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III And I am sure people in Sydney Mines don't realize this. It started there. (And this is just as fuzzy as DesBarres himself • You don't know exactly when Cape Breton colony gets formed, or declared.) Well, when is a colony declared? Is it declared when Britain makes the big statement, or is it declared when the first settlers come, or is it declared when the lieutenant governor comes? We had this problem when we were going to mark the bicentennial. (If he'd come ashore and planted the cross!) If he'd done that, that'd be lovely, we'd know. But that just didn't happen. We had this debate about the bicentennial--when are we going to celebrate it? Well, we're not celebrating Britain declaring this a separate colony, in 1784. There were no people here. And we're not celebrating the fact that Britain did this. We're not rejoicing in our Britishness. We're celebrating the founding of our colony, of our people coming here. If that's the case, it's sometime in 1785, when the council began, and the people's representation began. So, during that winter, DesBarres draws up the plans. He's come to the conclusion, I think, that he's not going to settle at Point Edward. I don't know why. It could be that he thought the water supply wasn't reliable enough. Crawley's Creek would be the main supply--but it does dry out--at least it does now--in the summer. The other possible place would be Leitches Creek, or Balls Creek. The problem with that is, it's not so defensible. It's a flat area. But Sydney Harbour, now, the peninsula, was different. It was built like Halifax peninsula, you see. You must remember, Muggah's Creek then was about 10 times as wide as it is now. It's been filled in by slag from the steel plant. That's an important point--we always forget that. It was very wide at that time. So there was a very defensible peninsula, and a good supply of water from Wentworth Creek. And there was also a freshwater pond, no longer there, on the east side of the peninsula--what we call Louisa Gardens now. In the spring, when the ice went out--I presume May--DesBarres and his son and a Loyalist by the name of David Tait, who had a background in surveying, came over, and they staked out what we today call the North End of Sydney. DesBarres drew up a plan which is one of the finest plans of any city in Canada. He hoped that Sydney would become one of the chief outposts of Britain in the New World. And he could see the potential in the coal fields and in the fish. Louisbourg had done it--why not Cape Breton? So he had very fond hopes. He laid out the plans of a beautiful capital, with wide avenues, parks, a large commons area, circular drives where stables would presumably go, and a place for the government house, a large area at the north end for the military, which we call Victoria Park--it's still military there. A model like Bath, England--that idea of an 18th century city, with fine curves. The plan of Sydney is magnificent; it's just beautiful when you look at it. It makes your mouth water. The streets are named after King George, Queen Charlotte, some members of the royal family. A member of the military is present to paint the portrait of the founding of Sydney, so we have a portrait of the Blenheim in the harbour. It's a capital city. Named after the head of the Colonial Office, Lord Sydney--North Sydney Mall 116 King St., North Sydney, Nova Scotia • Climate Controlled



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