## Indians



The Micmac First Nation called it Chebucto. Rudyard Kipling dubbed it "
Warden of the Honour of the North". In 1993 Harper's Bazaar described it as
" the very anatomy of a hip city", and in 1917 over 2, 000 people called it a
final resting place. This is Halifax, Nova Scotia

the Mi'kmaq ranged over most of the Maritimes and Quebec's Gaspe Peninsula, speaking the Algonquin tongue

The aboriginal people of the Maritimes wintered on the Fundy side of the province, hunting deer and moose on expertly crafted snowshoes. When the ice broke in spring they traveled to traditional locations along the coast like Chebucto, 'the biggest harbour' to summer and fish. Their weirs harvested the runs of herring and smelts. They developed barbed hooks and lines to land salmon and larger sea mammals. Each spring when they had migrated to the coast the Mi'kmag celebrated spring with a feast on the harbour shore.

When Europeans arrived they encountered the tribes at these traditional locations and recognized an affinity between the spring feast of the Mi'kmaq and their own Easter celebration. These rites of spring which celebrated the renewal of life, linked the two cultures and became a holy day bequeathed with the name St. Aspinguid of Agamenticus.

When Port Royal fell to the British in 1707, the French explored the Atlantic shore of Nova Scotia, eager to maintain a presence in Acadia. Two years before the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht snatched the mainland out of King Louis' hands, the royal engineer, De Labat was sent to Chebucto with instructions to design a mighty French fortress.

According to De Labat's plan, McNab's Island is the focal point of the town.

With the primary fortification positioned on the opposite shore where York

Redoubt is today, satellite batteries were planned at the fishing grounds, at Eastern Passage and at Point Pleasant Park to track movements up and down the Arm.

In the race to rule Acadia, French ambition to build a military stronghold was implemented up the coast at Cape Breton. Louisburg became known as 'the Dunkirk of the West'. Before it forever fell into British possession half a century later, Louisburg rivaled Halifax as the key to the continent during the European settling of America.

Europeans began their exploration of North America at least a thousand years ago. The Vikings tripped upon the Atlantic provinces, naming part of the North Atlantic seaboard Vinland. The exact route these adventurers chose during their investigation of America is unknown. But they were one of the earliest in a long line of master navigators to visit the region and glimpse its treasures. Five hundred years later John Cabot reported to his sponsor, the British Crown, the wealth and wonder of the Maritime region and shortly thereafter England began to deploy navy warships overseas to protect the bountiful fishery.

In 1534 Jacques Cartier set out under the French banner. But Europe, forever consumed in religious war, had little to funnel into transatlantic endeavours, until Bourbon King Henri IV negotiated a peace on the eve of the 17th century. Soon France had established a colony at Port Royal and planted the seed of an empire that would sprawl across the continent. In 1604 Samuel de Champlain surveyed the jagged and crenelated Nova Scotian shoreline. He identified Chebucto as a good, safe bay - a well known fact among the fisherman who took shelter here to dry their catch.

When the 18th century dawned on Chebucto, the French had established a fishing station on McNab's Island. At this time, Governor Brouillan arrived at Chebucto en route to the Fundy shore and settlement. He recognized the port as 'one of the finest that nature could form' and no doubt the strategic advantage that would come with the establishment of a force at this centrally located anchorage on the Atlantic coast.

Control of Chebucto quickly became a pivotal concern for America and Europe. In the years after the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, various plans for a new town surfaced. Captain Thomas Coram proposed a settlement and applied for a monopoly on pine pitch. Another plan called for the cultivation of hemp to produce the ropes and sheets of His Majesty's Navy. While Britain was in apparent control of Acadia, crops and livestock were flowing freely across the province from the fertile Annapolis Valley to the French garrison at Louisburg. Thus commercial interests and the proximity of their foes eventually caused the British to found the town of Halifax in the summer of 1749.

In 1746, France planned to blitz the English forces in America. The greatest force yet to assemble in America would rendez vous at Chebucto. The recapture of Louisburg was the armada's immediate mission, but the ambitious plan also targeted Annapolis and Boston in a planned sweeping display of French power. Quebec would send a force in advance to join a squadron sailing from the West Indies and a fleet from across the Atlantic - 37 warships and 34 transports carrying 6790 soldiers and sailors - led by Duc D'Anville.

D'Anville's experience was a nightmare. The crew did not learn of the fleet's destination until they were at sea and they did not like being duped. The transatlantic voyage, plagued by raging storms, taunting calms and disease lasted most of the summer. Just as they reached Sable Island an unusually powerful storm beleaguered the fleet, sinking ships and scattering the survivors. When D'Anville arrived at Chebucto no ships were waiting, no advance force.

The frigates L'Aurore and Castor had left France only days ahead of D'Anville, but reached Chebucto early in the summer having taken a quicker route. They bided the time pillaging the English fishery and preying on merchant vessels and gunships alike. But soon provisions were low and their prisoners of war became a nuisance. These men were turned over to one Repentigny and 150 Natives who were to escort them to Quebec. They were marched into the woods and swallowed by history. Admiral Conflans arrived from the West Indies shortly after the advance guard had left and they too sailed for France. The disaster was too much for D'Anville who died on September 27, 1746 of apoplexy.

During the summer of 1749, a French frigate out of Louisburg sailed to Halifax. The settlers looked on as French officers dug up D'Anville's remains on George's Island and solemnly withdraw.

When the people of New England caught wind of the details of the 1748

Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle they were insulted. Louisburg is to be repaired by
the English troops and returned to the French in accordance with the peace.

The Yankees cannot fathom that Britain has traded their hard won trophy,
the Dunkirk of the West for a trading post in India.

Britain's agenda is concerned with a matter closer to home. The English gladly hand over Louisburg when the French agree to recognize the House of Hanover as the lawful sovereign of England. The Pretender, Bonny Prince Charlie has been a royal thorn in their side.

New England is refunded the expense of the Louisburg campaign. But William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts demands the English build a fortress at Chebucto. The English governor at Fort Anne, Paul Mascarene has been supporting the idea of a town on the Atlantic coast for 20 years, but only now, with the political shifting will Halifax be realized.

Halifax was yet a floating city in the summer of 1749 and construction efforts suffered from the animosity raging between the Mi'kmaq and the English.

Cornwallis had ordered Gorham Rangers to the edge of Bedford Basin to build a barrack by the Sackville River portage and watch over the corridor.

But a peace was the better solution.

Unaware of the finer points of Mi'kmaq ritual, Cornwallis had received three chiefs and nine deputies, representing the people of Minas Basin and Passamaquoddy aboard the Beaufort in an effort to bury the hatchet.

Cornwallis showed them a treaty made in Boston in 1725. They were asked to renew it and signed their totems which sealed the agreement, or so thought the English.

But within a few months scalpings terrorized the town, the governor's gardener among the dead. When a Mi'kmaq party came down the Dartmouth lakes and attacked the crew of the governor's sawmill, Cornwallis realized there had been no ceremonial washing away of the war paint, nor

celebration of the bright chain of friendship. He called upon soldier and civilian alike " to take and destroy the Micmac wherever they might be found, offering ten guineas for each Indian dead or alive as is the custom of America."

The Sphinx reached Chebucto on June 21, 1749. A month and a day later Cornwallis opened his commission as Governor and Captain-General of Nova Scotia. He organized a civil government and swore in a hand-picked council in the cabin of the Beaufort, around an oaken table which remains at Province House today.

Cornwallis had thought Point Pleasant Park welcoming, but the men of the fleet shunned the site because of the shallows. Others thought the mouth of Bedford Basin an ideal location for a settlement, good for the fishery and easily protected. Ultimately they compromised. The landing place was in the shadow of the sugarloaf hill where a great hardwood tree, the town's first gallows, spread its branches. Here the settlers found evidence of D'Anville's grim experience: skeletons in frayed French uniforms clutching rusty muskets lay on the beach.

With ceremony and formality behind him, Cornwallis began the work of settlement. Racing against the winter he had to erect an abatis about the town with outposts at the perimeter, acquire manufactured materials from Boston, organize the fishery and secure food from the Acadians who controlled the rich farmland of the valley. Roads needed to be built, a mill was wanting, not to mention a system of laws. The strip of drinking dens and shanties on Water Street was taking shape as a haven for liquor and violence.

In his first report to the Board, Cornwallis expressed frustration over the lack of industrious individuals among the settlers. He had had some success by dividing them into companies under leaders of their own choosing and by paying handsomely. But during the first winter one in three of these bewildered cockneys, surviving on a diet of salt meat and hard bread was laid low by disease. An influx of productive Yankees already acclimatized to pioneer life took their place while Cornwallis made little mention of the epidemic to the Board.

Acadians have been a part Nova Scotia since 1632 when the founding families arrived from France. Over 100 years later, when the British settled Halifax in 1749, the Acadians were already a self-sustaining community. They were largely independent of France, and enjoyed a strong alliance with the Mikmag.

When Britain and France struggled for supremacy in North America the Acadians wished to remain neutral. However, Governor Charles Lawrence believed that if the Acadians remained in Nova Scotia they would cause trouble for the British in their effort to gain power, so the deportation of these people began in 1755.

Families were only allowed to take what they could carry with them. All of their livestock and land was turned over to the Crown, and to deter them from returning their barns and homes were burned. The Acadians were divided into small groups and sent to various British colonies located between Massachusetts and Georgia.

After the Treaty of Paris in 1763, many of the exiled Acadians moved from the British colonies to Louisiana where they would become known as, " Cajuns". Other families eventually returned to Nova Scotia to rebuild. In September 1752, Chief Jean Baptiste Cope arrived in Halifax to meet with the governor on behalf of the Mi'kmaq. Cornwallis had resigned only six weeks before, and his replacement, Peregerine Thomas Hopson, seemed to have a more sympathetic to the Mi'kmaq than his predecessor. The government expressed its intended goodwill: "We hope to brighten the Chain in our Hearts and to confirm our Friendship every year." Cope returned to Halifax on November 22 to finalize the treaty, convinced of Britain's sincerity to establish peace, provide a trading post and protect Mi'kmaq lands.

The 1752 Treaty retained many of the basic terms of the 1725 Treaty of Annapolis Royal. As antagonism had developed during the intervening years, the second article of the 1752 treaty observed that, " All Transactions during the Late War shall on both sides be buried in Oblivion with the Hatchet." Within a few years Governor Lawrence would be offering a bounty for Native scalps. Yet by 1760, the French had been defeated in Nova Scotia, and according to Thomas Raddall, hostilities between the Mi'kmaq and the British largely ceased, due to the efforts of a missionary named Father Maillard.

The treaty also recognized that " the said Tribe of Indians shall not be hindered from, but have free liberty of hunting and fishing as usual." This term was to be rejuvenated in 1985, when Mi'kmaq hunter James Matthew Simon was acquitted of charges of hunting out of season. Arrested by the the RCMP in 1980, he pointed in his defence to the applicability of the 1752 Treaty, and won in the Supreme Court of Canada after having been defeated in the Nova Scotia Provincial Court. The case of James Matthew Simon versus the Crown was an influential one and recognition of the Native right to hunt

and protection against infringement of these rights.

After the American Revolution, approximately 30 000 loyalists and soldiers arrived in Nova Scotia, among them 3500 black loyalists and 1200 slaves. The first black loyalists to arrive in Halifax were part of the fighting unit " The Company of Negroes", who set sail from Boston with a company of British soldiers.

Over a ten month period, a free ferry service shuttled black loyalists from New York to Halifax. Some 400 ended up in Halifax, and 300 were sent to Preston where the lots were small and farm land was scarce. Few were granted any land at all with the sudden demand for food, shelter and everything else created by wave after wave of those abandoning America.

At St. Paul's Church in Halifax a special gallery was reserved for the blacks. This privilege was later taken away and they were advised to meet in private homes instead, beginning a process of segregation that would characterize race relations in Nova Scotia. As the black community grew, Baptist churches blossomed. David George, a preacher from Shelburne, was credited with founding the first black Baptist church in Halifax, one of six churches he founded in the 1780's.

Twelve hundred black loyalists accepted John Clarkson's offer of free passage to their ancestral home. The Sierra Leone Company had been created after the abolition of slavery, as a means of creating a free colony. On January 15, 1792 the Ark led 15 chartered ships bound for Africa out of Halifax harbour.

During the Napoleonic Wars Halifax was again cast in the role of fortress and naval base. An illustrious visitor, Prince Edward, Duke of Kent came to Halifax acting as Commander-in-Chief of British forces in North America for six years. Considered the most responsible son of "mad" King George, Edward was a good leader with a colorful military history but sometimes arrogant and short tempered. He had completed a successful expedition against the French in the West Indies and spent three years commanding a garrison at Quebec. He was reputed to be extremely demanding of his soldiers, making them march before five each morning, flogging and even hanging those who refused to conform to his high standards. Wherever he went the troops were almost mutinous.

Yet by the end of his tenure Halifax had experienced a great transformation and become the strongest fortress outside Europe. He also installed the first telegraph in North America, with posts on Citadel Hill, at the dockyard and at its peak the system was connected to Annapolis Royal. He built a new starshaped fort on George's Island that housed 300 men and 30 large cannons. He built martello towers at Point Pleasant and York Redoubt. No expense was spared as he reconfigured Halifax.

Tension between the British and the Americans increased dramatically during the Napoleonic Wars. Although the Americans were considered neutral, it was no secret they supported the French. In one famous incident, the British ship Leopard attacked, boarded, and searched the American ship Chesapeake in 1807. They found two men aboard, British citizens trying to avoid military service. One was flogged to death, the second was hanged and many Americans were hauled off by British press gangs to fight in what

has been termed the first global war.

In 1825 the Halifax Banking Company incorporated and began operations from their Water Street offices. Enos Collins, who profited greatly from privateering exploits, led a close circle of wealthy and powerful men in establishing a banking monopoly in Halifax. Five of Collins' partners were members of the ruling Council of Twelve, the effective government of the time. These dozen magistrates dominated finance in Halifax until another group interested in opening a general purpose bank challenged their hold.

The government was presented with a petition of signatures, including Joe Howe's, proposing the incorporation of a new public bank. The council attempted to amend the bill, but this created such a reaction from the assembly that it eventually passed unchanged. Following a meeting at the Exchange Coffee House the newly enfranchised opened for business at the corner of Granville and Duke streets in 1832. The birth of the Bank of Nova Scotia marked the beginning of the end for the unaccountable clique in positions of power.

Three years later Joseph Howe renewed his criticism of the government. His Novascotian voiced fiery accusations and drew a venomous reaction and a law suit from the magistrates he had offended. In 1835 Joseph Howe successfully defended himself against charges of libel in what has become one of Canada's most celebrated court cases. His combination of skilled oratory and a token knowledge of the law he gleaned from books on the eve of the trial, secured freedom of expression for the press. An eloquent six hour speech captivated the jury. One elderly man burst into tears. After only ten minutes of deliberation Howe was pronounced " not guilty" and carried

back to his home by the adoring masses. The struggle for responsible government evolved during the next five years until it was granted in 1840. One year later Halifax incorporated.

During the 19th century the British Empire, under Queen Victoria, was at its apex, and stretched all over the world. By 1854 Russia had become a new enemy of the British Empire, and the two powers waged war in what has become known as the Crimean conflict. Russia's new found status as Britain's enemy created a kinship between herself and the United States.

American Congress had forbidden foreign powers from recruiting soldiers on American soil. Yet Joseph Howe, under orders from Britain, went to New York in an attempt to drum up recruits for the new war. Almost a thousand German and Irish recruits sailed to Halifax, ostensibly as "labourers" for his new railway. When a local Irishman sent a telegraph to New York explaining the real reason for Howe's visit, a mob of angry New Yorkers surrounded Howe's hotel and frightened the envoy who managed to escape back to Halifax unharmed.

In 1861, the United States was thrown into bloody conflict. Ideologically divided over the abolition of slavery, the country was rent apart and entered a terrible Civil War. Initially, the mood in Halifax was one of sympathy for the Union, as Halifax's economic and social ties to New England had always been strong. Young Bluenoses, eager to join the ranks of the Union army, flocked to Boston for recruitment in support of abolition. However, Nova Scotia's relation with the United States was ambiguous throughout the war, as Britain feared an American invasion of Canada. Other Haligonians however sided with the South.

The Trent incident confused the issue as to where Nova Scotian sympathies should lie. In 1861 a US warship fired upon a British mail steamer. American soldiers boarded the ship to seize Confederate officials. The Trent incident seemed to indicate that the United States would declare war on Britain as well as the Confederates. Thankfully, President Lincoln helped to stave off any potential conflict by ordering the prisoners' release. But this didn't stop preparation against a potential American attack. In January 1862, five thousand British troops landed in Halifax, to be distributed throughout the provinces as a deterrent to an American invasion.

Halifax watched the war as the nearest neutral port on the eastern seaboard. The harbour was the site of various nautical escapades by the warring Yankees and Confederates. During the Chesapeake incident, disguised Confederate soldiers hijacked a steamer, bound from New York to Maine and Halifax. A Union cruiser boarded and seized the ship once it reached Halifax. But when the prisoners were put on trial they subsequently escaped with the aid of some prominent Halifax doctors.

In another famous incident, the Confederate gunboat Tallahassee was sheltered in Halifax harbour. Two Union cruisers lingered at the harbour mouth waiting to pounce on the Tallahassee as she sailed from the sanctuary of the neutral port. But the enterprising pilot, Jock Flemming managed to steer the boat through the shoals of Eastern Passage under cloak of darkness to avoid their foe. Some places were so shallow the keel slipped through the seaweed growing on the channel floor.

After the war ended in 1865 a group of Confederate officers, who called themselves the "unreconstructed rebels" moved to Halifax. Included in their ranks was John Taylor Wood, former captain of the Tallahassee and Josh Tatnell, the man who is coined the phrase "blood is thicker than water". An alliance between two old adversaries, Britain and France in 1904 signaled big changes for both Europe and North America. Together they watched German forces amass during the next decade until the grave altercation consumed all their energy. Halifax had been a cornerstone of Britain's colonial prowess. After almost 160 years of operations, the presence of the garrison army and navy had become so embedded in local society, the scrappy Canadian Department of Militia and Defence was a little dumbfounded when it inherited control of the fortress and dockyard. In February, 1906 the last imperial soldiers took their leave of the Warden of the North.

The local economy had been crutched on the British business of war. The void created by the departure of the imperial troops was eventually addressed in 1913 and accelerated by Halifax's important role during the First World War.

The port facilities were a shadow of the sailing days and modern steamships required extensive berths. Immigrants were streaming through the deep water terminal at Pier Two heading west. The Department of Railways and Canals responded to these trends with an ambitious plan to develop industry. New railway tracks were laid along the southwest edge of the peninsula where new terminals, a new station and a hotel were built. The drydock facilities were revamped and repaired and though it never

materialized the Canadian government proposed to spend a million dollars on the fortifications.

The Great Disaster of 1917, the Halifax Explosion, is without question the most traumatic event in Halifax's history. The greatest man-made explosion before the invention of the atomic bomb, one observer likened the blast to "the end of the bloody world." In that year the port was handling over 17 million tons of cargo and supplies for the war; food, clothing, medical supplies and ammunition bound for the front. New technologies had created weapons and explosives such as TNT and picric acid capable of large-scale destruction. The harbour was busy and rigidly organized. Skilled harbour pilots guided bigger vessels in and out of the congested port yet collisions were a reality.

Angered by the previous night's delay due to empty coal bunkers, the captain of the Imo ordered her to be underway without the permission of the harbour authorities. Traveling on the wrong side of the harbour, Imo quickly gained speed heading directly for the Mont Blanc, which was coasting into Bedford Basin after being inspected at McNab's Island. But only those aboard the Mont Blanc knew the nature of her cargo - over 2500 tons of explosives. All ships handling explosives were by law required to fly a red flag, warning others of dangerous cargo. But as no actual handling was to be involved the captain of the Mount Blanc avoided this protocol, fearing the red flag would draw the attention of the enemy.

The captain of the Mont Blanc signaled the Belgian ship that she was in the wrong place. Both ships reversed their propellers but because of the speed of the Imo, the ship swung around and struck the bow of the Mont Blanc

where some of the explosives were stored. The Mont Blanc stopped engines, drifted towards Richmond on the Halifax shore and caught fire. Plumes of nacreous smoke billowed from the disabled steamer. Captain Le Medec knew it was only a matter of time until the ship exploded and ordered the crew into lifeboats. The crew reached the Dartmouth shore, where they attempted to warn the uncomprehending inhabitants that the ship was loaded with explosives.

At approximately 9: 05 am, the Mont Blanc exploded and shook the earth. The blast's shockwaves leveled the city's north end, made the church bells ring as far away as Truro and shattered windows all over the area blinding hundreds. A huge mushroom-shaped cloud arose in the sky. Fragments of the ship fell like hail on Halifax. The half-ton anchor of the Mont Blanc landed two miles away from the original site of the explosion. 1400 were killed instantly, hundreds more were injured and over 6000 were left homeless. More Haligonians died during the explosion than in the First World War.

The relief effort that followed the blast was characterized by efficiency and generosity. From across Canada and the United States, medical supplies, huge sums of money, and relief workers poured into Halifax. Temporary houses were erected on the Commons, injuries were treated, and gradually life regained some semblance of the everyday.

Rum has played a crucial role in shaping Nova Scotian history. It has started riots, pacified the masses, and made large sums of money for those who sold it. Rum was an integral part of navy life. Rations were first issued on British ships after the capture of Jamaica in 1655. Watered down, it was called 'grog'. In Halifax the grog shops of Barrack Street multiplied. In the northern

colonies, rum was especially valued as it did not freeze during the winter. It probably became most important when it was made illegal during prohibition, creating an underground economy that flourished while standard commerce sagged.

Temperance societies had become influential enough in Nova Scotia to put a ban on the sale of alcohol from 1916 to 1929. This caused an enterprising breed of fisherman and sailors to covertly sell rum and a vigorous trade developed. Ships from all over Nova Scotia traveled as far as Jamaica to supply the eastern seaboard with " liquid gold".

Disdain for the prohibition legislation made smuggling almost respectable.

After all, it was a risky and almost glamourous business. The Dauphinees were one famous bootlegging family who brought rum in from Sambro to Halifax via the Northwest Arm. From there the booze was transported to their base of operations downtown - an old frame house with iron doors and a lookout.

Rum runners and bootlegging kept the authorities busy. The number of police, crown lawyers and inspectors increased exponentially and a special Preventative Force was created to cope with criminal activity. But by 1930 the business of rum running disappeared. Prohibition was repealed in Nova Scotia and government liquor stores opened for business

During the war the ranks of the Royal Canadian Navy swelled from a mere 1800 to 95 000. Of all Canadian cities, Halifax served as the main training centre. British rear Admiral S. S. Bo nham Carter called Halifax " probably the most important port in the world". The old King Edward Hotel at the corner of

Barrington and North streets became the administrative center for the Na vy and was rechristened the H. M. S. Canada. Families of servicemen had swarmed to Halifax. Rents soared and created a need for housing which stretched the city limits beyond the peninsula. The boom caused severe shortages of just about everything including food, clothing and gasoline.

Many Haligonians contributed to the degaussing process which protected steel-hulled ships again st magnetic mines. This crafty British invention foiled German U-boats that at one time seemed to pose an insurmountable threat to the convoys. Specially trained engineers from the Nova Scot ia Light and Power Company (and in one instance, students from the Nova Scotia Technical Colleg e) installed electrical coils that magnetically repelled the mines. Each ship that was degausse d was presented with a framed quotation from Homer: "This magic circle round thy bosom bind, /Li ve on, and cast thy terrors to the wind."

Halifax came out of a long economic slump during the conflict. Mills, shipyards and labourers were all in heavy demand. For the first time a large portion of the workforce consisted of wom en, who filled the vacancies left by the men who had gone overseas. It was a time of tumult and reinvention for the city. One of the greatest alterations to historic Halifax was the replacing of the old dockyards. The picturesque Victorian-style wharves were illequipped to handle the massive increase in volume of nautical traffic. The war brought radical changes to the city, transforming it from a quaint seaport town to a crucial Allied port.

The closing of Pier 21 in 1971 ended a colorful chapter in Canadian history.

For nearly 50 years the huge, unassuming-looking shed witnessed chaotic

times. Opened in 1928, the pier had been the disembarking point for immigrants coming to Canada and the gateway for more than a million refugees, war brides, and troops. This period saw the maturation of Canada's immigration policy into a nondiscriminatory one, mirroring the changes taking place in a country striving to find an identity of its own. During the pier's busiest years dozens of languages could be heard around the quay. As a result, translators of extraordinary capability were on site like Father Pius, a Roman Catholic priest from Kiev, who reportedly had a command of twelve languages.

http://millennium. ns. sympatico. ca/timeline/index. html