many of them are shown as having two chimneys, which are on either end of the buildings. In the left side of the picture he depicts a full two story house with chimneys on both ends. It has three upper windows, two on the bottom and a central door. A house just left of centre, although single story, seems a little more robust than the others. It has four windows, two on either side of the central door. A building just to the right of centre stands out because it is a two and a half-story structure with its two chimneys more centrally located. Perhaps this is some sort of commercial building such as a mill. The buildings in the upper right portion of the drawing appear to be some sort of row housing. Unfortunately, again because of the vagueness of these sketches, there is very little one can decipher other than their exterior styles.

The next image, titled *The North West View of Fort Lawrence in Chignectou 1755* was another drawn by Captain John Hamilton.

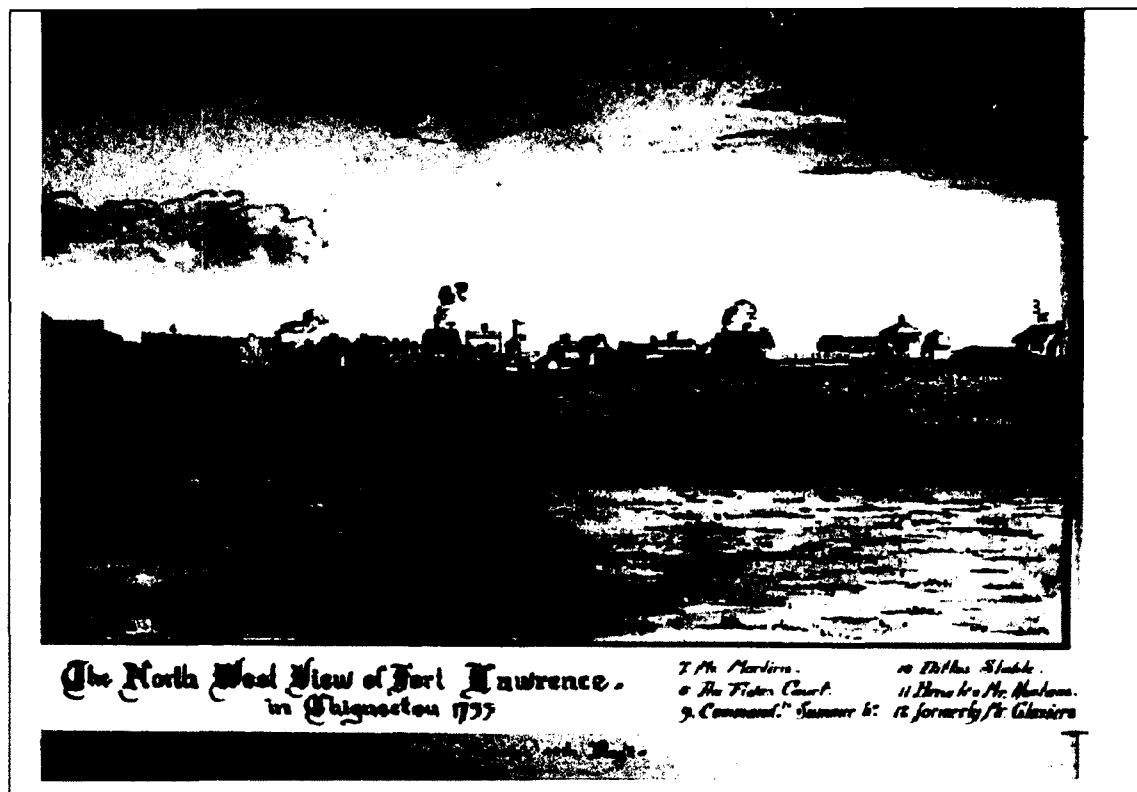


Figure 11: Hamilton: The North West View of Fort Lawrence 1755. Courtesy of the New Brunswick Museum. W334.

Unlike the previous images, the houses in this illustration were probably all built by British hands after the French village that once stood here was burned. Griffiths writes, that “over a hundred homes were set on fire and close to a thousand people forced to flee. The fires,” she continues, “were set by the Mi’kmaq but the responsibility for this action lay with La Corne, the senior French officer in the region, and Abbé Le Loutre” (Griffiths 2005: 392). The reasons the French burned the village down are complex and beyond the scope of this paper. This image was included because it offers a contrast with illustrations of French villages drawn by British and New England artists. It also may

depict evidence of British re-use or reconstruction of French domestic architecture or at least some of its elements.

Unlike the sterile, vague images of the French villages drawn by Hamilton and Bastide, here Hamilton depicts a British landscape that appears lived in and tamed. Smoke can be seen coming from various chimneys, flags are flying from rooftops and land is cleared and fenced off.

The second point of interest is in the examination of two houses in the drawing. The first, located in the centre of the image is that of a gambrel-roof house with a central chimney. Hamilton has labelled this house as belonging to a Mr. Martin. Gambrel and hipped roofed houses, although rare, are depicted in early illustrations of French villages in Nova Scotia. The second house of interest is located on the far, right side of the image. It appears to have a flared roof, which lends itself to the French roof style.

While it is impossible to make any conclusions from this image as there simply is not enough information, it does lead to a question: Did the French and British share and transfer some building techniques, styles and technologies while attempting to settle this highly disputed territory? Preliminary archaeological investigations in this region, by Parks Canada archaeologist Charles Burke, has indicated that there has been some re-use of French foundations by the new British occupants (Burke, C. Personal communication. 2011)

The next map, titled *View of Fort Cumberland in Nova Scotia, taken from the French 1755 from a View taken on the spot by Cpt. J. Hamilton*, depicts the French

stronghold of Fort Beauséjour. Essentially, this is Hamilton pivoting 180 degrees from his previous vantage point on Fort Lawrence.



Figure 12: Hamilton, 1755. View of Fort Cumberland and French settlement. Courtesy of NSARM:Army:Fort

After its surrender to the British in June of 1755 it was renamed Fort Cumberland. The fort and small French settlement appears in the distant background and lacks any real detail. All the houses appear to be single story with some having central chimneys while others have them on their ends. A small single-story house to the right of centre is interesting in that it is the only house with a fenced off front garden. Université de Moncton professor, Dr. Bernard LeBlanc, has suggested that it may be some sort of hospital or medical facility and the garden was used to grow medicinal plants (LeBlanc, B. Personal communication. 2011).

Keeping with the Chignecto region, the next image for examination is a ca. 1750 drawing (author unknown) of the western part of the Chignecto Isthmus showing Fort Beauséjour and the surrounding area.



Figure 13: Anonymous. 1750. Fort Beauséjour and surrounding French settlement. Courtesy of the McCord Museum, Montreal.

While it is difficult to gauge the accuracy of this illustration what can be commented on is the uniform style of the houses (single story) and the placement of the chimneys (all centred). What also stands out in this drawing is the size and location of the church. It appears to dwarf the French houses. Was this an actual representation of its size or was its size a symbolic reflection of its importance?

The next map, (Figure 14) was created by military engineer Jean Delabat during the final years of French occupation of Port Royal before its surrender to the British in

1710. The map alone provides very little in the way of detail regarding the inhabitants dwellings. However, when combined with a document which was created to provide compensation for the removal of these houses, it becomes both rare and valuable. This inventory not only lists the owners but also includes the lot size and basic dimensions of these homes and outbuildings. Unfortunately, house styles and the materials used in the houses are not given but all seem to be approximately the same size measuring 30 pieds (10m) to 39 pieds (13m) in length and 22 pieds (7m) to 24pieds (8m) in width. Kitchens and outbuildings are also inventoried. This does suggest that some uniformity existed in the midst of a great deal of diverse architecture.

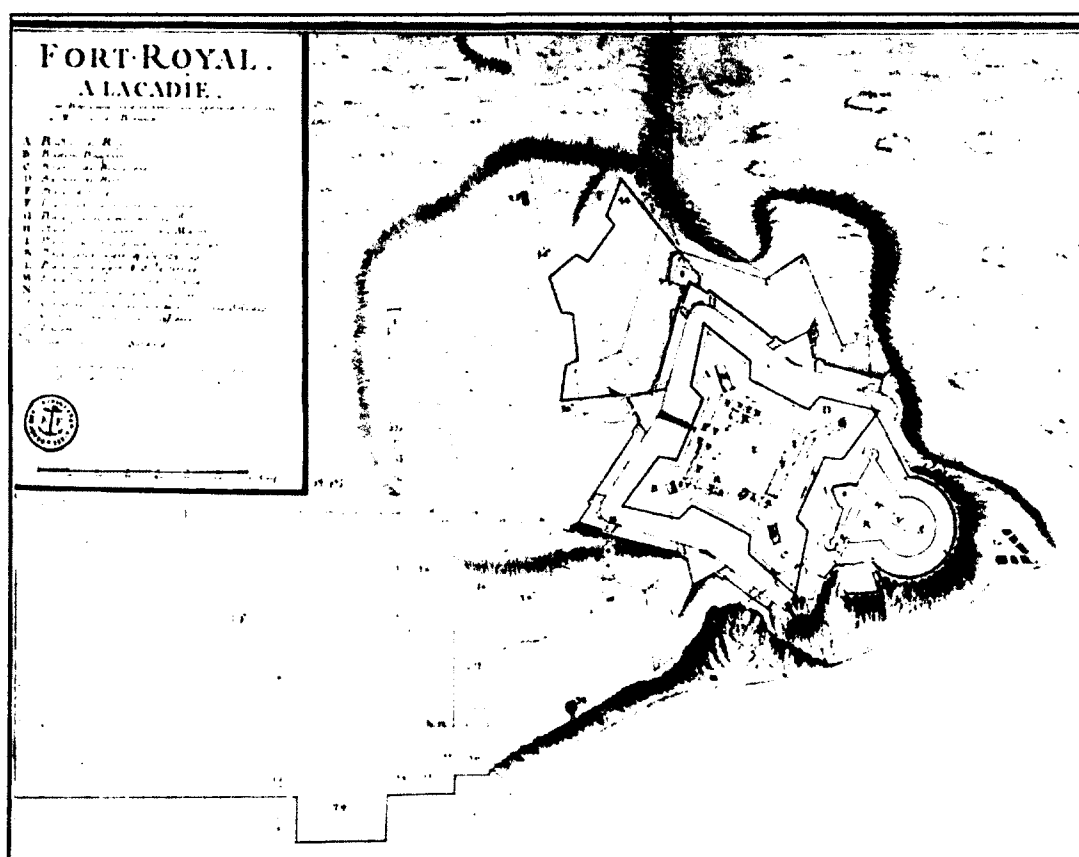


Figure 14: Delabat. 1710. FORT ROYAL A LACADIE. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada

What is curious is that in these maps and illustrations the architecture mostly appears as backdrops and not as the main focus of these illustrators. It might be argued that this lack of detail to the living French landscape, depicted by the mainly British cartographers and artists, was more than coincidental. This may have been a deliberate attempt to de-humanize the landscape thereby making its conquest more palatable to all those involved.

Maps and drawings depicting pre-deportation French vernacular architecture become more layered when viewed through the lens of critical cartography. Was it in the interest of the British Empire for British cartographers and artists to depict the French populating developed landscapes, with sturdily constructed homes and barns? It is quite striking that these drawings and maps not only lack any significant detail in regards to architecture, but there is not a single person or animal in any of them. The landscapes are vaguely drawn, relaying a sense of sterility to the observer. The houses do not look lived in but instead seem to be merely token symbols, with the exception of the Hamilton drawing of Fort Lawrence (Figure 11).

Chapter 2

Extant Architecture

When on the falling tide the freighted vessels departed,
 Bearing a nation, with all its household goods, into exile,
 Exile without an end, and without an example in story.
 Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Acadians landed;
 Scattered were they, like flakes of snow, when the wind from the north-
 east
 Strikes aslant through the fogs that darken the Banks of Newfoundland.

Longfellow, Evangeline 1847

It is hoped that the study of extant 17th and 18th century French vernacular architecture might bring stylistic patterns and common types of building materials to light. If so, were there elements of these that were transferred from one region and one time period to another? Unfortunately, very little French vernacular architecture has survived for study in Nova Scotia or in France. A visit to western France, the site from which the majority of Acadia's French colonists embarked (Massignon 1962: 74), was intended to document the architecture these peasants had constructed and lived in prior to their departure. To this writer's surprise, none existed. It was explained during an interview in La Rochelle with author and local historian Thierry Veillot that "primitive architecture was never valued by the French people and therefore never preserved" (Veillot, T. Personal communication. 2011). He said that there are some places reporting

to have examples of early architecture, however, scholars have discredited these buildings as having no validity. It seems as though entrepreneurs have “created a type of Disney World in order to attract tourists” (Veillot, T. Personal communication. 2011).

Unfortunately, this researcher has not been able to discover any documented pre-deportation extant French vernacular architecture. A few late 18th and early 19th century dwellings do exist. These buildings can be found in Louisiana, Missouri and Quebec. Although the construction of these buildings has been dated to after the deportation, I am convinced that they still provide important information because they still reflect or illustrate how ethnicity can be demonstrated in architecture.

Through the examination of several extant 18th and early 19th century buildings in Louisiana, Edwards discusses the extent to which cultural processes such as pre-adaptation, founder’s effect and cultural syncretism account for changes in the forms of typical settler’s houses. Although such analysis is valuable in helping to understand what was being constructed by the early settlers, Edwards is quick to preface his article by stating that examining extant buildings is not without problems. Specifically, he writes, that “our perceptions of the nature of colonial French settlements” are problematic. He suggests that “our portraits of the past are distorted by the unrepresentative nature of surviving standing structures, the dearth of good archaeological surveys and the biases inherent in historic documents” (Edwards 2006: 3). The past is viewed through the lens of what he calls the “Vernacular Zone”, describing it as the “differential survival of large and well-built structures at the expense of those less well built but far more typical” (Edwards 2006: 3). Pertaining to extant architecture, he quotes Henry Glassie, who states

that as the “historian gazes upon the limited sample of surviving evidence...his or her inability to participate in the living culture of the pioneers must distort their very practical and usually highly religious perspective and into something more superficial and less coloured by the daily struggle to survive (Glassie, H. As cited in Edwards 2006: 3).

In order to overcome this obstacle, Edwards believes that the best hope of gaining insights into extant historic vernacular architecture is for the researcher to immerse him or herself in anthropological theory. He identifies four distinct processes of culture change. These are: adaptation to geography and environment, cultural history, non-synchrony, and founder’s effect and hyper-diffusional associations.

Adaptations to geography and environment is a fairly simple premise and basically suggests that things such as climate, elevation, geology, local resources and economy all play a role in what type of building will be constructed. Edwards offers France as an example to illustrate this idea because there exist substantial regional variations in its architecture. This can be attributed to France having both a northern and Mediterranean climate (Edwards 2006: 4). Colonists arriving from these different regions would have transmitted some of these architectural differences onto the new landscapes. “Once implanted on American soil, even greater variations developed. The relative pre-adaptation of previously extant French vernacular traditions in Nordic, temperate and tropical American environments played a role in the selection of different kinds of architectural patterns in the Americas” (Newton and Pulliam 1974, as cited in Edwards 2006: 4). He suggests that, for example, northern houses would exhibit characteristics more like those of similar latitudes in Europe, “while tropical adaptations might reveal

profoundly non-Gallic modifications following the period of initial occupance and experimentation” (Edwards 2006: 4).

Cultural history examines how foreign influences dramatically flavoured the architecture of France. The main influences can be found from the Romans in the south, Celts in the west, Germans and Dutch in the north and Scandinavians in the northeast. Interestingly, Edwards notes that even “very localized sections of France exhibited building traditions and technologies not found or commonly utilized in neighbouring departments” (Edwards 2006: 4). (Even in regions settled for hundreds of years, there is great architectural diversity. Perhaps this speaks to the concept of the French peasantry living in ‘Clanscapes’ and those immigrating to North America merely continued this societal structure). After this “localized French architectural tradition had been implanted in a pioneering American environment, new waves of cultural influences made their mark. Most significant was the creolization of colonial French traditions under the influence of non-Gallic resident populations such as American Indians” (Edwards 2006: 4). To date, little scholarly attention has been directed to the way in which the First Nations may have influenced early French vernacular architecture. We know that the early French settlers had close relationships with the Mi’kmaq population, with several documented intermarriages (Griffiths 2005: 259). How might a home built for and managed by a Mi’kmaq wife have been different?

Non-synchrony refers to the evolution of architectural traditions through time. Temporal changes in colonial architecture “result both from technological transformations and from newer building fads and fashions occurring in the métropole

and being exported piecemeal” (Edwards 2006: 4). Edwards also suggests that the linkage between diffusion and economic success over time should not be underestimated. “Successful planters, farmers and entrepreneurs can afford the affectation of imported architectural models, decorative trappings and styles” (Edwards 2006: 5).

Founder’s effect and hyper-diffusional associations are actually terms used in genetics, but Edwards believes that these concepts are also relevant to architectural processes in North America. He contends that when settlers left the Old World for the New they did not necessarily carry all components of their architectural traditions with them.

Some got left behind. Some elements of the architectural sample carried as cultural and historical shipmates, so to speak, were historically rather than functionally associated. Depending on the specific social, geographical and historical character of each new settlement, an incomplete sample of the entire French architectural repertoire was established in each colony or settlement. Each represented a kind of random sampling of the broad architectural character of the homeland (Edwards 2006: 7).

Over time the resulting architectural traditions were further eliminated, he suggests, due to being simply forgotten or deliberately discarded “while others, which were originally unimportant, became increasingly dominant in the new environment. In broad perspective, these new colonial samples each differ from the character of the motherland as a kind of non-random sampling or sampling error” (Edwards 2006: 7).

Professor Fred Kniffen of Louisiana State University agrees with this theory and after having examined the development processes common to many American colonial settlements adds that “after a temporary experimental period, settlers establish a

permanent settlement imprint in each new colonial area” (Kniffen, as cited in Edwards 2006: 3). He labelled this as the period of “initial occupance”, and the architecture of this period of settlement is distinguished by its lack of “stylistic adornment” (Kniffen, as cited in Edwards 2006: 3). Instead of stylizing their dwellings, Kniffen argues, they are “focused upon functionality and are intended to provide permanent survival and well-being in the new environment” (Kniffen, as cited in Edwards 2006: 3). The new colonists would rely on their building practices and styles perfected in their homelands and only as time permitted and immediate survival was no longer an issue, would they transform their “architectural character in the direction of popular styles and national or international fashion”(Kniffen, as cited in Edwards 2006: 3).

The following sites in North America, where confirmed late 18th and early 19th century extant French vernacular dwellings, will be examined. These include Louisiana, Missouri and Quebec. The extent to which Dutch and northern German architecture influenced the French vernacular architecture will also be analysed.

Louisiana

While they have lain in this Port, the Town has been at considerable charge in supporting them, as they appear very needy, and quite exhausted in Provisions; and it cannot be expected that the charge or Burden of maintaining such a Multitude can be supported by the Inhabitants of Annapolis (Maryland)....it will be necessary soon to disperse them to different Parts of the Province. (Annapolis Maryland Gazette, December 1755. As cited in Wood, G. 1995: 10)

The French settlers deported along the eastern seaboard of North America were essentially abandoned to hammer out an existence with very little government support or aid of any kind (Faragher 2005: 373). In many cases, only private donations kept these new settlers from starving to death or succumbing to the elements and sadly all too often this “aid fell far short of the exiles’ needs. The persistent economic deprivation as well as the resulting inadequacies of diet and lodging produced a dangerous side effect- susceptibility to disease” (Brasseaux 1987: 44). To make matters worse, the French refugees were also limited in their movements, in an attempt by the British to “prevent the exiles from reaching the western boarder” and so escaping to French territory (Brasseaux 1987: 42). They were trapped in a situation that continued to deteriorate. With imminent demise on the horizon, political developments in Europe offered some hope. At the end of the Seven Years’ War through the Treaty of Paris (1763) the French sought to end the internment of the Acadian refugees in England and in the American colonies. The British government eventually granted their wish to leave the colonies and depart for “any French possession within eighteen months of the treaty’s ratification” (Brasseaux 1987: 45). Unfortunately this new found freedom was not without tribulation. Those who had survived the expulsion were now free to leave the American colonies and return once again to Nova Scotia or Canada, and yet their bleak economic situation meant they did not possess the finances to do so. In a desperate attempt to find the money necessary to gain admittance on a ship travelling north, those in Maryland turned to the Maryland government for aid in resettlement. Although the Maryland Governor was happy to have this group of destitute foreigners leave, he was not willing to pay for their departure. They were dealt a second blow when “the governors of Canada and Nova

Scotia, as well as the British secretary of state adamantly opposed the Acadian repatriation” (Brasseaux 1987: 46). With their return blocked and their present situation desperate, many turned their eyes towards Louisiana.

Benjamin Maygarden, writing in the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, believes that by examining buildings and building methods in Louisiana he can find clues as to what the architecture in pre-expulsion Acadia might have resembled. He writes that, “documents and limited archaeological evidence indicate that the building methods of the Louisiana Acadians during the colonial period strongly reflected a heritage of late-medieval and early-modern French methods and techniques of constructing vernacular building” (Maygarden 2006: 211). If it is true that the French peasants who settled parts of Louisiana carried on building traditions from the late medieval and early modern French period, it would make sense, he contends, that they likely used these or similar techniques in 17th and 18th century Acadia. As explained earlier in the chapter, some sort of modification or slight divergence might be expected given the different climate, geography and building materials available in these two distinct regions.

One of the more famous early French houses in America is the simple, single story house known as the Badin Roque House constructed in Louisiana in 1770 (Figure 15). It is the only extant example of a *poteaux en terre* house in Louisiana (Maygarden 2006: 216).



Figure 15: Badin Roque House, Louisiana. Constructed in 1770. Courtesy of the Louisiana Folklife Centre

Its Breton influence can be seen in its high-pitched roof, although metal sheathing is clearly a modern touch. Its style of construction is known as *poteaux-en-terre* (post in ground). Here posts are put directly into the ground and planks are then fastened to them. Stone and clay or mud is placed between the posts. This provides insulation and protection from the outside elements, while also increasing the stability of the structure. Two small, rectangular windows frame a small central door. The chimney is placed just off to the right of centre of the building.

Saint Louis/ Sainte Geneviève, Missouri

The settlement of Sainte Geneviève was established as early as 1735 as a trading post for French fur traders. “The Hamlet was visited early in November 1736, by Pierre Laclede Liguist, a successful trader, who had ventured up the river from New Orleans in a barge laden with goods for Indians and settlers” (Thwaites 1905: 284). Liguist quickly

moved to the present day location of Saint Louis where he was able to find more room for his trading post. With the Treaty of Paris, the “much disheartened Illinois French...retired to the west of the river” (285). This, Thwaites writes, was because the French had not yet realized of the cession of Louisiana to Spain. “The palisaded village of Saint Louis was accordingly, in February, 1764, laid out around Liguist’s post, and thither and to Ste. Geneviève perhaps half of the French population on the Illinois soon drifted” (285).

Today, in the small town of Sainte Geneviève, Missouri stands the Beauvais-Amoureux House, constructed in 1793 by the early French settlers (Figure 16).



Figure 16: Beauvais Amoureux House. 1792. info@visitgen.com

This too is an example of the *poteaux-en-terre* method and better shows this technique. Mulberry and cedar trees “were commonly used for their resistance to rot. Vertical logs braced the truss that supported the roof. A mix of gravel and lime mortar, called *pierrotage*, was packed between vertical logs. Sometimes a blend of straw, animal hair,

clay or grass was used in another construction practice called *bouzillage*” (Deposki 2008: 24).

Figure 17 depicts the La Source-Durand House, constructed in 1807 using the “construction technique called the ‘wall plate lap notch’. Its walls are built in *colombage pierroté*, a French construction method popular in the eighteenth century” (Edwards 2006: 22). This method consisted of joining a wall plate to vertical posts and was used in both *enterre* (earthfast) and *sur sole* (on sill) (Edwards 2006: 22). In the image it appears that some of the outside is clad with boards.



Figure 17: LaSource-Durand House, Ste. Geneviève 1807. Illinois State University archaeological fieldschool conducting a recent excavation. Courtesy of Doctor Elizabeth Scott, Illinois State University.

Examination of the primary maps discussed in the first chapter, shows several of the houses seeming to have a Dutch architectural style or influence. While it is

impossible to identify these definitively as Dutch it should be noted that they had a long and important presence in France throughout 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Hence it could be reasonably argued that some of their traditions, customs and “flavour” may have been infused into the French culture. Primarily it was their expertise in building and maintaining dykes that brought the Dutch to France. Ciriancono, writing in *Building on Water*, believes that at the end of the 16th century, France re-launched the land reclamation projects which would then “continue, with variations in intensity, for many years (Figure 18). It was Henri IV who set up the *Association pour le Dessèchement des marais et lacs de France* which “drew on Dutch finance and technology to implement an entirely new agricultural policy on a national scale” (Ciriancono 2006: 208). Finding a skilled labour force to carry out this work was made easy due to the “great influx into France of people fleeing the religious persecution then taking place in Flanders and Holland” (Ciriancono 2006: 209).



Figure 18: Drainage projects developed by the Dutch throughout Europe (with dates). Courtesy of Berghahn Books.

Figure 19 is what Rosalie Fellows Bailey, author of *Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses*, gives as an example of the style of the early permanent dwellings created by the Dutch in America. She notes these “permanent homes were small, one story buildings of roughly cut stone or wood, with straw thatched roofs, narrow windows with only two panes of glass, stone



Figure 19: Pre-revolutionary Dutch House with flared roof. Courtesy of Dover Publications

fireplaces and ovens and chimneys of boards plastered inside with mortar or mud (Bailey 1968: 20).

The Dutch House (Figure 20) is a late 17th century home located in Delaware. Except for the small dormer it has a strong resemblance to several of the illustrations from the previous chapter. In particular the slope of the roof and despite the lack of porch there is a generous overhang at the sides. There is also a central doorway, flanked by a window on each side.

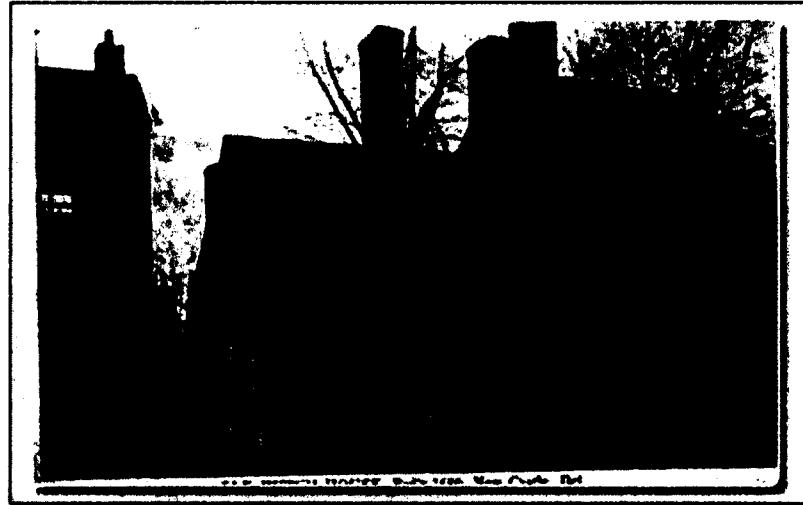


Figure 20: The Dutch House, late 17th Century, Delaware. Courtesy of the New Castle Historical Society.

Bailey writes that these houses gradually changed over time, particularly in regards to their rooflines. The roofline became extended to “overhang the front and rear wall and generally this projection was curved slightly to avoid the windows and prevent a top-heavy appearance. The protection of the clay and mud mortar from the rain is the reason generally advanced for this development” (Bailey 1968: 21).

Another modification to this style of house occurred in the early part of the eighteenth century with the advent of the gambrel roof. This roof has two slopes, with the line being broken at an obtuse angle. It is found in Europe and was also used in early New England, “but the Dutch combination of slopes and curved overhanging eaves is the most beautiful gambrel known” (Bailey 1968: 21).

While the vast majority of Dutch settlements sprang up in upstate New York, with the main settlement of New Amsterdam, established in 1624 on the tip of Manhattan, (Janowitz 1993: 6), it would be reasonable to argue that due to its close proximity some

aspects or influences of these building styles could be found in the vernacular architecture of pre-deportation Acadia as trade and travel between the two regions must surely have occurred.

The following photos were taken by the author's wife with the author in several of them to provide a sense of scale. These houses are found at the Coppenburg Open-air Museum in northern Germany (Freisland). The government deemed these buildings to be of such cultural importance that it ordered them moved to their present location to be preserved. These buildings date to around the mid eighteenth century. Figure 18 (map with location of Dutch built dykes) indicates that there existed a strong Dutch presence in this region and where no doubt many things would have been traded back and forth including such things as building styles and technologies.

These houses have many similarities to those described in primary maps and texts (as discussed in the previous chapter). The similarities also support what is being discovered through archaeological research in Nova Scotia. The majority of the houses on display at the museum had thatched, flared roofs set on a post and beam frame. Clay and fibre were mixed together and spread onto the walls to provide insulation. Three to four courses of stone were laid out on the ground where a wooden sill was placed on top. The posts were then fastened to the sill with wooden pegs.

The first two photos are of an attached bake oven where the family's bread and other baked goods would have been cooked. As can be seen from the photo it had a rectangular, stone footing (Figure 21). Unfortunately, access to its inside was not

permitted. The third and forth photos (Figure 22 and Figure 23) are of a small dwelling with a steep, thatched roof. Part of the wall has been exposed to reveal the structural components of the walls.



Figure 21: Bake oven located on western end of house with stone foundation and wooden sill. Coppenburg Open-air Museum. Courtesy of Anne Marie Lewis

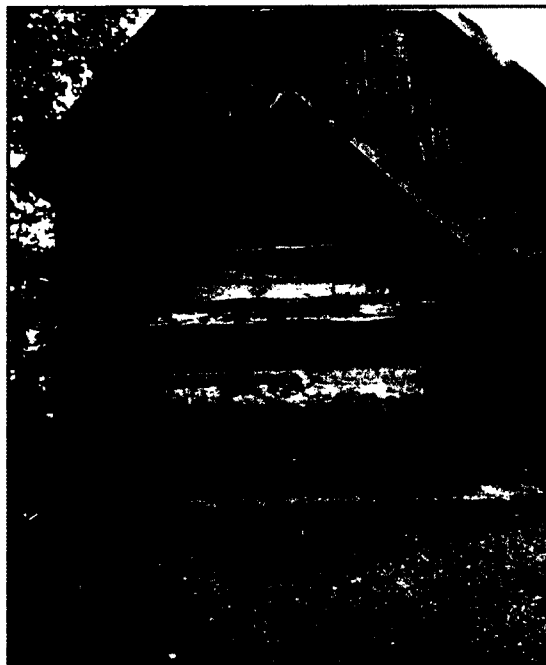


Figure 22: End view of bake oven with pegged mortise tongue. Coppenburg Open-air Museum. Courtesy of Anne Marie Lewis.

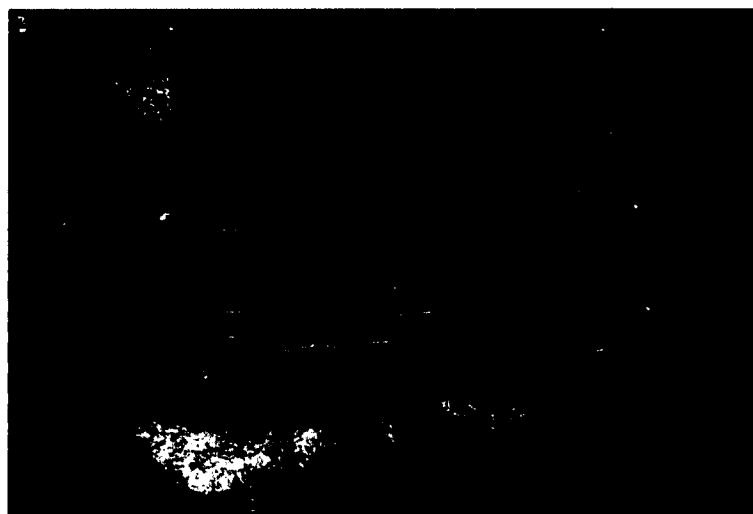


Figure 23: Exposed posts with clay infill. Coppenburg Open-air Museum. Courtesy of Anne Marie Lewis

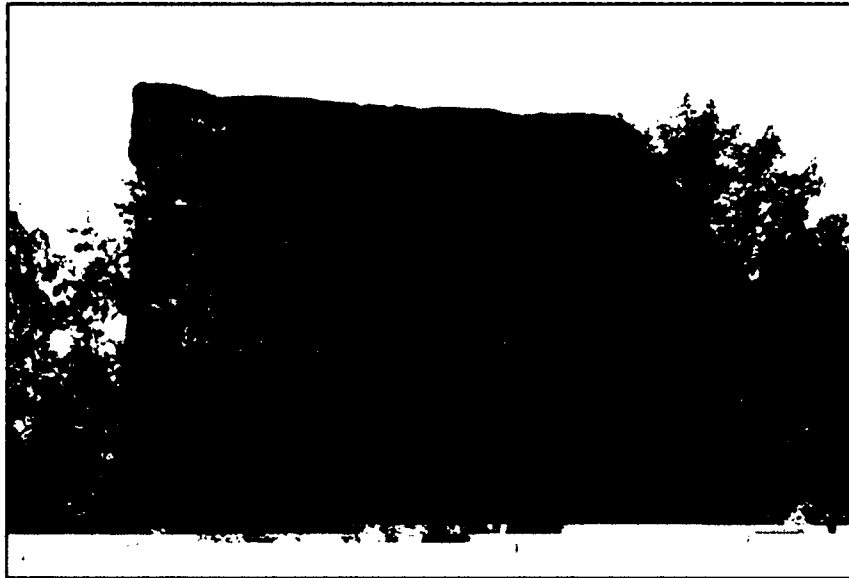


Figure 24: Thatched roof. Coppenburg Open-air Museum. Courtesy of Anne Marie Lewis

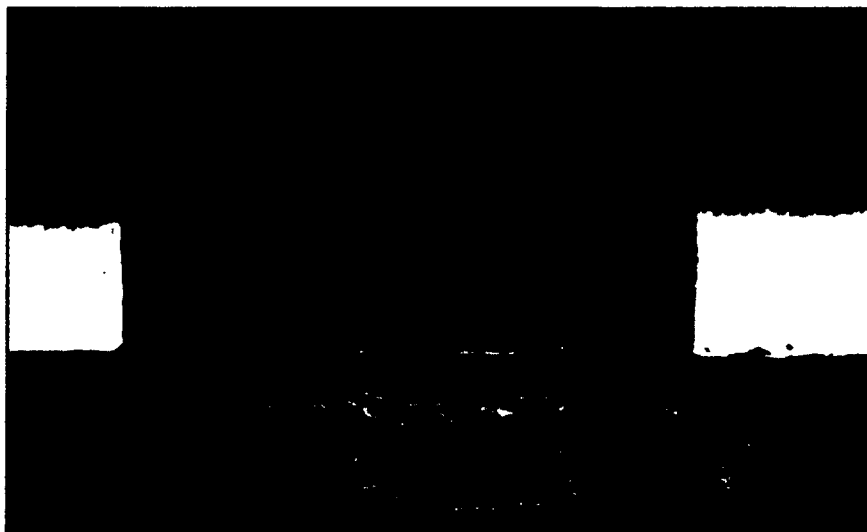


Figure 25: Stone foundation with wooden sill. Exposed mud and grass insulation. Coppenburg Open-air Museum. Courtesy of Anne Marie Lewis.

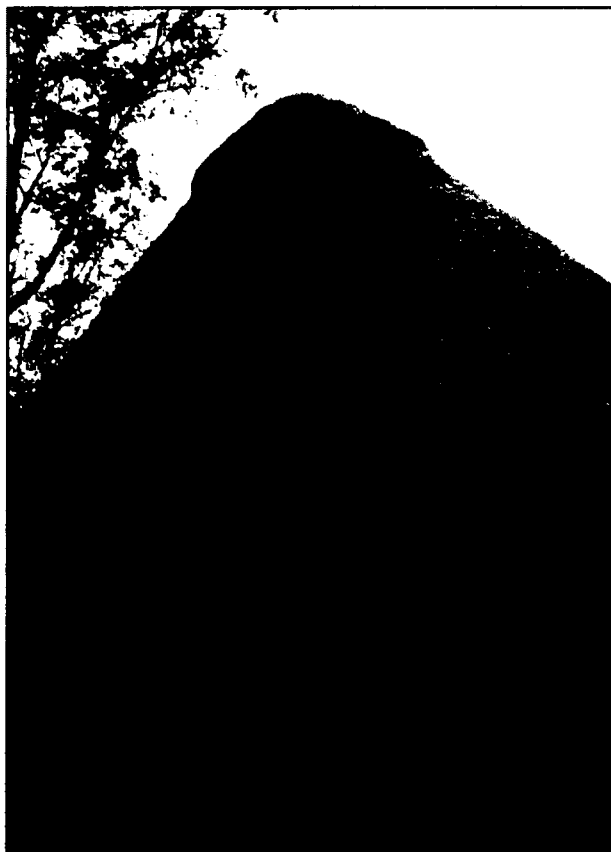


Figure 26: Thatched roof house with no chimney. Coppenburg Open-air Museum. Courtesy of Anne Marie Lewis.

This last thatched house (Figure 26) has been included because it does not have a chimney and may have features in common with the one in Port Royal that was described in a court document (as noted in the previous chapter). Smoke from fires lit inside escaped through the thatch as well as through open doors and windows. The ceiling was dark black from the heat and soot accumulating over time. Was this a cultural choice not to have a chimney or simply an economic indicator?

Quebec

There exist several examples of 17th and 18th French architecture in the province of Quebec. Most reflect the Breton style of construction as seen in The Pilon House (Figure 27). This house is located just outside the city of Montréal and employs the Breton style of construction. It was constructed in 1706.

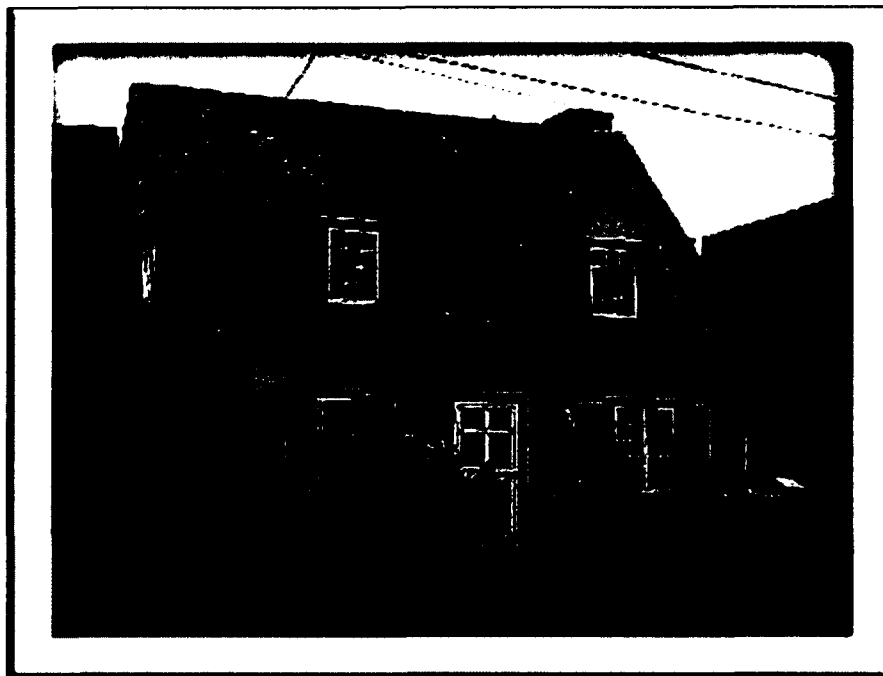


Figure 27: Pilon House, Quebec 1706. Courtesy of Luc Nappen. McCord Museum. Notman Photographic Archive 16.

The house has a high-pitched roof and narrow central doorway. This doorway has small narrow windows on each side. An interesting adaptation noted by 18th century traveller Peter Kalm is the way the French in Quebec heated their homes with “small iron stoves, which are removed in summer time” (Kalm 1747: 402). In all his travels he has seen this only in Quebec. He believes this is because “the iron here is good and can be

very conveniently dispersed over the country. This, moreover, is the iron-work in the country” (Kalm 1747: 403). In respect to architecture, many of the French in Quebec would not have needed to add massive fireplaces and chimneys to their houses like the French of Acadia did because they were able to use these small, efficient iron stoves instead.

It should be noted that settlers to New France from the Brittany region accounted for a small but important element in both populations (Quebec and Acadia), about 4 percent each (Massignon 1962: 74) and therefore this style of architecture might not have been very common but it needs to be added to the vernacular architecture of the time. Massignon does believe, however, based on linguistic analysis that the provinces of Normandy, Perche, Ile de France and other western provinces north of the Loire River, provided the majority of settlers to the St. Lawrence Valley (51%), and around 25% immigrated to Acadia. The non-French colonizers to Acadia consisted of English, Scots, Irish, Portuguese, and Basques account for “at least 7 percent of the Acadian population” (Massignon 1962: 74). This, I would suggest, means that one should not be surprised and might even expect to find a variety of architectural styles represented in Acadia settlements.

Historian Thierry Veillot concluded our discussion (in France) by mentioning the results of some recent archaeology in the region of La Rochelle. Archaeologists had uncovered several small 12th century fishing villages. The houses in these villages all had long rectangular stone footings, which, archaeologists suggest, would have allowed for the drying of fish in the back while leaving the front of the house for living space. He

suggested that the occupation of the home owner might have influenced the style of home being built. This might help explain some of the architectural diversity in Acadia as well.

To conclude the chapter on extant French vernacular architecture a 1795 description by Captain John MacDonald of some late 18th century French homes located near Amherst, Nova Scotia has been included. Due to the dearth of extant architecture the description of these buildings will be analysed and although they are no longer standing their detailed description does allow for analyses, even if somewhat superficial.

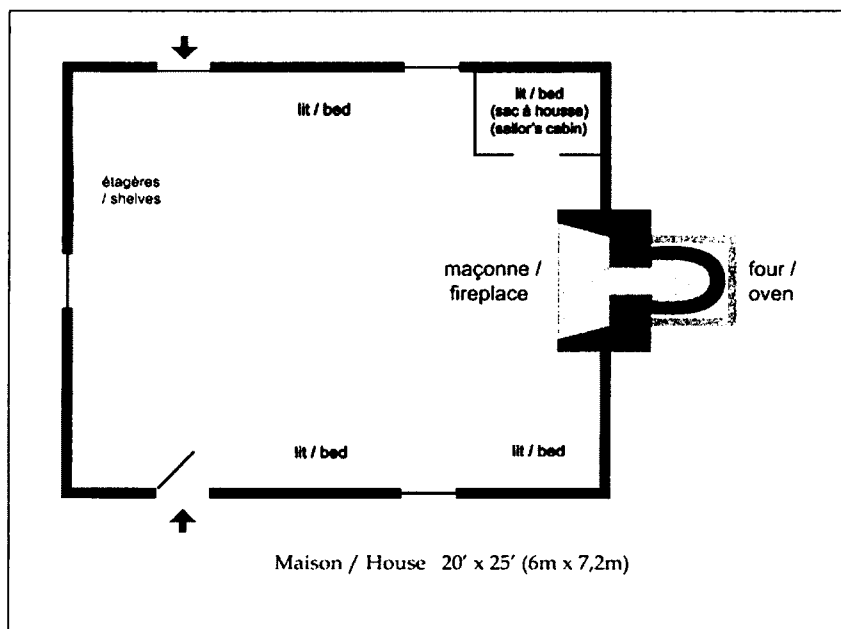


Figure 28 : Interpretation of the Acadian houses at Menoudie as described by Captain John MacDonald in 1795. A "sailor's cabin" type bed has been added here. It is possible that the secondary door was located in the gable wall, opposite the chimney. Courtesy of Bernard LeBlanc Université de Moncton.

The following is the description made by MacDonald in a report on J.F.W.

DesBarre's land holdings, and the drawing (Figure 28) by doctor LeBlanc is based on this description:

The premises of everyone seems to be a house from 18 to 25 feet long & as many in breadth without porch or partition but the outer door opening immediately into the sole room. There are generally two doors, the lee one being that which is used. The chimney, of which the lower part is stone & clay, & the higher part is clay wrought upon cross bars of wood between a wooden frame, is in the remotest part from the door. The Beds are on both sides of the house from the chimney to the doors. In the end of the house opposite to the chimney, the pots and water vessels lie on the floor, and the Milk & Milk vessels are disposed of on shelves, together with their bowls mugs &c: As they all sleep, eat, cook, smoke, wash &c: in this house or room, I need not say it must look black and dirty enough particularly as the houses are now old.

Behind the Chimney on the outside is an oven of clay, the opening to which for bread & fire is on the Inside back of the chimney. The oven rests on a square wall of Loggs or Stone around an apartment three or four feet in the square, where a few pigs enter on the outside, and lie warm from the heat of the chimney & oven.

In their Barns they are more Sumptuous. They are from forty to fifty feet in length – from twenty to thirty in breadth & from ten to fifteen high, the lower story destined for the cattle – and the upper for the corn, Hay, and threshing floor: At a distance they set off the whole place.

I had almost forgot to mention that their houses have a cellar underground for the roots &c to which they descend by a trap door in the floor.

J. MacDonald 1795 (Centre d'Etudes Acadiennes Anselme-Chiasson 1.18-10)

In a discussion with Dr. LeBlanc he suggested that these post-deportation houses, as well as others in New Brunswick, were H-bent style frame houses (See

Appendix). He suggested that based on what was being built after the deportation by those French who had returned to the Maritimes was evidence as to what the Acadians (his term) were building prior to the deportation.

While it is impossible to discredit this theory, it is necessary to treat such generalizations with caution. Deetz points out that “if we were to rely on the evidence of standing buildings, an oversimplified view of America’s earliest architectural diversity would almost certainly result. The surviving evidence aboveground is remarkably homogeneous in form...but the evidence from both archaeology and documentary sources is taken into account, a very different picture emerges, one of considerable diversity” (Deetz 1977: 130-131). Davidson concurs with Deetz on the limitations of using extant architecture to draw firm conclusions, stating, “it is unlikely that every style of house built during the period is represented by extant building” (Davidson 1988: 249).

The lack of extant French vernacular architecture makes it difficult to confidently draw conclusions. It does provide us the opportunity to glimpse into the past and determine whether or not building technologies, styles and materials were transferred from one time period and region to another. Although the sample sizes are small, the sites in Louisiana, Missouri and clearly demonstrate that the styles, poteaux en terre and poteaux sur sol, for example, were constructed in both pre-Deportation Acadia and post-Deportation North America.

Theory as to why building styles and elements are transferred from one region to another and possible explanations as to why change occurs has also been included to provide context. Understanding this process may allow future researchers, particularly archaeologists to better understand what he/she is finding in the ground.

Chapter 3

Archaeology

Acadian material culture is an area which has remained relatively unexplored...(and) this aspect of Acadian culture has never received the attention which it deserves.

(LeBlanc 1995: 577)

The findings of archaeological investigations are thus in dialogue with evidence in historical plans, maps, drawings and texts.

(Voss 2008: 174)

With the lack of quality, descriptive primary texts and cartography, and the scarcity of 17th and 18th century extant architecture to analyse, archaeology is the best avenue from which to continue this examination and interpretation of pre-deportation French vernacular architecture in Nova Scotia. As James Deetz writes, “the subterranean remains of a house, which are observed through excavation, have survived the passage of time in a far less selective way than have whole structures” (Deetz 1977: 127). Catherine Cottreau-Robins, Curator of Archaeology at the Nova Scotia Museum, has stated that there are presently over one hundred confirmed pre-deportation sites registered in Nova Scotia and only a handful have been excavated. She suggests that only through more comprehensive archaeological investigations of these sites will we arrive at a clearer,

richer interpretation of these early French colonists (Cottreau-Robbins. Personal communication. 2011).

The use of the post-processual approach, which is “aimed at understanding the past by reconstructing the point of view of past peoples who produced the archaeological record” (Ashmore and Sharer 2006: 281), will be implemented to interpret the archaeological sites examined in this thesis. Moving away from the merely descriptive approach and examining the features (most of which are stone foundations or cellar holes) for style will provide a glimpse into the “choices and strategies used by members of a community to establish their physical presence in the landscape” (Voss: 2008: 173). Continuing with this concept of style and its importance, it is deemed as more than a “passive product of the enculturative milieu, it came to be viewed as a form of communication and social marking in certain usually highly visible artefacts, and in certain social contexts” (Conkey 1991. As cited in Jones 1997: 113). Surely there can be fewer things more highly visible than a person’s home. Jones agrees with Conkey’s premise and adds that “style was regarded as both functional and adaptive in that it facilitates the exchange of information concerning social and religious identification, group affiliation, status and so on in periods of environmental and social stress” (Jones 1997: 113). To complement this thought Nicholas David and Carol Kramer write, “when examining architectural remains, archaeologists tend to consider building materials, scale, patterns of circulation and location. They also consider the numbers, associations and, spatial distribution of objects, features, and facilities within structures” (David and Kramer 2001: 285). Paying attention to these elements they suggest, will “assist in

formulating hypotheses relating to, for example, variations in the functions of built habitats, or in the economic statuses of households within a settlement” (David and Kramer 2001: 285).

The Melanson Settlement, Belleisle, Grand-Pré, Beaubassin and Castle Frederick, have been selected for analysis and have all undergone varying degrees of archaeological investigation ranging from complete excavation to shovel testing. Unfortunately the sample size is small and has been limited to only these five sites because they are the only ones which have been confirmed as pre-deportation French sites based on materials recovered. Those materials and components that are deemed to be of an architectural nature will be analysed to determine if there exist any similarities amongst these sites and just as importantly whether or not the archaeology confirms or refutes the evidence of primary texts, cartography and extant architecture.

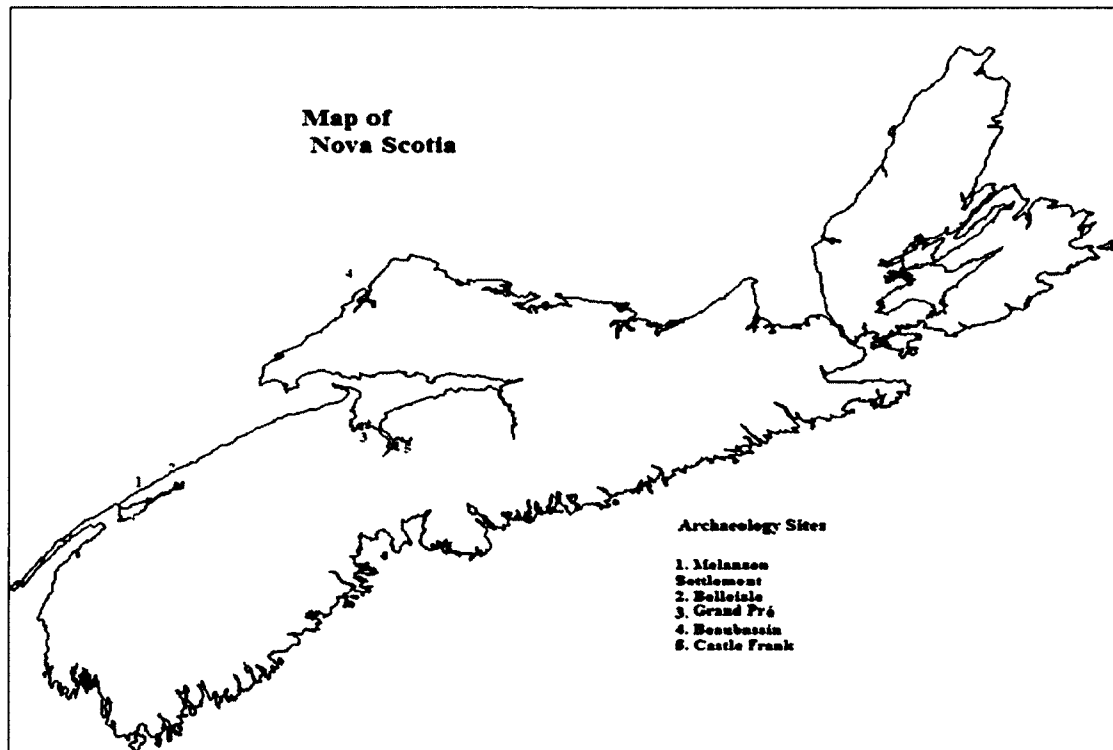


Figure 29: Map of Nova Scotia with pre-deportation French archaeological sites. Courtesy of Jonathan Fowler, Saint Mary's University.

The Melanson Settlement

In 1984 an archaeological survey carried out by the Nova Scotia Museum and Parks Canada identified “several cultural resources” at the Melanson Settlement (Dunn 2007: 2). Research on this once forgotten landmark would provided valuable information on the French colonists because “its in-situ resources reflect the family communities in which the Acadians settled along the Dauphin River (now Annapolis)” (Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada 1986). It was on this basis that the Melanson Settlement was designated a National Historic Site.

Briefly, the Melanson Settlement dates back to about 1664 when Charles Melanson and his wife Marie Dugas decided against settling on a site described as the “upper, above the town and its fort, where they would be secure against enemy attack in time of war” (Dunn 2007: 7) and instead chose to “make their home on the lower river, between Goat Island and the town” (Dunn 2007: 7). This founding family of Acadia used their English background to their advantage and Dunn believes that this was one of the reasons they chose the vulnerable area to establish their homes writing: “Possibly Charles felt that his English background and Boston connections would save him from English attacks while his French background would save him from French attacks. Their mixed English-French heritage gave both Charles and his brother Pierre a definite strategic advantage over other Port-Royal residents” (Dunn 2007: 7).

The Expulsion of 1755 ended almost ninety years and four generations of Melanson occupation at this site. Like many other French settlements everything was likely burned to the ground and this is supported by John Knox who described the Annapolis River in 1757: “On each side we see the ruins of habitations, and extensive orchards well planted with apple and pear trees bending under their weight of fruit; beyond these are dark, thick woods and high mountains all around” (Knox, J. As cited in Dunn 2007: 78).

The 1984 survey led the archaeology team to focus on one of the “more noticeable cellar depressions for testing and excavation” (Crépeau and Dunn 1986: 7). This cellar, in fact, revealed “complex patterns of building destruction and re-use” and

was the site of three different houses. The first house was a *piquet* or vertical post building.

This survey helped locate 18 features and six of these cellar ruins “consist of more or less square depressions approximately one metre deep and an average of 6.5 m square. Situated on the east side of these ruins is a grassy mound created by the collapse of a chimney (Crépeau and Dunn 1986: 8). This pattern of chimney orientation seems to contradict the work Christianson and Crépeau, who, in attempting to synthesize their research on various locations write; “[i]t is clear that there were prescribed choices for the orientation of houses, for house shape and for the location of the fireplace/oven complex. The east-west orientation, and west wall placement of fireplaces, may relate to climatic factors such as prevailing winds” (Christianson and Crépeau 1995: 99). This is one case of placement not based on standard practice and is one aid in determining the extent of uniformity of pre-expulsion building practices. If it were not just the prevailing wind that determined the chimney placement then might it have been cultural? Why, for example, do some buildings have their chimneys centrally located? In excavating numerous cellars Christianson found that the earliest structure was “piquet or vertical post building. The posts, which averaged 13 cm in diameter, were driven into the ground and fieldstones were wedged against them” (Crépeau and Dunn 1986: 10). The building measured 5.85 m wide and at least 10 m long. Interestingly, the authors of this report indicate that “this type of construction was a common building technique throughout early New France”. This is, however, “the first documented instance of its use in Acadia” (Crépeau and Dunn 1986: 10). Was this simply the result of a small sample size,

and if there had there been more 17th and 18th century French sites excavated would this number have increased? This building was destroyed at some point, the:

area levelled and a timber frame (*charpente*) house built. Unlike the first house, the second incarnation sat over a shallow roughly dug-out cellar. The footing was laid on the surface of the ground and consisted of two courses of stones bonded together with puddle clay. The fireplace was at the east end of the house (unlike the west end at Belleisle). The slate and basalt surface of the large hearth extended some 1.75 m out into the kitchen area. The firebox was fashioned out of fieldstones mortared together with local red clays, while the flue had a wood frame with a clay lining and exterior parging. Attached to the back of the chimney, on the exterior of the house was a bake oven. Soft clay tiles were found on the floor of the semi-circular oven. Local clays were also mixed with chopped marsh grasses and used to make the wattle and daub which filled the timber frame while the exterior of the house was finished in planks (Crépeau and Dunn 1986: 10).

This example of construction can be seen in Figure 29.



Figure 30: Torchis and plank wall. Sinclair Inn, Annapolis Royal. Courtesy of Jonathan Fowler. Saint Mary's University.

The third house on this site was of a similar design as the second one (timber frame building with clay walling sitting on a simple stone footing) but with smaller dimensions, measuring 6.5 m by 7.4 m

In June of 2011, Université Laval doctoral candidate Stéphane Noël, while excavating faunal remains at the Melanson site, uncovered what appears to be a drain with a wooden lining (Figure 31) exiting a house foundation (17B19). Complete excavation of this site remains to be done and therefore caution must be taken when drawing conclusions, however, to date this feature appears to be unique at this site.



Figure 31: Possible wooden drain. Melanson Settlement. Courtesy of Stéphane Noël. Université de Laval.

Noël also reports that several of the shell-middens he had uncovered (Figure 32) are located on the southeast corners of these foundations, which prompts him to speculate that this would have been the location of their doors. The inhabitants would mostly like have opened their doors and thrown their waste materials. Over time all the organic material would have decomposed leaving shells and bones (Noël, S. Personal communication. 2011).



Figure 32: Shell midden located on southeastern side of house foundation. Melanson Settlement. Courtesy of Stéphane Noël. Université de Laval.

The Melanson Settlement site remains a rich site for archaeological research. Much work remains to be done and valuable discoveries uncovered as Noël's work illustrates.

Belleisle

Located on the north side of the Annapolis River, eight kilometres east of the town of Annapolis Royal, the Belleisle site would probably have consisted of about twenty houses at the time of the deportation. This represented the “largest Acadian settlement on the Annapolis River apart from the administrative center of Port Royal” (Christianson 1983: 1). This, archaeologist David Christianson explains, was due to the extensive marshlands adjacent to the community which made it an excellent area for agriculture. Belleisle is one of the earlier sites analysed and can be given a settlement date of 1679 when “the Martin brothers had improved the land at Belleisle and were then residing in that location” (Calnek 1897. As cited in Christianson 1984: 7). A 1688 census by Gargas listed the “total population of seventy four persons, including twelve adult males and twelve adult females, residing in ten houses” (Christianson 1984: 7). Belleisle continued to grow at a steady rate and a map of the area made in 1733 indicates the existence of fifteen houses and one windmill. It is from this that Christianson believes this community would have consisted of “over twenty and perhaps as many as thirty houses by 1755” (Christianson 1984: 7).

Archaeological research, which was commenced in the early 1970s by the Nova Scotia Museum under the direction of archaeologist Brian Preston, was initiated based on the information from local community members describing what appeared to be early house foundations. Upon closer examination, in the form of test excavations, Preston identified “a probably late pre-expulsion Acadian house foundation” (Christianson 1984: 1). He also reported “five structures of probable Acadian origin...{where} three of these

structures were interpreted as a distinctive form of pre-expulsion Acadian housing not present in post-1755 settlements in Nova Scotia” (Preston 1971: 13). Preston returned to the site the following year and conducted a small excavation on one of the foundations. His team found wrought iron nails, perhaps used in “flooring in order to prevent floor boards from splitting” (Christianson 1984: 39). If this in fact is the case, were floors made of wood standard in these French homes or simply specific to this particular community? The 1983 project examined this same foundation as well as that of another. In all, the project was able to identify through excavation three house foundations, an unidentified feature associated with a house foundation (designated as “House 3”), dykes and two wells. Many pottery shards and artifacts one might expect from the process of daily living have been uncovered and provide a valuable insight into the daily lives of these people (Lavoie 1987). It is, however, the foundation features that provide the most relevant information to this researcher. The house foundations were constructed of local basalt field stone using dry mortar techniques and Christianson notes that the foundation for one of the houses as “being formed using local basalt field stone generally arranged two rows wide and three to four courses high” (Christianson 1984: 21). The foundation, he continues, “incorporated a single cell living area, a fireplace/exterior oven complex with the west wall and an apparent extension, perhaps for storage, along the eastern wall (Figure 33).

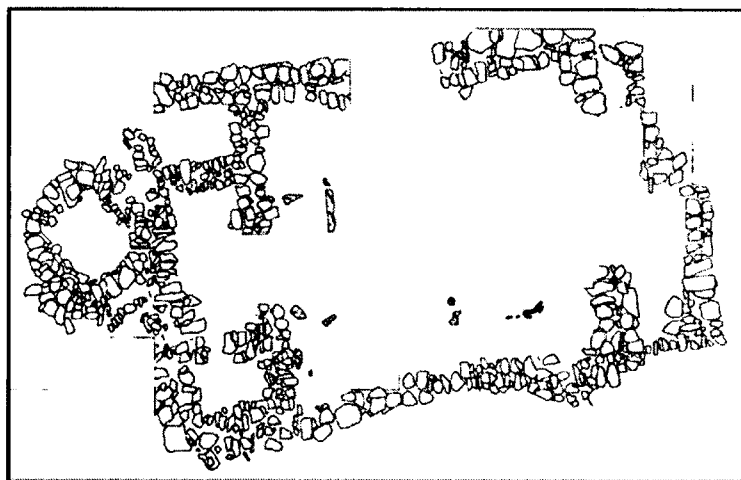


Figure 33: House foundation at Belleisle. Courtesy of David Christianson. NSARM.

In his 1983 excavation report Christianson writes, “Of the five structures on the Belleisle marsh reported by Preston in 1971, three are now recognized as relatively undisturbed pre-expulsion Acadian houses. The fourth, consisting of a round stone foundation, is classified as a feature associated with House 3” (Christianson 1983:11). The most distinctive features, Christianson believes, of the House 1 foundation are the fireplace and associated exterior oven-base. “The fireplace”, he writes, had an “interior dimensions of 3m by 1.25m may have been brick lined. Quantities of fractured, irregularly formed red bricks were concentrated in the excavation units contiguous to the fireplace” (Christianson 1983:23). Due to the poor quality of these bricks he surmises that they may have been manufactured locally. The excavation uncovered pieces of local blue slate that were also concentrated around the fireplace. Christianson reports that “two relatively complete specimens recovered had pecked edges and were approximately 5cm thick and suggests that local slate tiles were made to use in place of period imported ceramic floor tiles. No slate tiles were located immediately in front of the fireplace

opening suggesting that they were used as hearth tiles” (Christianson 1983: 23). The report continues with a description of the exterior oven and based on material unearthed Christianson postulates how it was constructed:

The base for an exterior oven located adjacent to the back of the north half of the fireplace was circular and had an exterior diameter of 2.5m and an interior diameter of 1.5m. It was constructed of the same local fieldstone as the house foundation. The oven base was built on a slope and its lowest point was approximately .75m below the level of the foundation. Large quantities of fieldstone located in and around the oven base suggest that it was partially constructed with this material (Christianson 1983: 23).

He suggests that the actual oven was probably made of clay based on the large quantities of fragmented clay excavated in the fireplace/oven complex area (Christianson 1983: 23). A quantity of unfired clay was also found during the excavation in what would have been the interior and exterior of the building and “exhibited a wood grain pattern on the surface...” of one side and a white slip on the other (Christianson 1983: 24). This, Christianson contends, is that the clay had been applied to a wall or other wooden surface when wet and later covered with the white clay slip (Christianson 1983: 24). He gives the external dimensions for House 1, excluding the oven base but including the west extension, as 11.5m by 7.5m. The living area, bounded by the fireplace opening on the west and the interior of the east wall (excluding the east extension) measured 6.5m by 6m. The east addition extends 1 to 1.5m beyond the living area (Christianson 1983: 21). A close analogy to this complex is seen in a vernacular floor plan (Figure 34) from the Vendee region of France (Drobecq 1942: 57).

1 and House 2 sites. The dearth of window glass “suggests that another form of window covering, perhaps shutters and/ or animal hides, was in more general use” (Christianson 1983: 38).

In 2004 and 2005 archaeologist Marc Lavoie conducted archaeological research in the central-west area of the Belleisle marsh on an island where he had originally spotted the ruins of two suspected pre-deportation Acadian houses. Upon further investigation he also uncovered several other houses, a barn, latrines and an ice house (Lavoie 2008: 87). Lavoie found that these dwellings had been built upon earlier foundations he has dated to around 1670 and each of these buildings varied in size. One he has described as being “la grande maison” (Lavoie 2008: 87). Some of these houses were constructed using the *poteaux sur sole* (post on a sill) method with the walls constructed out of *colombage/bousillé* (mud and fibre) while others were constructed using the *poteaux en terre* and were much smaller than the other houses (Lavoie 2008: 91). Lavoie was able to trace and identify some of the occupants to three of the houses. These houses he has identified as having belonged to the Savoie family, Gaudet family and Blanchard family and were constructed using the *colombage bousillé, pièce sur pièce and poteaux en terre* methods (Lavoie 2008: 92). While Lavoie feels that much more research needs to be done at Belleisle, he believes that the picture that is starting to emerge is one of architectural diversity and societal stratification (Lavoie 2008: 92).

Grand-Pré

Grand-Pré, a small village in the Annapolis Valley nestled between the university town of Wolfville to the west and Hantsport to the east would by today's standards be hard pressed to be seen as the heart of anything. However, prior to the deportation of 1755, Grand-Pré was a vibrant French settlement referred to as the "granary of Acadia" due to its large harvest yields (Johnston and Kerr 2004: 24). Settled in the early 1680s by French families from the Port Royal area, Grand-Pré offered an abundance of rich marshlands to dyke, freedom from prying government officials and attacks from New Englanders, who viewed Port Royal as a military target (A.J.B. Johnston and W. Kerr 2004: 17).

Although small and quaint, Grand-Pré today is considered by some as the heartland of the Acadian culture and attracts thousands of tourists, many of whom self identify as Acadian. There are a number of reasons why this might be so, however, a poem by American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, entitled *Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie* can be seen as its driving force (Johnston and Kerr 2004: 71). This poem brought to the attention of millions of readers the plight of those deported while at the same time romanticizing these people and their way of life. In 1922 a memorial church was constructed on what has been considered the footprint of the original pre-deportation church foundations (Johnston and Kerr 2004: 73) and recently an impressive interpretive centre was built to provide the visitor with an Acadian narrative of its history.

When exactly digging into the soils of Grand-Pré in search of artefacts pertaining to the French settlers commenced can never be pinpointed, although, there are records of treasure seekers and antiquarians uncovering material culture since the 19th century. There is no doubt that incalculable damage has been done by these looters and a great deal of thanks must be directed towards John Fredric Herbin, who realized what was going on and in the early 20th century and purchased these lands thereby putting an end to the destruction (Fowler, J. Personal communication. 2009).

Professional archaeology at Grand-Pré began in 1972 under the direction of E. Frank Korvemaker culminating with his, *Report on the 1972 Excavation of Two Acadian Houses at Grand Pré National Historic Park, Nova Scotia*. This report, combined with a report by Denise Hansen of Parks Canada, and the work done by the Saint Mary's University field school (2001-present) will be analysed to glean information regarding the architecture of this area.

The Korvemaker-led fieldwork of 1972 focused on two sites in which initial surveys had identified two depressions which quite possibly were foundation sites. One was quite pronounced (House 1) 8B5 and one slight (House 2) 8B6. Both were surrounded by slight ridges. They were determined to be of French pre-Deportation origin based on the recovery of French ceramics found throughout the unit (Korvemaker 1972: 24).

Excavation of House 1 unearthed a “small cellar, a stone foundation and a variety of charcoal traces” (Korvemaker 1972: 3). Unfortunately, complete excavation of this

site has not been finished and therefore confident interpretation must wait. “The major feature” identified by Korvemaker “is the cellar, which was constructed with sloping earthen sides-a technique apparently used to avoid the construction of retaining walls. The cellar was found to be a square structure with sides about 15ft (5m) long” (Korvemaker 1972: 3).

Wood discovered at the base of the unit consisted of planks and possible beams. An indication that this wood was used structurally is evident in its orientation (signifying intentional placement) “parallel to the south wall of the cellar, while other remains lay parallel to the east wall” (Korvemaker 1972: 3). Korvemaker contrasts the existence of wood found at House 1 with cellars found at the Romas Site in Prince Edward Island where no wood was found. He points out, however, that based on the amount of charcoal recovered from both sites, burning at the Roma’s Site was far more extensive than at House 1 in Grand-Pré (Korvemaker 1972: 3).

A stone formation made of large field stones and adjacent to the assumed location of the west cellar wall was uncovered. This feature measured 7.5 feet north-south by 8.2 feet east-west. Korvemaker reports that “the majority of this stone formation appears to form a relatively level surface having an average elevation of 28.8 feet (9m) ASL” (Korvemaker 1972: 5). A single row of stones forms a second course along the south and west sides of this formation, “creating the impression that the level surface is surrounded on two and possibly three sides by a stone wall. This, Korvemaker, suggests is the “existence of a single, horseshoe-shaped fireplace with the opening towards the east” (Korvemaker 1972: 6).

Again, until this site has been completely excavated it will be difficult to gain a full understanding of what exactly was here. What can be surmised is that this building did not have a stone foundation thereby making it difficult to determine its dimension. Also the lack of torchis, or perhaps the failure to report torchis as an architectural material, makes it difficult to draw conclusions as to the appearance of this structure.

House 2 (8B6), like House 1(8B5) was only partially excavated. It measures approximately 23 feet (8m) east-west by 21 feet (7m) north-south. Korvemaker reports that excavations of this second house “revealed basically the same features found for Acadian house 1”. He adds that “an additional feature uncovered in this building which was not found in Acadian house 1 consists of a stone drain leading northward from the cellar” (Korvemaker 1972: 11). Was this a result of House 2 being in an area that required draining or was this a common feature that a more thorough excavation of House 1 might have uncovered?

Based on these findings as well as analysis of heavy deposits of charcoal, Korvemaker does hazard a guess on its dimensions, writing, “the original house measured approximately 47 feet (16m) in length and about 23 feet (8m) in width, with the cellar located below the east half of the house” (Korvemaker 1972: 13).

To the untrained eye the following images (Figures 35, 36 and 37) appear to be jumbles of stones, however, they do show in the pattern of their arrangement the size and orientation of the house for which they were the foundation. No footing has ever been detected; however, a cellar and fire-box are evident.

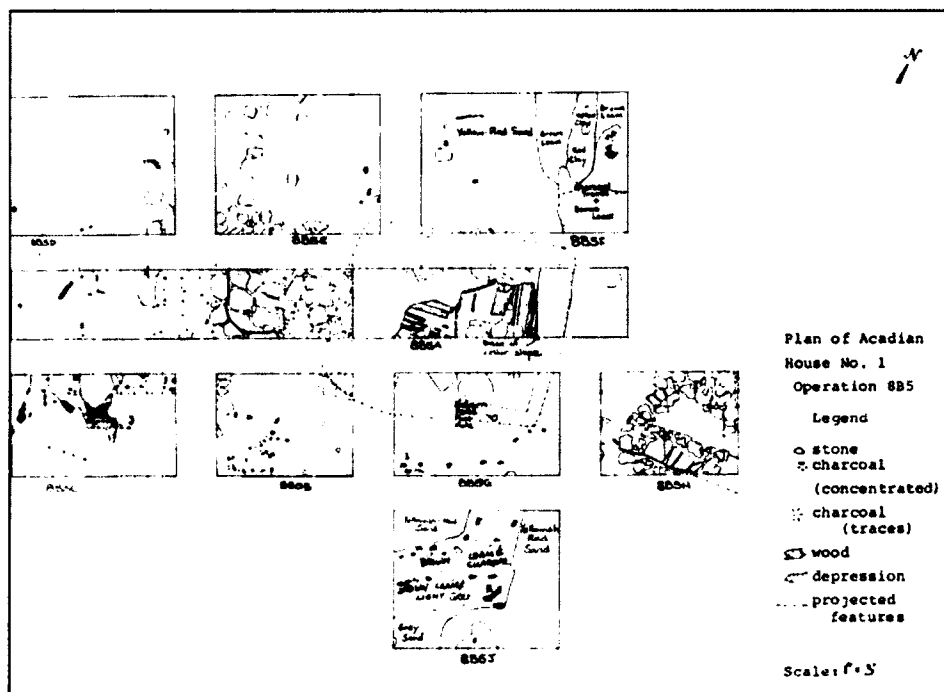


Figure 35: Plan of Acadian House. Courtesy of Parks Canada.



Figure 36: Post-excavation photo of French house 1. Courtesy of Parks Canada.



**Figure 37: View of cellar in Acadian house 2. Camera facing east. 8 foot (3m) scale bar. 8B-297-M.
Courtesy of Parks Canada.**

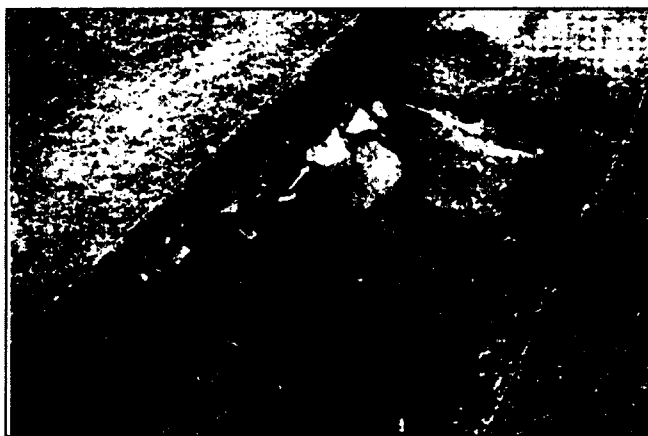


Figure 38: Post excavation photo of house 2. Courtesy of Parks Canada.

Figure 39 is a photo of a pre-deportation French cellar located just east of the memorial church. It has been identified as being of French origin based on several pieces of torchis located in the burn or destruction layer as well as a suggested terminus ante

quem date for construction due to the absence of Planter-era ceramics from the drain fill (Fowler, J. Personal communication 2001). A Saint Mary's University field school student gives scale to the photo as does a meter scale bar. A plan drawing (Figure 40) has been included to better define the stone cellar wall/footing. To the northeast of the foundation runs a stone-lined drain similar to that of House 2 (8B6). The gaps shown in the stone work in this photo (top right and bottom left) are the results of post-deportation treasure hunting (Fowler, J. Personal communication. 2008).



Figure 39: Cellar footing of pre-deportation Acadian cellar. Courtesy of Jonathan Fowler. Saint Mary's University.

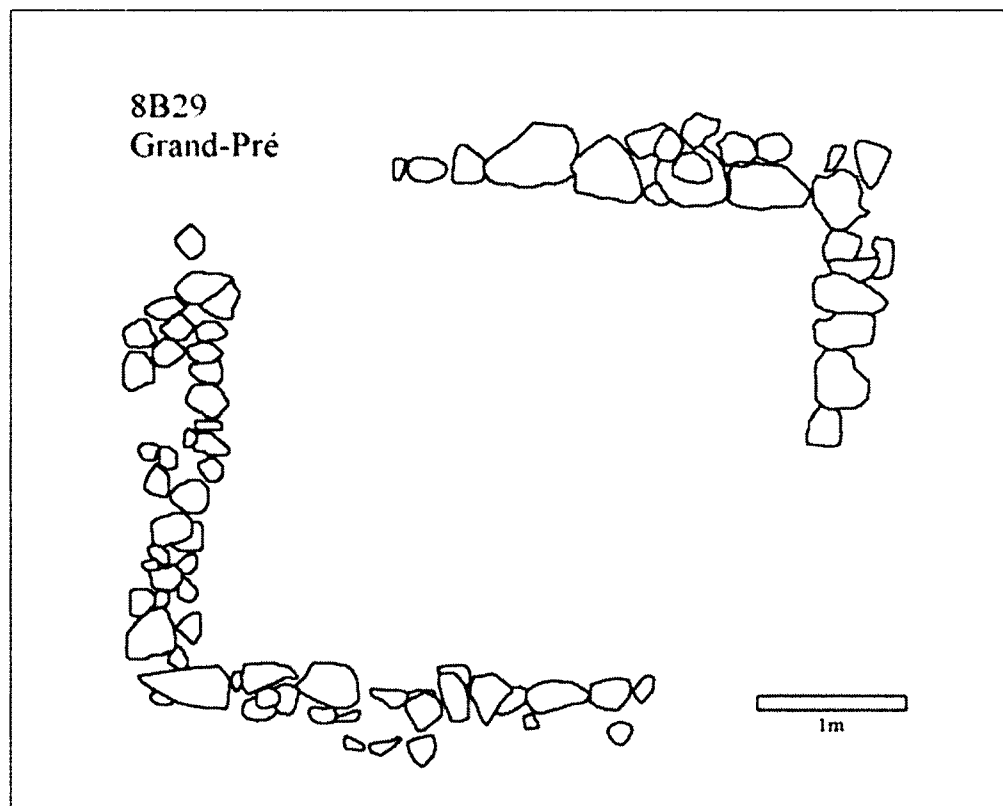


Figure 40: Plan drawing of cellar. Courtesy of Jonathan Fowler, Saint Mary's University.

Beaubassin

In 1671, after decades of almost constant turmoil in Port Royal, a prominent local inhabitant, Jacques Bourgeois, “moved his large extended family to Chignecto (‘great marsh’ in Mikmawisimk)” (Faragher 2005: 71). Thus began the settling of the isthmus between what is now Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Faragher writes, that “Chignecto was ideal country for Acadian pioneers: 50 000 acres of salt marsh, drained by four tidal rivers and interspersed with forested uplands. Fifty feet or more of tidal variations had left deep deposits of rich sediment in the lowlands” (Faragher 2005: 71).

The diversity of settlers to this region can be seen when examining the many place names left behind. “Butte à Roger on Beauséjour ridge to the north of rivière Missaguash, was named for Irishman Roger Caissy and his wife Marie Poirier, who planted the communities first orchards. Butte à Mirande, on Beaubassin ridge to the south, was the homeplace of Emmanuel Mirande, emigrant from Portugal by way of Québec, who prospered, and after a few years married the young widow Marguerite Boudrot, daughter of Jacques Bourgeois” (Faragher 2005: 72).

Unfortunately, this site, rich in history, has had very little in the way of archaeological investigation. Parks Canada archaeologist Charles Burke has been conducting surveys and test excavations in an attempt to determine how extensive the French settlements around Fort Beauséjour are. No actual excavation of any of these sites has been conducted but Burke hopes that with proper funding more in-depth investigation can be carried out in the not too distant future (Burke, C. Personal communication. 2011). This is not to suggest that nothing has been gleaned from these tests. Several sites have uncovered various quantities of torchis and window glass and Burke points out that there are indications that the British who resettled this region after the expulsion re-used several French foundations by adding on to them (Burke, C. Personal communication. 2011). He concluded the discussion by echoing others in saying that there is still very little known about these early French settlers and that archaeology will play a vital role in bringing some clarity to the many questions that remain unanswered.

Castle Frederick

The former estate of Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres, Castle Frederick is located in Upper Falmouth in Hants County. During a preliminary reconnaissance of the area in 1987 “30 cultural features were recorded that were believed to date from about the early eighteenth century to about 1950 (Preston 1991: 16). Following this reconnaissance, Stephen A. Davis, from Saint Mary’s University, along with several students and volunteers, conducted two days of test excavations in 1992. These tests revealed the existence of “one Acadian and two post-Expulsion house sites” (Deal, 1992: 16). Archaeologist Marc Lavoie identified one site as a pre-Expulsion French house site, “based on the recovery of one sherd of Saintonge ware, a few sherds of Rhenish stoneware and the general proportions of the feature in comparison with those at Belleisle and Melanson” (Christianson, D. As cited in Crépeau and Dunn 1986: 18). This French site, located on the DeBarres estate, has been identified as the small pre-Expulsion French village of Pierre Landry.

In the 1987 report by then Nova Scotia Museum curator Brian Preston, several possible French house sites were documented at the Pierre Landry site. Although they were not excavated their shapes would indicate that they were foundation features with collapsed chimneys. “A possible house foundation represented by a small depression and mound feature” was how Preston described one site, and “a large, roughly circular depression at the edge of the small wooded area” another. This “large, roughly circular depression” is interesting when examining the research of Dr. Jonathan Fowler who has identified circular features in aerial photographs in the Grand-Pré area (Fowler, J.

Personal communication. 2009). It is hoped that further research, including fieldwork, at these sites will be able to determine what these features are and from what time period they were made.

As mentioned earlier, much more archaeology needs to be done in order to make any real attempt at understanding fully the French vernacular architecture of pre-Deportation Acadia. What the archaeology to date has given us, however limited, is a picture of architectural diversity. Size of houses differed, as did the placement of their chimneys. Some houses had stone cellars while others did not. Large amounts of window glass were found at some sites and almost none at others. Evidence of thatched roofing was found in sites around Belleisle but not at Melanson. Further excavations of course will help to confirm these findings.

What can be said with confidence, based on the archaeology, is that the dwellings excavated to date appear to have been relatively small, one room structures. In the majority of them, torchis was found in varying amounts. This supports the findings in the primary texts and cartography, as well as in the extant architecture.

An important point to remember when considering reasons for architectural diversity found at these sites is best surmised by Cr peau and Christianson, who write:

It is tempting to identify a simple linear progression from earthfast and unframed dwellings to fully framed houses on foundations. However, all of the excavated buildings were constructed between 1700 and 1755, and the dwellings from Belleisle and Melanson must have co-existed. A more realistic model would describe the pattern as one where builders exercised choice and displayed flexibility with respect to construction techniques. This adaptability is reflected

also in the re-use of building sites for the construction of successive houses (Crépeau and Christianson 1995: 99)

Lavoie's work at Belleisle is very exciting because he was able to identify the occupants of the houses excavated thereby allowing this researcher to trace the three families back to the Loudunais region of France (Massignon 1962: 70, 71). Matching the archaeological record in Acadia to its creators and tracing them to certain regions from whence they came, is another tool that archaeologist can use to better understand the diverse cultures that constructed it.

Conclusion



Figure 41: *Migration* by Claude Picard. 1986. Courtesy of Parks Canada. BX.R.82.

This painting hangs in the memorial church at Grand Pré National Historic Site of Canada. It is an iconic depiction of the Acadians returning home from their exile. A woman bends down to pick a flower as if on a picnic. A squirrel perched on a stump, unafraid, takes in the procession, almost as if welcoming them home. The family even has pets which obediently walk alongside. There is little doubt that this painting was greatly influenced by the romance and naturalism of *Evangeline*. If this was but one of many narratives, then it would not be problematic. Unfortunately, as McKay and Bates write, “it became in many public contexts, *the* statement about Nova Scotia’s past. It

generated a formidable symbolic and material framework composed of unexamined categories” (McKay and Bates 2010: 128).

This thesis has examined 17th and 18th century French vernacular architecture through primary text, cartography and illustrations, extant vernacular architecture and the archaeological record. The purpose of this research was to offer a counter narrative to the ubiquitous one the public has warmly embraced. The romanticizing of these people which started with Longfellow, and continues to this day, does a great injustice to the early colonists. It has not only oversimplified the French settlers by lumping them all together as a group of a-political, passive communal farmers, it has taken the individual out of history. There is nothing more dehumanizing than this.

Through archaeological research and a re-examination of the historiography researchers today are uncovering a picture of the French settlers as anything but passive, a-political or homogeneous. They had diverse economies; some were farmers, some fished while still others were entrepreneurs who conducted trade with the New England states. This diversity in employment also brought a substantial range in family incomes. Some families appear to have been relatively quite well off financially while others scraped by (Fowler, J. Personal communication. 2009). We know that this diversity also extended to family dynamics as early census record a number of intermarriages with the Mi'kmaq, as touched upon earlier.

When these aspects of the cultural landscape are considered, its complexity becomes clearer. Unfortunately, the pre-deportation French colonists made or left behind

very few written accounts of their lives in Acadia. This means their voices have been forever muted and their histories written and told by others. I would suggest that the examination of their vernacular architecture is one method in which to gain insight allowing for a more complete version of their story.

Historian F. Frederick Kelly believes houses should be viewed as “human documents” and used them to study early New England culture (F. Kelly, as cited in Davidson 1988: 249). When viewed as “human documents” the architecture of the early French settlers paints a picture of a diverse, resourceful group of people adapting to their environment while maintaining some of their Old World flavour.

Chapter one, which examined primary text and early cartography and illustrations, shows a variety of both building styles and construction materials. Important to note is that these early documents provide evidence of variety of architectural styles, methods of construction and building materials that remained more or less constant from very early in the colonization right up until the deportation. The theoretical lens of critical cartography has been implemented to provide context for what has been drawn and written. These primary sources, although valuable, are laden with bias and must not be accepted as literal depictions.

Chapter two examined the extant architecture in an attempt to provide insights on aspects of Old World architecture that may have been transferred to North America while recognizing any adaptations. Unfortunately, like the primary documents, there are very few examples of extant architecture from which to draw conclusion. Instead, a

discussion of the limitations of extant architecture has been touched on as well as some theory on the genesis of colonial architecture has been explored.

The third chapter discusses the archaeological record dealing with pre-deportation French sites. Although small in number, these excavations confirm that variations in building size, methods and styles existed thusly supporting the findings in the previous two chapters. Within each settlement there does appear to be some architectural uniformity based on size and materials used which supports the notion of pre-Deportation Acadia being understood as a “clanscape”.

I would agree with Ms. Coutreau-Robins that we have only uncovered the “tip of the iceberg” in regards to the archaeological record. A better understanding of the early French settlers will be attained through future discoveries and examinations of their material culture. I would contend that it will be through archaeological research that we can best reach this goal. It must be cautioned however, that because archaeology is based on interpretation and is susceptible to personal bias the researcher must be thorough in their methodology and careful not overstep the evidence. It is only when the archaeologist is collaborative, open to critique and prepared to recognize counter interpretations that the fullness of this research can be realized.

Appendix

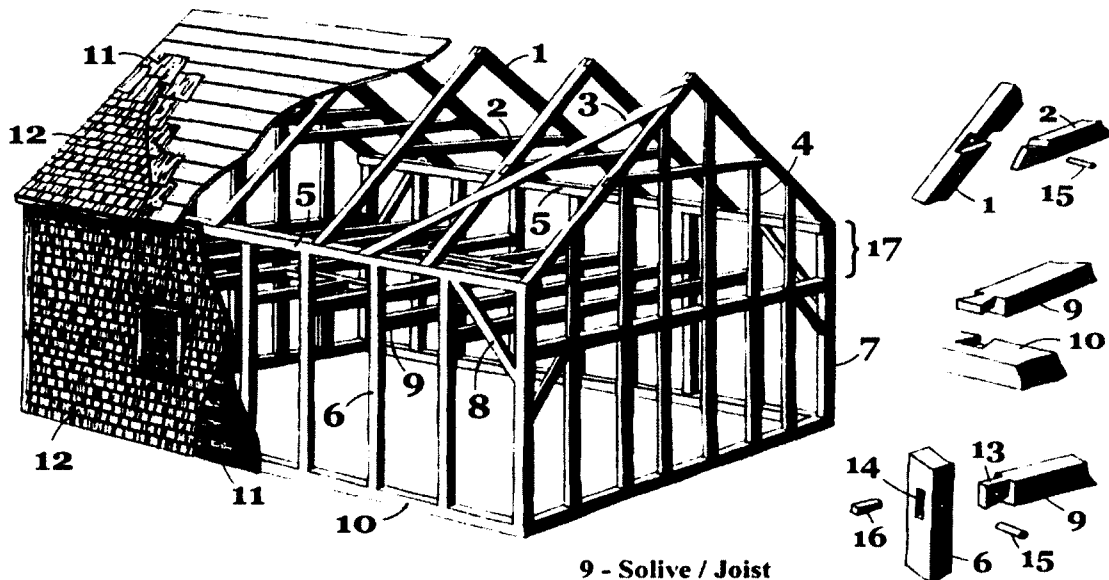
Gambrel –roof: Medieval Latin word, derived from the source word gamba, meaning a horses leg. This roof style is primarily sloping, with the upper slope having a shallow angle whereas the lower slope going for a steeper angle. This provides the advantage of a sloping roof while providing more headroom in the upper floors of the building. The Gambrel saw its origins in Indonesia where European settlers built houses using the gambrel roof design in order to allow the passage of smoke out of the house.

www.rooftrussdesign.net/gambrel-roof

Hipped-roof: a roof that slopes upward from all sides of a structure, having no vertical ends. The hip is the external angle at which adjacent sloping sides of a roof meet. The degree of such an angle is referred to as the hip bevel. The triangular sloping surface formed by hips that meet at a roof's ridge is called a hip end. A pyramidal hipped roof, also known as a pavilion roof, is hipped equally at all corners and the hips meet at a single peak, but the more common form of hip roof is a rectangular structure, where a roof ridge meets two hips at either end.

www.britannica.com

H-Bent Framed House



- 1 - Chevron / Rafter
- 2 - Entrait / Collar-Beam
- 3 - Contre-vent / Wind Brace
- 4 - Poteau de pignon / Gable Post
- 5 - Sablière supérieure / Top Plate
- 6 - Poteau / Post
- 7 - Poteau cornier / Corner Post
- 8 - Bras de force / Brace

- 9 - Solive / Joist
- 10 - Sole / Plate
- 11 - Écorce de bouleau / Birch Bark
- 12 - Bardeaux / Shingles
- 13 - Tenon / Tenon
- 14 - Mortaise / Mortise
- 15 - Cheville de bois / Dowel
- 16 - Coin / Wedge
- 17 - Tête de mur / Knee-wall

Courtesy of Bernard Leblanc. 2011

Citations

Maps, illustrations and photographs

Figures:

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40. Plan drawing of cellar. Courtesy of Jonathan Fowler. Saint Mary's University. 2001.
41. *Migration*, Claude Picard. 1986. Courtesy of Parks Canada. 2011.

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