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ISSUE : [Issue 21](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1978/12/1

New England's Role in the Underdevelopment of Cape Breton during the French Regime, 1713-58 In Issue 19, we told of the First Siege of Louisbourg and the fall of that French-held fortress to New Englanders. The following essay by Andrew Hill Clark (originally published in 1965) is offered here to help overcome the too simple idea of "enemies" and to convey some of the complexities of the international relationships that converged on Cape Breton Island. What becomes clear here is that the French hold on the island was never secure, and that it might not have sustained itself as long as it did had it not been for the on-going (illegal) trade with New England. Moreover, the essay offers some understanding as to why, despite almost 50 years of French occupation of the island, so little evidence of that occupation marked the landscape they left behind. When it is completed, the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park, on Cape Breton Island, will be the largest of its kind in Canada and one of the most impressive historical monuments in North America.... Such a monument to French concern for the security of its North American continental empire, a vast sweep of thinly held territory running in a crescent from Cabot Strait to the mouth of the Mississippi, may well lead to a false picture of the French development of the island for which Louisbourg served as the political and commercial capital. In 1713 the French had formally assumed control of that island, popularly known for the name of its eastern cape (officially entitled Isle Royale), and they held it with one four-year break (1745-49) until it was captured by the British for the second time (1758). When the latter took inventory of Cape Breton Island in 1766, having gained formal sovereignty through the Treaty of Paris in 1763, they counted 707 resident people (exclusive of Indians), of whom only 271 were listed as "Acadians." This imprecise designation included all of the French-speaking remnants of the island's former population; other informal immigrants from the residue of the Acadians of the peninsula of Nova Scotia and the Island of St. John (Isle or lie St.-Jean of the French regime and Prince Edward Island after 1799). who had escaped the roundups and deportations of the 1750's or had returned from exile; and, probably a scattered few whose origins lay in Canada, Gaspé, the Newfoundland coast (especially on the islands of St.-Pierre and Miquelon which have remained under French sovereignty to the present day), or even in Old France itself. Probably very few had been resident on the island before the thorough British clean-out after 1758. Neither the count of 1766 nor the later one of 1774 (1,012) was thought to be complete; the British found much the same kinds of difficulties in counting people as had the French authorities in the preceding half century. The major industry was still the cod fishery, so that much of the "population" present at any of the coves and harbours of the east coast through the long fishing season was both literally and figuratively a "floating" one. The largest resident population during the French regime had been between 4,000 and 50,000, and those numbers included the soldiers, sailors, and artisans associated with the building and maintenance of the fortress.



If merchants and resident fishermen were also included, it is probable that two-thirds or more of the residents of the "Royal Island" were usually living at, or in close proximity to, the fortress, capital, and major port of Louisbourg. It is doubtful that there ever were more than 1,500 wintering residents scattered along the coasts of the island, and only a corporal's guard had made any serious effort to exploit the inland resources of land, forests, and minerals. Apart from the fishery and the search for stone and timber for the fortress, the principal activity was trade, with the island's countless harbours providing convenient loopholes in British and French mercantilist regulations. Some ship and boat building was done but it faced many difficulties; farming activities were far below a subsistence level, spotty in distribution, and usually very near to the coast. Over the vast majority of the island's 4,000 square miles of land there was scarcely anything to show for nearly fifty years of occupation. Despite the great potential importance of the island of Cape Breton and its fortress capital, Louisbourg, to the strategic and commercial interests of the French North American empire, despite the island's quite substantial resources of timber, coal, and farming land, and despite the great and persistent local needs for food and lumber (the colony, especially Louisbourg, was often in distress), the half-century legacy to the landscape was almost unbelievably scanty. This paper is an attempt at explanation.

THE FAILURE OF IMMIGRATION The failure of Frenchmen to leave their homeland and migrate to France's North American dominions is one of the salient