

**A survey for French military supply depots built in 1749-50
at the port of Shediac and on the Shediac River**

Research conducted for the Shediac Bay Watershed Association

by

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Final Technical Report

Your Environmental Trust Fund at Work

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Executive Summary

In the middle of the 18th century, France and Great Britain were at war over Acadia. Nova Scotia was held by the British but the French controlled New Brunswick. However, the British claimed that New Brunswick was rightfully theirs and in 1749, they began to press their claim.

To prepare for the imminent conflict on the Isthmus of Chignecto, the French established, in 1749, two supply depots, one at the port of Shediac and the other at the head of tide on the Shediac River. From there, troops, munitions, and supplies were transported over an 18-mile road to the present location of Moncton, where they were once again loaded on ships and carried down the Petitcodiac River to their final destination at Pointe à Beauséjour.

From 1750 to 1751, the cargo of at least four French supply ships was funneled through the Shediac supply route. Included were the tools, materials, and weapons used to build and arm Fort Beauséjour, north of the mouth of the Missiguash River, and possibly Fort Gaspereau, in Bay Verte.

The focus of research in 2000 was to find traces of the two supply depots at Shediac. The engineer who constructed them, Lt. Joseph de Léry, wrote a *memoire* to Marquis de la Jonquiere, Governor of New France, describing the buildings that comprised the depots. He also described the road from the Shediac River to the Petitcodiac River. In 1751, he indicated the approximate locations of the depots and the road on a map of the region.

The map and *memoire* both indicate that a house and a warehouse were built at the head of tide, the farthest point to which salt water travels up the river at high tide. The road to Moncton began there.

However, the location of the main supply depot at the port of Shediac is less clear. The map shows it on the mainland but one interpretation of de Léry's *memoire* suggests it was built on Shediac Island.

When the French military completed a road across the Isthmus of Chignecto in 1751, linking Fort Gaspereau to Fort Beauséjour, the much longer Shediac River supply route was abandoned. No written accounts have been found describing the fate of the abandoned supply depots.

The archival research and test excavations conducted during the search for the depots in the fall of 2000 formed the basis for an exhibit prepared for Heritage Day, 2001. Five Grade 8 and three Grade 7 students at Shediac Cape School participated in the preparation of this exhibit, which was incorporated into the school's Heritage Day celebration, with its theme: "Our Oceans." The Shediac Bay Watershed Association sponsored the exhibit, which focused on the little-known but strategically important geopolitical role of Shediac Bay and the Shediac River in this formative stage of Canada's history.

A public lecture and media coverage of the survey for the supply depots helped raise public awareness of the historical dimension of the waterways in the Shediac Bay watershed.

Acknowledgements

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Many thanks to Régis Brun and Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc for sharing their historical knowledge and the wealth of documents at the Centre d'Études Acadien at the Université de Moncton. Thanks to Bernard LeBlanc at the Musée Acadien for encouragement to conduct the survey.

Special thanks to residents of the study area for their generosity with their knowledge of local history. Specific contributions are acknowledged in the text.

River Travel before European Arrival

When canoe and toboggan were the primary modes of transportation, the two rivers that empty into Shediac Bay were important transportation routes. They were shortcuts from the western part of Northumberland Strait to the Bay of Fundy and the St. John River.

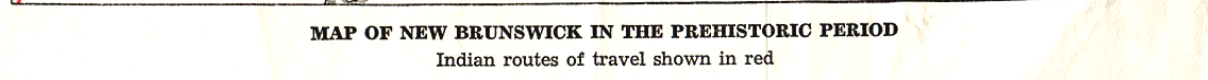
By ascending the Scoudouc River and crossing a portage to reach the Memramcook River, a traveller could cross from the Northumberland Strait to the Bay of Fundy without having to circumnavigate mainland Nova Scotia.

The route up the Shediac River and across a portage to Hall's Creek or Humphrey's Brook, then down to the Petitcodiac River, was also an important route (figure 1). From the Mi'kmaq camp ground near Hall's Creek (Ganong 1899:229), the canoe party could wait for the tidal bore to propel them upstream to a location near the town of Petitcodiac. From there, they could portage to the headwaters of the Caanan River, which empties into Washademoak Lake, and from there, the lower St. John River (Ganong 1899:246-8). Alternatively, from the camp ground near Hall's Creek, they could wait till the tidal bore was receding and let it carry them down the Petitcodiac to Shepody Bay and the Bay of Fundy.

In this sense, the Shediac River was a conduit to both the Bay of Fundy and the lower St. John River valley. Artifacts made of stone from quarries in the Minas Basin and Washademoak Lake found in a site at the mouth of the Shediac River bear witness to the popularity of the route in prehistoric times. In addition, copper tools and beads have been found in several sites around Shediac Bay (Leonard 1996). These were made from copper nuggets that erode from the basalt trap rock exposed in a 200 foot cliff at Cape D'Or, Nova Scotia, and elsewhere around the Bay of Fundy.

Flint and copper were important commodities but by no means the only attractions the Bay of Fundy and the lower St. John River held for the Mi'kmaq who lived in northeastern New Brunswick and the Gaspé. To gain direct access to them, most would have travelled through Shediac Bay, either westward up the Shediac River or southward up the Scoudouc. Being at a point of convergence on an arterial travel route would have made Shediac Bay a favoured location for gatherings of families and bands for social, political, and economic activities.

For example, the Mi'kmaq who lived in Ejetdaik (Shediac) may have



canoes in the Maritimes (Leonard 1996:194). Unlike heavy dugouts, a lightweight bark canoe could be carried between the headwaters of rivers by a single adult. With the advent of the birch bark canoe, the flow of people, goods, and ideas through Shediac Bay and its tributaries increased steadily for three millennia. Then, for the first two centuries of contact with Europeans, it seems to have increased exponentially, primarily because of trade and war.

The role of Ejetdaik in the military struggle for Acadia, 1749-60.

In 1713, the King of France ceded to the Queen of Great Britain: “all Nova Scotia or Acadie, comprehended within its ancient boundaries.” (Treaty of Utrecht, Article 12: MacIsaac 1937:11). Great Britain claimed that Acadie included New Brunswick but France claimed the Missaguash River (the present provincial border) as the boundary between Acadie and New France.

From a strategic perspective, New Brunswick linked Quebec (Nouveau France) with the other French territories on Prince Edward Island (Isle Saint Jean) and Cape Breton (Isle Royale). Consequently, control of the ports from Baie des Chaleurs to Baie Verte (figure 2) was crucial in sustaining a link between Quebec and Louisbourg, thereby maintaining control of the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and Cabot Strait.

From 1713 until 1749, the British were unable to secure a negotiated resolution to the boundary dispute. Although documents indicate they considered all of New Brunswick and part of the Gaspé to be under British rule (PANS 1900.84, cited in: Webster 1930:22) the failure of the British government to adequately fund the enforcement of its claim allowed the French to situate themselves at Point à Beauséjour, across the Missaguash River from the thriving Acadian settlement of Beaubassin.

This village was established in 1672 (MacIsaac 1937:3) and prospered because the settlers transformed the vast Tantramar salt marshes into productive hayfields by dyking. The entire Chignecto area was granted by the Governor of New France to La Valliere, who established an estate on what is now Tonge's Island (MacIsaac 1937:3). From there he ruled Acadia from 1678-84, answering to Frontenac in Quebec City, and further enhancing the strategic importance of the region.

The indifference of the British government in enforcing their presence in Acadia ended when Great Britain and France declared war in 1744. However, the

accumulated neglect left the British forces garrisoned in the Annapolis Valley and Minas Basin ill-equipped to defend against attacks by aboriginal and French forces, such as the surprise attack and massacre of a small British force stationed at Grand Pré. This expedition was led by de Villiers, commanding a detachment that had established itself at Beauséjour (MacIssac 1937:260), thus marking the region as a hotbed of revolt against British rule.

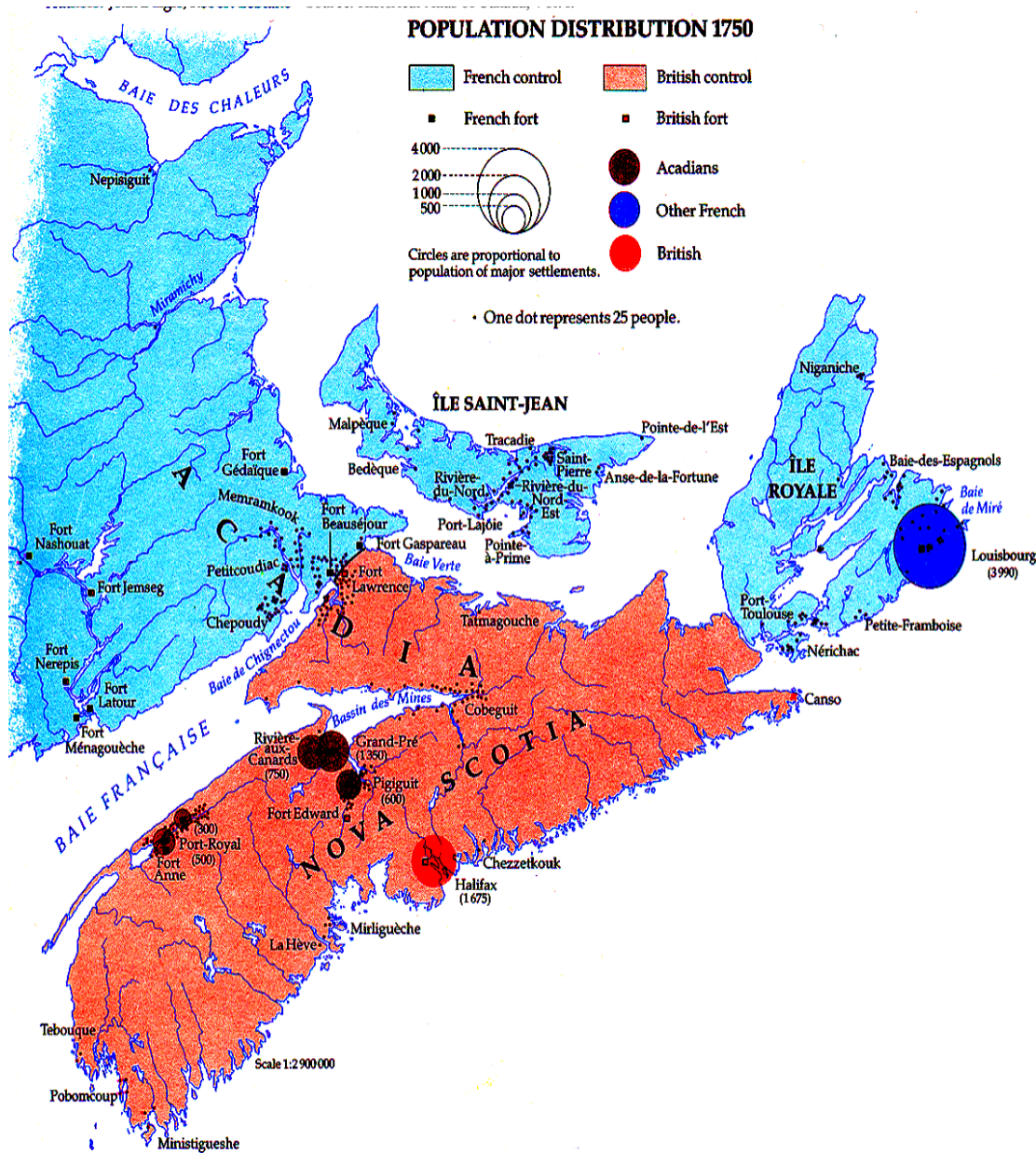


Figure 2. The Maritimes in 1750 (after Daigle and LeBlanc 1987).

The French stronghold of Louisbourg was captured by New Englanders in 1745 but returned to France by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. In the same year, the Earl of Halifax was appointed president of the Board of Trade in Great Britain. He abandoned the mercantillist attitude of investing only in colonies that yielded valuable commodities, and began to implement plans for development based on the concept of empire-building. Resettling British subjects was an important part of the process (Dickerson 1912:39). In this he was supported by William Shirley, Governor of Massachussetts. Subsequently, the port of Chebucto received several thousand British subjects, planting the seeds for the city that now bears Lord Halifax's name.

With the construction of the citadel at Halifax in 1749, the rulers of New France were becoming increasingly concerned with the growing British presence in Acadie. Aware that British settlement in Chignecto was imminent, and recognizing that the Beaubassin-Beauséjour area would be the scene of conflict, the Governor of New France, de la Jonquière, directed Chevalier de la Corne to establish military supply depots in Shediac Bay and along the Shediac River, to enable the transshipment of munitions and supplies from Quebec City, through the Shediac River to present day Moncton, and from there down the Petitcodiac River to Point à Beauséjour and Beaubassin.

As noted in the previous section, this had been a well-established, important portage route for at least 3000 years, and was particularly well adapted for canoe travel.

The decision to establish the Shediac supply route before the much shorter Baie Verte route across the Isthmus of Chignecto may have been driven by fears of the proximity of Baie Verte to British-patrolled waters off the Amherst shore of Nova Scotia. Shediac was more safely within French-held waters, thus protected more from detection and attack by the British. By building supply depots on the Shediac River route, the French were probably trying to conceal from the British their efforts to funnel supplies from Quebec to Pointe à Beauséjour.

The task of constructing the supply depots fell to an experienced engineer in the French military, Lt. Joseph de Léry (figure 3a). He began construction in late November of 1749, when three supply ships arrived from Quebec, bearing the required building materials, along with personnel, munitions and supplies (Brun

1995).

Another shipment arrived from Quebec on June 14, 1750, aboard “le London,” a 70-ton sloop captained by Jacques Jalin (Brun 1994:17). This consignment, of which we have the complete inventory (Brun 1994), was received ten days later by Abbé Le Loutre. Weaponry included 400 flintlock rifles, 3000 gunflints, 200 large knives, and 10,000 pounds of lead shot and gunpowder. Other supplies included 300 white shirts, close to 200 blankets, 18 barrels of hard liquor, as well as quantities of salt pork, biscuits, flour and lard.

Abbé Le Loutre then transported these goods up the Shediac River, across the road to Moncton, then down the Petitcodiac to Beaubassin. Le Loutre, the Vicar-General for Acadia, is nefarious as the priest who induced aboriginal warriors to carry out depredations against the British. He also recruited other priests to take up the struggle against the British (Webster 1930:95).

In April of 1750, two months before Le Loutre received the arms at Shediac, British Major Charles Lawrence had dropped anchor at the mouth of the Missiguash River, intending to land and built a fort. However, the French were prepared to defend, as Chevalier de la Corne had set up camp at Pointe à Beauséjour a few weeks earlier (Webster 1930:32).

When the French sighted Lawrence’s ships anchored in Cumberland Basin, Le Loutre dispatched a party of his First Nations mercenaries to set fire to the houses and barns of the Acadians at Beaubassin, across the Missiguash from the French military encampment at Pointe à Beauséjour. This forced the approximately 1000 Acadians to flee from their village of at least 150 houses and prevented the British from gaining any material benefits by capturing the village. However, the degree of French preparedness combined with the dropping tide to cause Lawrence to sail back to Minas Basin, rather than attempt to land and build a fort in the smoldering rubble of the once thriving town of Beaubassin.

After Lawrence’s visit in April, the commander at Pointe à Beauséjour, de la Corne, knew he would eventually return. de la Corne probably dispatched a courier to Quebec City with a request for munitions and supplies. Subsequently, the sloop *le London* left Quebec on May 15, 1750, bound for the military supply depot at Shediac. Abbé Le Loutre signed for the munitions and supplies at Shediac (Brun 1994:18), demonstrating once again his central role in the French military resistance to the

British forces.

Major Lawrence returned to Beaubassin in September of 1750 with a strong force, intending to build a fort amidst the burned out wreckage of Beaubassin. When he attempted to land, a force of Acadians and Natives fired on his troops from behind a dyke at the mouth of the river (Parks Canada 1970:4). However, Lawrence landed in a small boat with some troops and stormed the dyke, breaking the defences. Six British soldiers were killed in the skirmish, but many more Acadians and Native warriors were slain by the victors (Murdoch 1866, cited in MacIsaac 1937:45).

According to the journal of Captain La Valliere, the band of Acadian renegades and aboriginal mercenaries who resisted Lawrence's landing were commanded by Abbé Le Loutre and his assistant, Father Germain, the priest at Beaubassin who had burned his church under orders from Le Loutre when Lawrence had visited in April (Webster 1930:32).

By September, when Lawrence landed at Beaubassin, the weapons and supplies Le Loutre had received in Shediac at the end of June would have been transported to Beauséjour. They were probably used by Le Loutre's troops in the effort to prevent Lawrence's landing but to no avail, as the British forces succeeded in making shore and commencing construction of Fort Lawrence, a four-sided palisade strengthened with earth (Parks Canada 1970:5).

In the fall of 1750, after the start of Fort Lawrence, de la Corne was replaced by de Vassan, who came with orders to prepare for construction of a fort at Pointe Beauséjour. The next spring, on April 12, 1751, the governor of New France sent Lt. de Léry to build two palisaded forts, one at Pointe à Beauséjour and the other at Baie Verte (Webster 1930:39). By late August 1751, when inspected by Col. Franquet, both forts were completed, although Fort Beauséjour continued to be expanded and reinforced until 1755 (Parks Canada 1970).

The portage from Baie Verte (Fort Gaspereau) to Cumberland Basin (Fort Beauséjour) was about one league (three miles) (Parks Canada 1970:3). According to Webster (1930:18) a two-mile road was built along the route by the French after completing Fort Gaspereau. The first mile and a quarter leading westward from Fort Gaspereau was built on pilings, enabling wagons to cross the wetlands.

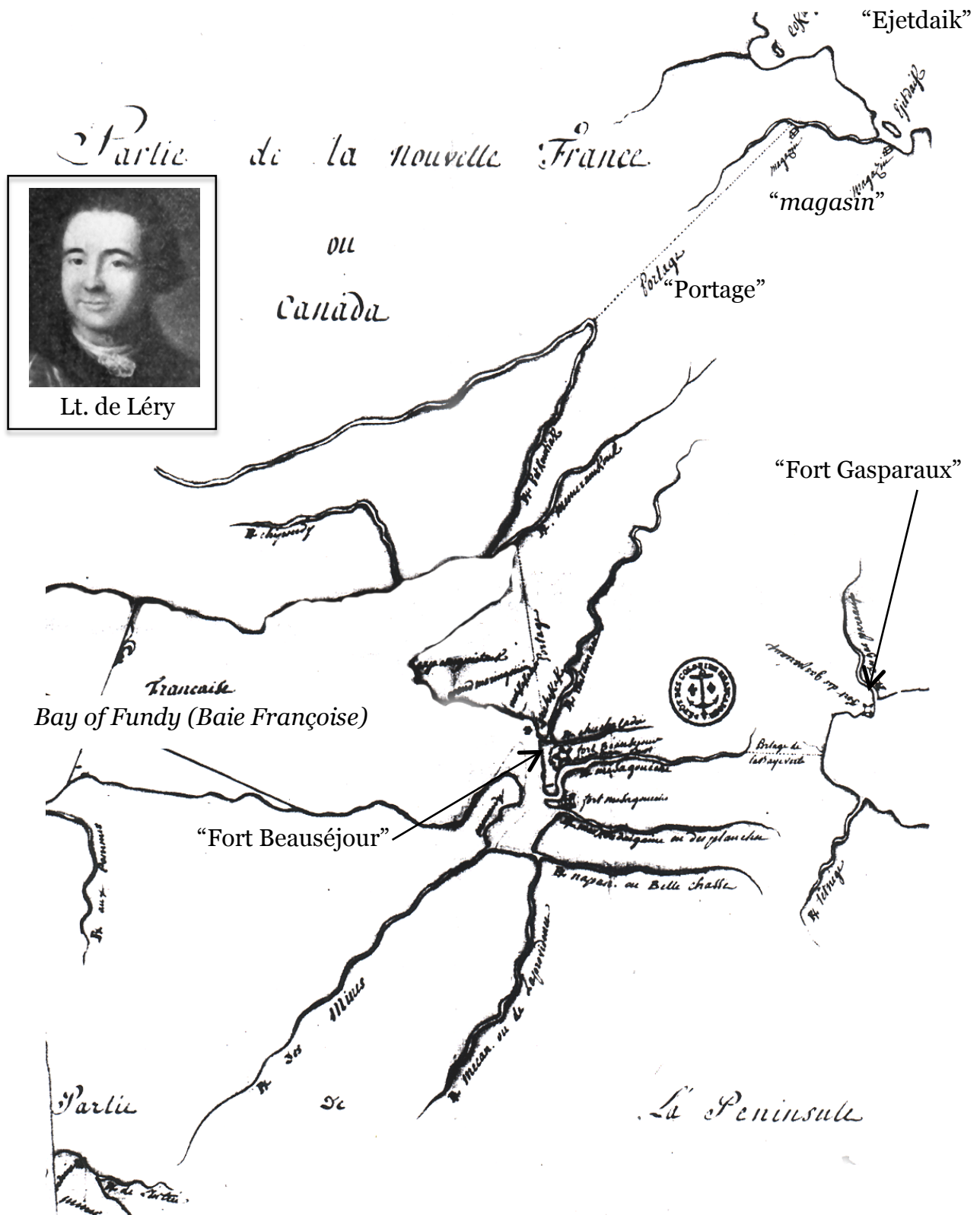


Figure 3. Section of map by Lt. de Léry, October 1751 (CEA 20.6.21).

When the three-mile road was finished, in late 1751 or the spring of 1752, the French had little need to maintain the supply depots in Shediac. It was far easier for them to dock their ships at Bay Verte, unload the heavy munitions and supplies, load them on carts and haul them on a three-mile road to Fort Beauséjour than it was to dock in Shediac, haul the goods up the Shediac River in canoes, then across the 18-mile road to the Petitcodiac, then down to Fort Beauséjour. Consequently, the Shediac supply depots are not mentioned after 1751 in any archival documents examined by previous investigators.

In summary, the Shediac supply route played a crucial role for the French from 1749 to 1751. It permitted them to ship weapons and supplies to the Missaguash River when it was the “line drawn in the sand” between the French and British forces, both determined to assert sovereignty over New Brunswick. Supplies funneled through the Shediac River route were part of the effort to construct and arm Fort Beauséjour and possibly Fort Gaspereau, both built in 1751 in response to the British building Fort Lawrence in 1750.

Since the French established the Shediac supply route in 1749, they evidently anticipated the need to eventually build a fort in the vicinity of Beaubassin at least two years in advance of the occurrence. By funneling munitions and supplies through Shediac, the French may have hoped to hide their arms build-up from the British, thus maintaining the element of surprise. Thwarting Major Lawrence’s first attempt at landing at Beaubassin in 1750 demonstrates the effectiveness of this strategy at forestalling British advances.

The Fate of the Ejetdaik Supply Depots

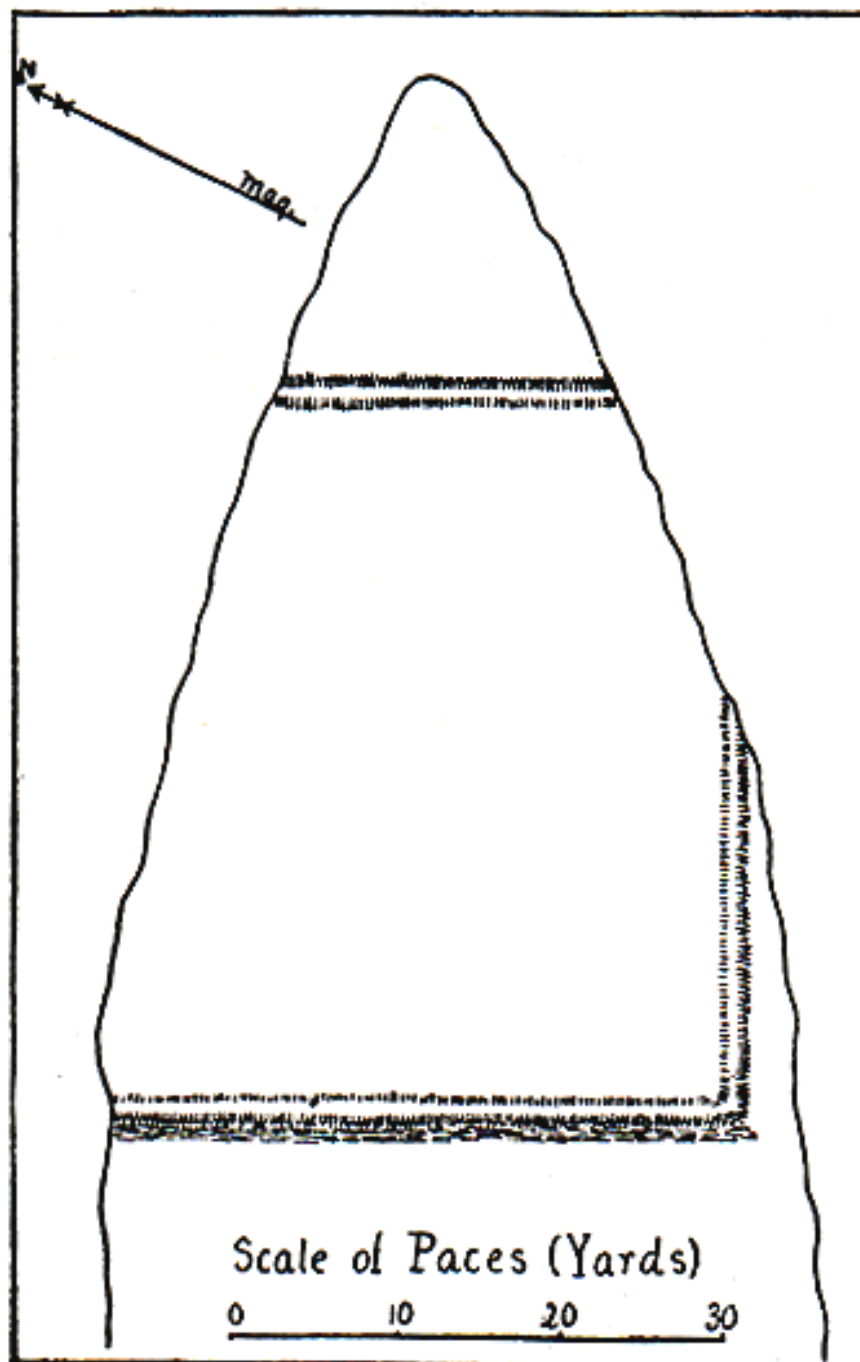
The first investigator to search for the Shediac supply depots was W. F. Ganong, in 1897. He had seen 18th century maps by D’Anville (figure 4), Green-Jefferys, and Montessor (figure 5), all indicating a fort on the north side of the Shediac River. He asked knowledgeable citizens in the Shediac area but found no oral traditions of fortifications on the mainland. However, he was directed to the small island in Shediac Bay, named Indian Island or *L’Île Sauvage* at that time. There he found “the distinct remains of an earth-work some three feet high with a shallow ditch outside,” (Ganong 1899:292). He mapped the earthworks and published it with a description and summary of its possible origins (Ganong 1899) (see figure 6).



Figure 4. Section of map by d'Anville, 1755 (CEA)



Figure 5. Section of map by Montessor, 1768 (CEA).



**MAP No. 32. REMAINS OF THE FORT ON
INDIAN ISLAND, SHEDIAC HARBOUR.**
From a plan by the Author, 1897.
*Cross-lines are ramparts, lengthwise lines
are ditch.*

Figure 6. Fort walls on Skull Island (Ganong 1899:293).

Some years later, historian Placide Gaudet gave W. F. Ganong a copy of the 1750 *memoire* by de Léry (NAC C11A, 96, f.206) describing the structures built at Shediac (Appendix A). Ganong (1906:122) laments that de Léry is not more specific as to the location of the supply depot at the port of Shediac. He also suggests that the supply depot at the port of Shediac was probably surrounded by a palisade, leading to its description as a fort on subsequent maps.

Attempting to determine the origin of the fort on Indian Island (known as Skull Island since the 1950's), Ganong found competing explanations. In 1904, Judge D. L. Hannington gave him a hand-written manuscript in which he claims that the fort on Skull Island was built by the crew of a French military frigate (MAA 7001-205). According to this version, the captain of the frigate heard of the surrender of Quebec in the fall of 1760 and sought refuge in Shediac harbour, where they built a fort to defend themselves for the winter (Ganong 1906:122).

In a letter by Ganong to Webster in January of 1928, he reveals that he has seen the "La Jonquiere map of about 1751" (which handwriting analysis reveals was drafted by de Léry – figure 3). He notes that it has "*magasin*" marked on south side of the Shediac River, "and it is hardly likely that a fort was later built on the north side, though it may have been." (NBM GMC B 1, P 3).

Later that same year, Webster published his history of Shediac. In it he indicates that he has seen the 1750 de Léry *memoire*, or at least a translation of it, but gives no mention of the "La Jonquiere map of about 1751" that Ganong had informed him of in January. Consequently, Webster (1928:5) suggests that the fort depicted on the north side of the Shediac River on the d'Anville and Montessor maps is a representation of the depot built at the head of tide on the Shediac River by de Léry in 1750. Had he seen de Léry's map of 1751, he may have reached a different conclusion as to the identity and whereabouts of the "fort" depicted on the d'Anville and Montessor maps.

Webster (1928) also mentions the earth-works on Skull Island, and includes a copy of Ganong's 1897 map (figure 6). He mentions Judge Hannington's theory of the 1760 French frigate wintering there in 1759-60, although he does not mention him by name. However, a copy of Hannington's hand-written 1904 manuscript is in Webster's papers in the Mount Allison archives (MAA 7001-205), so it appears as though he knew it was Hannington's theory. Webster (1928:5) dismisses the 1760

French frigate theory, stating that there “is no historical foundation for the latter claim, which must be considered purely fanciful.”

In 1899, Ganong reported that to “residents of the harbour [Shediac],” the fort on Skull Island was known as “the Indian fort, and that it was always called *Fort Sauvage* by the French.” He also related that he was “told by an Indian chief that it was built by the Indians for protection against the Mohawks” (Ganong 1899:292).

Ganong considers the possibility that the fort on Skull Island is the French fort marked on the maps of d’Anville and Montessor but concludes that :

“It is very difficult to believe that this very small fort on a tiny island surrounded by salt water was the French fort referred to in the documents of the time. (Ganong 1899:292).”

He goes on to suggest that “it may be really a fort built by the Indians themselves,” noting that Native forts were known from Nerepis, Meductic and Richibucto. Webster (1928:5) supports this hypothesis, based on the local oral tradition of “*le Fort Sauvage*” on Indian Island.

Many Acadian residents of Shediac still maintain this oral tradition, including Lucille Girouard (néé Poirier), descended from one of the earliest settlers in Shediac Bridge (Belliveau 1977:33, DHA 1977:1977:7). When I interviewed her on the subject of the French supply depot in September of 2001, she replied that she knew of no stories of a fort at the mouth of the Shediac River, but directed me to *le Fort Sauvage* on Skull Island.

Many years elapsed between Ganong and Webster’s efforts to find the French supply depots and subsequent endeavours. In 1993, during the second season of field survey aimed at locating the military encampment site maintained at Cocagne Cape by Charles DesChamps de Boishébert in the 1755-58, Marc Lavoie also surveyed the Shediac River. He hoped to find vestiges of “*des entrepôts construits en 1749 et 1750*” (Lavoie 1994:14).

Unlike previous studies, Lavoie’s report quotes directly from the original *memoire* by de Léry, and cites its archival provenance. Despite superfluous words interjected in two of the direct quotes (Lavoie 1994:4, lines 12 and 13), he does report correctly that the two buildings constructed by de Léry at the head of tide were built “*de pieux ronds couverts d’ecorse*,” or round posts with bark on (see Appendix A,

paragraph 9, line 3).

Further interpreting the *memoire*, Lavoie (1994:4) claims that de Léry reported that the Shediac River supply route was “*quasi-impraticable*” because the shallow depths between Shediac Island and the mouth of the Shediac River forced the French vessels to:

“... rendre à l’île, d’où les cargaisons étaient transbordées dans les petits embarcations pour être transportées jusqu’à l’embouchure de la rivière”
(Lavoie 1994:4).

In other words, he claims that de Léry reported that the French ships anchored at Shediac Island, off-loaded cargo into smaller boats that were rowed or sailed to the mouth of the Shediac River, to be loaded into the warehouse there. He cites a report by Guy Lavoie (1993) as indicating the depot was at the mouth of the Shediac River.

Lavoie and his crew canoed the Shediac River for 12 kilometres from its source (Lavoie 1994:15) but were unable to locate vestiges of the buildings.¹

Over the years, the French supply depots on the Shediac River route have proven difficult to find. Much of the historical evidence is either vague or conflicting. However, we do have a *memoire* and a map indicating the approximate locations, both made by the engineer who built the supply depots, as well as Forts Beauséjour and Gaspereau a year later. In light of previous failures to locate the depots, re-examination of the primary documents is called for.

de Léry’s Map and Memoire

The map is one of the two primary sources for defining the location of the depots. As seen in figure 3, de Léry drew a small rectangular building labeled with the word “*magasin*” at two locations, one south of the Shediac River, in the vicinity of Shediac Cape; the other on the south side of an eastward bend (looking downstream) in the Shediac River.

In paragraphs five and six of his *memoire* (Appendix A), de Léry describes the Shediac River. When he travelled it in a bark canoe on May 28 and July 20 of 1749, the canoe touched bottom in several spots. This is still an accurate detail, as I found out during canoe trips to the head of tide on the river, in search of the site where de

¹ Likewise, they found no traces of Boishébert’s camp at the mouth of the Cocagne River.

Léry built a small house and a warehouse in 1750 (table 1).

Table 1. Structures built by French Lt. De Léry, 1749-50.

Location	French	English	Dimensions	Date	Walls
port	<i>magasin</i>	warehouse	20' x 36'	1749	unpeeled logs
port	<i>maison</i>	house	20' x 30'	1749	unpeeled logs
port	<i>maison</i>	house	20' x 30'	1749	unpeeled logs
port	<i>magasin</i>	warehouse	20' x 30'	1750	unpeeled logs
port	<i>magasin</i>	warehouse	20' x 30'	1750	unpeeled logs
port	<i>maison</i>	house	20' x 24'	1749	unpeeled logs
port	<i>foury</i>	oven	10' x 10'	1749	unpeeled logs
head of tide	<i>magasin</i>	warehouse	24' x 30'	1750	unpeeled logs
head of tide	<i>maison</i>	house	9' x 9'	1750	unpeeled logs

de Lery's next paragraph states that the distance from the mouth of the river to its head of tide is 2 leagues (six miles). In the fall of 2001, I determined the present location of the head of tide by observing changes in water levels upriver at low and high tides and by noting presence or absence of freshwater mussels in the riverbed. The head of tide is now between six and seven miles (11 km) from the rivermouth. Since the landmass is subsiding at about 15 cm per century (Scott et al. 1987:668), the head of tide location has probably migrated upriver slightly over the past 250 years. Siltation could be factor in altering the head of tide as well. However, the head of tide is an ecotone, a frontier between two ecosystems, as opposed to a sharp boundary, so even accounting for changes due to rising sea-level, de Léry's measurement corresponds roughly to the present location of head of tide, seen in figure 7.

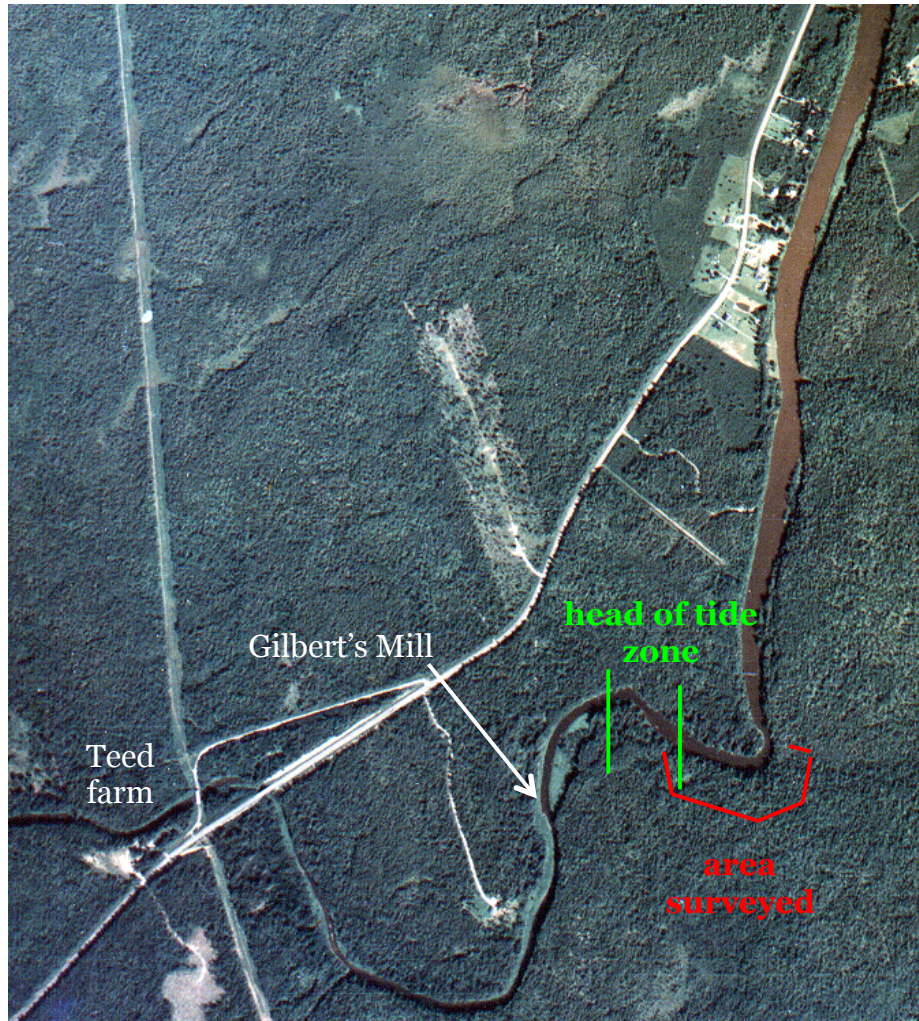


Figure 7. Location of head of tide on the Shediac River on 1996 air photo.

In one sense, the location of the head of tide as shown in figure 7 corresponds to the positioning of the “*magasin*” on the 1751 map by de Léry (figure 3). That is, it is on the southwest corner of a bend in the river. However, if we compare the shape of the river in de Léry’s map to its modern overall configuration (figure 8) we see on his map, the “*magasin*” is located east of the point where the river bends toward its source in a southwest direction. On the modern map, the head of tide is not in this location, but farther upriver, along the southwest-trending portion of the river, as marked on figure 8.

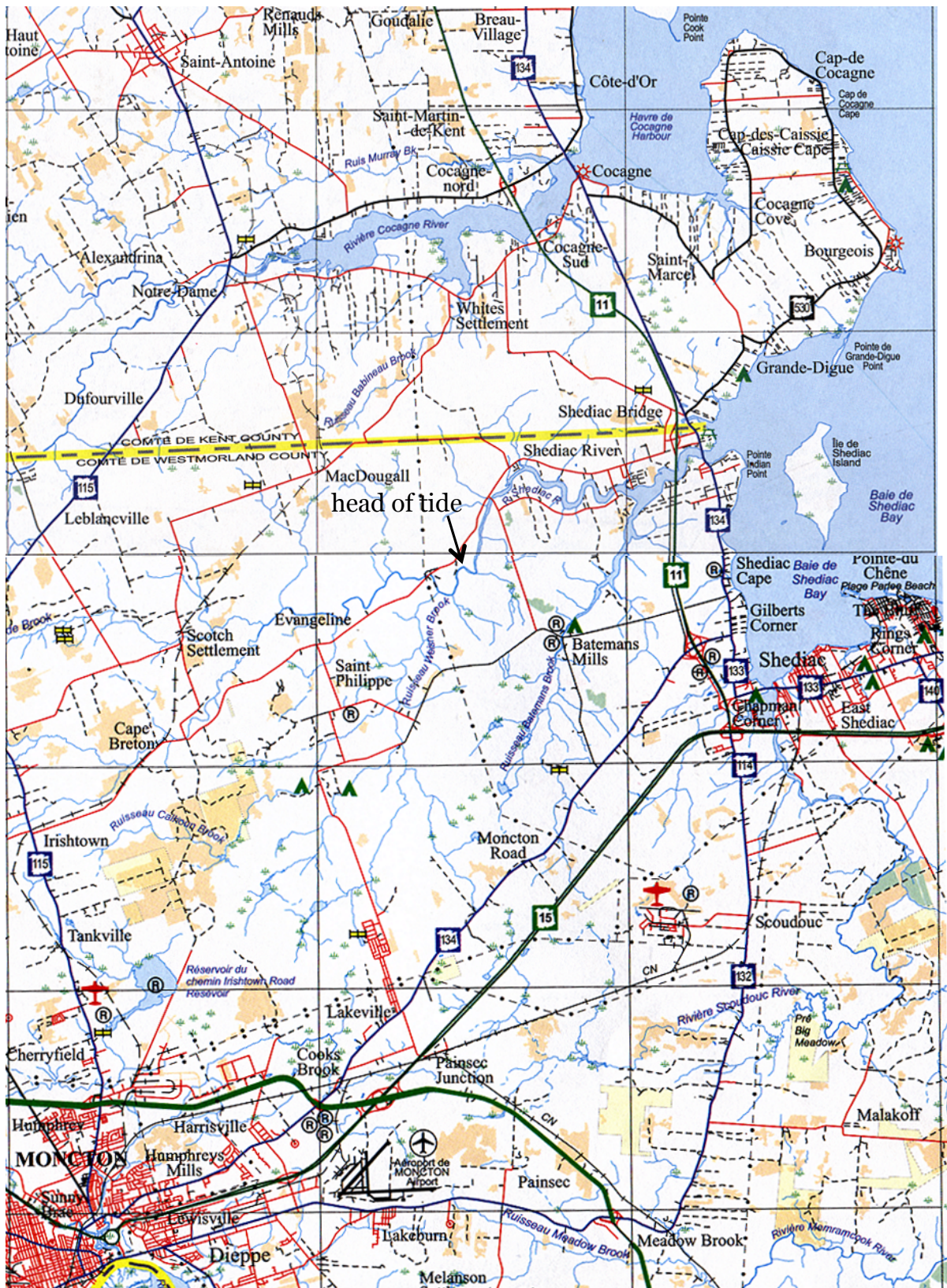


Figure 8. Modern map of Moncton-Shediac area (SNB 1998).

In the fall of 2000, I walked the entire zone outlined in figure 7 in red, but saw no surficial evidence of the two structures. Subsequently, I covered about three hectares along the river with a metal detector, digging test pits where a reading was obtained. Only late 20th century debris was recovered, however, and very little of it. However, the same general area, if surveyed in the spring before vegetation emerges, might yet reveal the 1750 depot site.

However, another historic map, made in 1753 or 1754 by the French military officer Gaspé, who was commandant of the French forces along the St. John River at that time, also shows the Shediac-Moncton portage route. In this map (figure 9) the Shediac river is represented differently than in the 1751 map by de Léry.

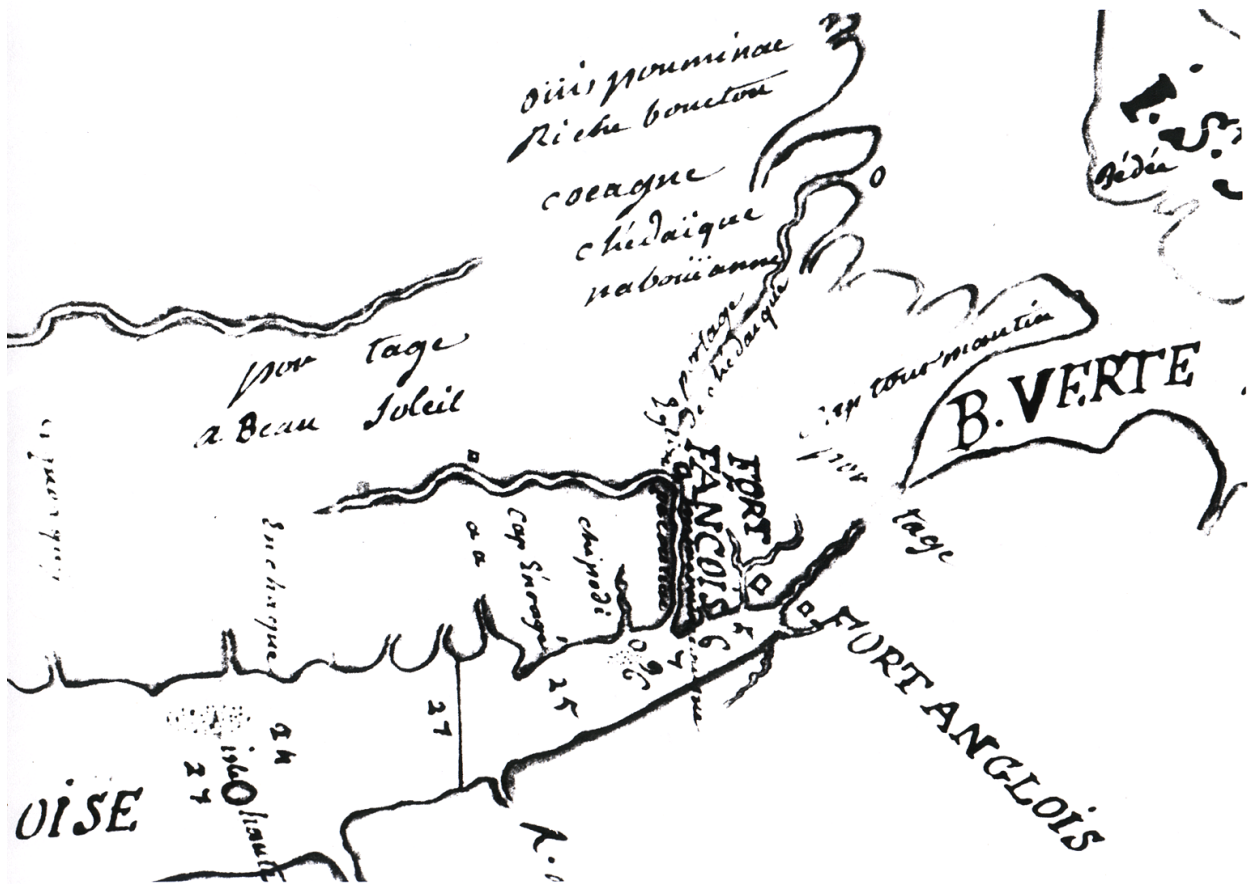


Figure 9. Section of map by Gaspé, 1753 or 1754 (CEA).

As seen in figure 9, the “Chédiaque” river trends abruptly southwest just up from it’s mouth. This configuration is more akin to Bateman’s Brook, a major tributary of the Shediac River, visible in figure 8. The distance between Bateman’s Mills and the confluence of Hall’s Creek and the Petitcodiac is equal to the distance

from the head of tide on the Shediac River to the confluence of Hall's Creek and the Petitcodiac. Moreover, the Bateman's Mills-Moncton route is closer to the present highway 134 between Shediac and Moncton than the Shediac River-Moncton route is. As well, the distance from the mouth of the Shediac River to Bateman's Mills is less than the distance from the mouth of the Shediac River to its head of tide. Therefore, provided the Bateman's Brook was navigable to its head of tide in 1749, it would have provided a shorter route to Moncton.

Considering the absence of any 18th century artifacts in my test pits at the zone surveyed on the Shediac River in 2000, I suggest future survey for the two structures built by de Léry on the "Ejetdaik" River should focus on Bateman's Brook, in the vicinity of Bateman's Mills. However, more survey should be done on the Shediac River as well, slightly farther upstream than the area covered in 2000, as shown in figure 7.

Webster (1928:4) relates that Samuel Teed, who lived on the Shediac River (figure 7), heard in his youth of "an old French fort said to have been near Gilbert's Mill." Mr Teed claimed to have visited many times "an old cellar on the south bank of the river about four hundred yards below the mill site." It was on an elevation opposite a bend in the river "very near the limit of tide, with a beach suitable for the landing of boats." Tales of treasure buried there by Acadian refugees fleeing the British from 1755 to 1758 lured locals to excavate the cellar. They are reported to have found broken pottery and household utensils (Webster 1928:4).

While the location mentioned (figure 7) corresponds roughly with the head of tide location where de Léry built a 9' x 9' house and a 24' x 30' warehouse (table 1), the presence of a cellar suggests a 19th century farm house rather than the military outpost buildings, which almost certainly did not have cellars, or even foundations.

The structures described by de Léry were made from unpeeled logs, probably set into the ground like pickets, in the way palisade walls were made. An example of this type of construction is found in the description of Fort Gaspereau by the British Lieut.-Col John Winslow soon after its capture in 1755. Within the fort he found "... a Large Store house but not Tight nor Flor" (Webster 1930:60). Since both Ft. Gaspereau and the Shediac supply depots were built within a year or so of each other and by the same engineer, we may assume this description would have applied to both. If the depot buildings did not have floors, it is unlikely they had foundations,

and they would certainly not have had cellars.

Building house walls of *piquet* (*poteaux en terre*) was a very common practice for early Acadian dwellings (Ennals 1983:9). The same was probably true for the mid-



18th century French military outposts. The appearance of this construction method is depicted in figure 10.

After 250 years in a forested area, one that was logged for a century and burned by at least one forest fire, it is unlikely that this sort of structure would be distinguishable in surface topography, especially in the summer and fall.

Turning to paragraph 9 of de Léry's *memoire*, he lists the function of each of the seven

Figure 10. Example of *piquet* or *poteaux en terre* construction (Ennals 1983:9).

structures he built “au port d’Ejetdaik” in the fall of 1749 and spring of 1750, along with their

dimensions. These, along with the two buildings constructed at the head of tide in 1750, are summarized in table 1.

Although we have precise information on the dimensions of the seven buildings constructed at the port of Shediac, we are not so fortunate with information on their location. As described earlier, several researchers have looked for this depot. The map drafted by de Léry in 1751 shows the *magasin* on the mainland. The map is generalized, at a small scale, and made no earlier than the autumn of 1751, because it includes Fort Gaspereau, which we know from reports by la Valiere and Franquet, was finished in August of 1751. Therefore, the map was made at least a year and a half after the Shediac depot was built.

The position of de Léry's *magasin* at the port of Shediac is consistent with the location of Acadian homes plotted on nautical charts of the harbour made in 1768 (Holland in DHA 1977:7) and 1776 and 1781 by desBarres (figure 11).

In de Lery's map (figure 3), the *magasin* is west of the southern tip of Shediac Island. The northern pair of homes, defined as two adjacent lots by desBarres (figure

11) correspond with this location. As Webster and Ganong suggest, these are probably the homes of Acadian settlers who harboured British land grantee William Hannington when he arrived in March of 1785 in Shediac (Webster 1928:7).

The occurrence of the earliest mapped Acadian homes in the Shediac Bay area at the location where de Léry depicts the “*magasin*” in 1751 can be taken as support for the hypothesis that this location at Shediac Cape was where the seven buildings comprising the supply depot were built. When Acadians first settled along the shores of Shediac Bay, about 16 years after the supply depot was abandoned by the French military, it is easy to imagine them gravitating to the site of earlier French occupation. Since the military would have cleared the area of trees, it may have been easier to clear for agriculture than elsewhere along the shores of the bay. Furthermore, they may have been able to salvage useful building materials from the remains of the abandoned depot.

Further support for the early importance of this location is found in the fact that there, the colonial New Brunswick government built, in 1839, the 763 foot Queen’s wharf (Webster 1928:11), the first public wharf in Shediac Bay (Belliveau 1977:45).

However, according to Belliveau (1977:46), residents living further north, at what is now the Rockcliffe cottage community, objected to the wharf being built out from the public road beside the Hannington property. They claimed that if built from the headland north of Hannington’s property, where they lived, the wharf would only have to be 534 feet long: 30% shorter and less expensive. However, the wharf was eventually built at the end of Queen’s Wharf Road at Shediac Cape.

This debate over the location of the Queen’s Wharf is significant because we know from de Léry’s *memoire* that he sounded out the harbour, and comments that there is no channel north of Shediac Island. We know that he refers to Shediac Island, not Skull Island, because he writes that the “isle” is 3/4 of a league long, or 2 1/4 miles, very close to the present length of Shediac Island. However, 250 years ago, the isthmus between Shediac Island and Skull Island had probably not been breached, so Skull Island was a peninsula of the larger island. This how it is depicted on desBarres’ map (figure 11).

In 1749, de Léry was searching for a port where military equipment could be off-loaded and stored in a warehouse until such time as it could be transported up the

Shediac River in canoes. The presence of five houses (table 5) suggests the need to provide housing for troops to defend the depot and carry out the tasks associated with the shipments of munitions and supplies. Although he does not report it in his *memoire*, some sort of wharf must have been built to enable the efficient handling of goods to and from ships anchored in the harbour.

However, as noted earlier, Marc Lavoie (1994:4) asserts that the French supply vessels anchored near Shediac Island, then unloaded supplies into smaller boats that were rowed or sailed up to the mouth of the Shediac River, where the supply depot was built. I tested this hypothesis by determining the most probable location for such a port at the mouth of the Shediac River.

Since the depot functioned as a trans-shipment point for troops and supplies, the French would have situated it to facilitate this process. Had they built it at the river mouth, they would probably have made the landing where the channel approaches the shore most closely. The course of the channel is visible in the 1963 airphoto (figure 12), on the south side of the river at Indian Point.

The location of the channel today is the same as in the 1951 air photo. Its location is a function of hydrodynamic forces dictated by overall river meander shape (Strahler 1982:221). The Shediac River is classifiable as in the early mature stage of development (Strahler 1982:420). This, in combination with the channel's recorded stability over the past 50 years, suggests that it has not shifted appreciably over the past 250 years either. Therefore, its present configuration can be used as a guide to the most probable location for docking facilities associated with the military supply depot.

Visible on the 1953 air photo (indicated by an arrow in figure 12) is the Elphege Poirier house, part of a farm established on land granted by the province of New Brunswick in 1791 (DHA 1977:9). According to Belliveau (1977:25) it was built "about 1797 by Pierre Poirier," one of eight Acadians given title to a total of 1600 acres in Shediac Bridge and Grand Digue in 1791 (DHA 1977:8).

According to Lucille Poirier, daughter of Elphege, the road passing north-south in front of the Elphège Poirier house was the road to Shediac before Route 134 was built. According to other residents of Indian Point, a small fishing wharf existed at the northern terminus of this road until early in the 20th century and it is still

faintly visible in the 1963 air photo (figure 12). Since the channel is so close to shore there, it was the most logical place for the first Acadian settlers to build a wharf at Indian Point in the early 1790's. The same principle would apply to the French military, had they established the supply depot there in 1749.

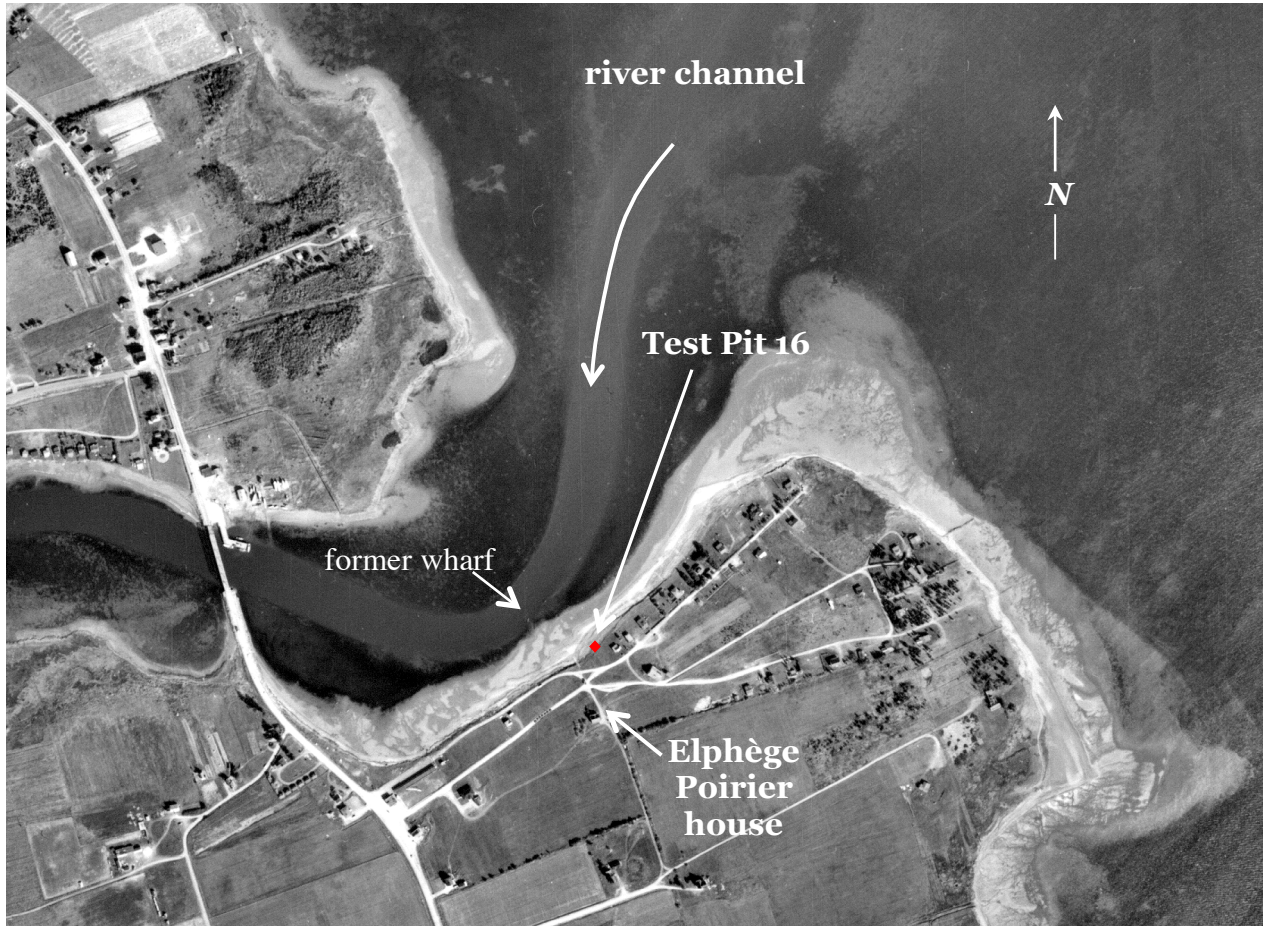


Figure 12. Indian Point in 1963, with location of former wharf and TP16.

In late October of 2000, I excavated a 1 metre square test pit 14 metres south from the edge of the shore and 9 metres east of the former road to the former wharf, now a private beach access point for residents of Indian Point. The location of TP 16 is indicated by a red dot in figure 12.

The location was chosen to maximize recovery of artifacts that might have been lost or discarded in the vicinity of the wharf, if there had been one there in the mid 18th century. In addition, TP 16 is in one of the few locations in the zone where the channel approaches the shore that have not been altered by recent landscaping associated with domestic residences (figure 13).

The test pit yielded artifacts from the 19th and 20th centuries, including sherds of coarse red earthenware and fine white earthenware, container and window glass, cut and wire nails, and a stem fragment from a clay tobacco pipe. The artifacts are described in table 2 (Appendix B). No 18th century artifacts were found *in situ* nor in the 1/4 inch mesh screen through which all fill was sifted.

One feature was revealed in the western half of TP-16. It was the corner of a rectangular depression (figure 14) filled with coarse, sandy loam, with abundant ceramics, glass and nails. This may be a corner of a shed or baithouse that was built adjacent to the wharf in the 19th century



Figure 13. TP 16 before excavation.



Figure 14. TP16, lot 4.

Along with the test pit, I searched for evidence of 18th century occupation of Indian Point by interviewing residents. Although the entire area was farmed for two hundred years by the Poirier family, both the eldest member of the family, Lucille, and her son, Marc Girouard, informed me that no artifacts nor structural features had ever been turned up by plowing.

In summary, field research suggests that Indian Point is not the location of the French military supply depot built in 1749-50.

Re-examining Marc Lavoie's statement that the French military supply ships unloaded cargo into small boats near Shediac Island and rowed it up to the depot at

the mouth of the Shediac River reveals possible flaws. First of all, contrary to what Lavoie (1994:4) reports, there is no reference to the practice of unloading cargo into row boats in de Léry's *memoire*, as is evident from a close reading of Appendix A. Secondly, the distance from an anchorage between Skull Island and Shediac Cape northward to the closest feasible location for a landing at the mouth of the Shediac River is about two kilometres. Unloading a ship by transferring the cargo this distance in small boats to a depot would be slow and inefficient. For example, consider that there were 10,000 pounds of lead shot and gunpowder in the munitions signed for at Shediac by Abbé Le Loutre in June of 1750, along with many other bulky and heavy loads (Brun 1994). In short, Lavoie's hypothesis of a supply depot at the mouth of the river can be rejected.

From the perspective of the French military, the ability to anchor vessels near the depot was arguably the most important criteria in selecting an appropriate site for it at the port of Shediac. de Léry does not mention building a pier at the depot but some sort of pier or wharf must have been built to facilitate unloading supply ships. Ideally, they would have a pier where the supply ships could dock, so the contents could be unloaded and wheeled onto land and into the warehouse. Barring this, they could have off-loaded into row boats and rowed to shore to unload. Even in this case, however, they must have built some sort of structure where the row boats could tie up, to facilitate handling the cargo.

We know from the debate over the location of the Queen's Wharf in 1839 that the wharf was built there in spite of the fact that it was not the most efficient location. In order to reach the same depth of water (5 or 6 feet at lowest normal tide), a wharf at Rockcliffe would have been only 66% as long as the Queen's Wharf was. This is supported by examination of the nautical chart for Shediac harbour (figure 15), where the depths of water at lowest normal tide are plotted: the 5-foot depth is closer to shore at Rockcliffe than at Queen's Wharf. Even though the *magasin* is located there in de Léry's map, and the earliest recorded Acadian dwellings were there as well, according to the desBarres 1781 map, it is not best the location along the shores of Shediac Bay for building a wharf for military supply vessels.

30

Unlike the provincial colonial government, the French military was not constrained by the need to make decisions based on political factors, so they would probably have chosen to build their supply depot at the most physically suitable location for building a wharf. By dropping a weighted line overboard, they could have sounded out the harbour to find the locations with depths of water sufficient for mooring supply ships closest to land. Having this data, they would then choose a location with the deepest water closest to shore, and also closest to the Shediac River, for that is where the cargo would eventually be taken, on its way up to the *magasin* at the head of tide.

Looking again at the modern nautical chart (figure 15), we see two small basins near Skull Island. One, with seven feet of water, is west of the island and a second, larger basin, with nine feet of water at low tide, is southwest of the tiny island. The nine-foot basin is now between 750 and 800 feet from the shore of Skull Island.

In 1912, W. F. Ganong returned to Skull Island and made a more accurate map of the ruins of the fort on Skull Island than he had in 1897. Having used a compass and tape, his 1912 map is “accurate to within a few inches” (Ganong 1914:3). According to this map, the remaining length of the southern rampart across the island is 106 feet. On October 18, 2000, I was on Skull Island when a surveyor from Key Surveys was also there, surveying it for the owner. I asked him to measure the length of the southern rampart, which I pointed out to him. His GPS-based reading was 17.7 metres, plus or minus one centimetre. At 30.48 cm to the foot, this converts to 58 feet. This means that the island is 48 feet narrower than it was in 1912. Since it is eroding on both sides, the average recession rate is 24 feet in 88 years, or 3.3 inches per year. Therefore, the cliffs of Skull Island have receded about 68 feet since 1749.

According to these calculations, assuming the nine-foot basin was in the same location in 1749, a wharf on Skull Island would have to have been about 700 feet long to reach the basin.

If we examine the 1953 air photo (figure 16) we see a faint white line running out into the bay at the end of Queen’s Wharf Road. This is the ruins of the Queen’s Wharf. Also visible in the air photo is the former wharf on Shediac Island. If we survey the air photo for other linear features similar to the two



Figure 16. Mosaic of air photos of Shediac Bay (1953 – S, and 1954 – N).
abandoned wharves, we can see a distinct white linear feature extending southwest from Skull Island to the nine-foot basin. Could this be the ruins of a wharf or pier

built on Skull Island?

Of all the locations along the shores of Shediac Bay suitable for constructing a wharf, Skull Island is closest to the Shediac River. It is about 1.5 kilometres closer to the Shediac River than the Queen's Wharf is.

In summary, several factors suggest that Skull Island would have been the most efficient location for de Léry to build the supply depot in the port of Ejetdaik. However, his 1751 map shows it located on the mainland. For this reason, all previous researchers have logically rejected the possibility that the earthen-walled structure on Skull Island is the location of the supply depot.

But the map is not the only document left to us by de Léry. In the final line of paragraph 4 of his *memoire*, de Léry writes that: “***ladite isle formes le port d'Ejetdaik.***” Farther on, he begins paragraph 9 by writing that “***L'on a fait en 1749, au port d'Ejetdaik, un magasin de 20 pieds sur 36 ...***” and goes on to list all the structures, as summarized in table 1. One interpretation of this is that he built the depot on Shediac Island. However, it is a question of semantics. For example, when he writes that the island “*formes le port d'Ejetdaik*” does he mean that the island forms the northern boundary of the port, or that it constitutes or comprises the port?

A truly satisfactory explanation for the origins of the fort mapped on Skull Island by W. F. Ganong in 1897 (figure 6) has never been offered. Neither Ganong, nor anyone who has researched the problem since, has found written reference to its construction or use. That it was widely known among the Acadians of Shediac as “*le Fort Sauvage*” is certainly compelling evidence that it was used by the Mi'kmaq, and Ganong (1899:292) says he was told by “an Indian chief” that the fort was built by the Mi'kmaq to defend against the Mohawks. Ganong cites other examples of Native forts in the 17th and 18th centuries, at Nerepis and Meductic on the St. John River, and at Richibucto, in support of the hypothesis that the fort on Skull Island may have been built by the Mi'kmaq. He goes on to say that he finds it “difficult to believe that this very small fort on a tiny island surrounded by salt water was the French fort referred to in the documents of the time.” (Ganong 1899:292).

However, if it was an inappropriate place for the French to build, why would it be any more appropriate for the Mi'kmaq? As for suitability, neither of the other two forts de Léry built in the region had drinkable water supplies within their walls. The

commandant of Fort Beauséjour appointed in 1754 complained that water had to be carried from a well “10 to 12 arpents” distant (Webster 1930:42). Likewise, Fort Gaspereau had no well in the fort, and water, like firewood, had to be fetched from some distance (Webster 1930:45).

From a defensive standpoint, the island is flat-topped with steep, four-metre cliffs on all sides. This would help to keep the enemy from gaining access. It affords a panoramic perspective of the bay and enemy vessels could be seen before they entered the harbour because the southern tip of Shediac Island is low marsh, and does not obstruct the view from Skull Island to the Northumberland Strait.

Ganong’s assessment of the fort on Skull Island as “tiny” is curious, since in his map of 1912, the distance between the north and south ramparts is 125 feet. This makes the fort on Skull Island larger than Fort Gaspereau, which we know was square, with walls 114 feet long (Webster 1930:43).

Based on the distance between ramparts of 125 feet, and assuming the fort was square, the area within its walls would have been 15,625 square feet. The combined area of the seven structures built by de Léry at the port of Shediac is 3700 square feet (table 1). Therefore, the fort on Skull Island would have easily accommodated all seven buildings.

However, we do not know if the depot was surrounded by a defensive wall or palisade. Did the French military believe that the potential for attack by British aggressors (naval or privateer) warranted construction of a palisade encircling the compound at Ejetdaik?

Thanks to Régis Brun (1995) we have a detailed inventory of cargo that arrived in Shediac on November 19, 1749, on three ships. Commanding the flotilla was Chevalier Louis de la Corne. The vessels also carried 70 men, 50 of whom were soldiers. The complete list of “*Munitions et Marchandises*” is six pages long. The value of the shipment was £34,000, the modern equivalent being several hundred thousand dollars (Brun 1995:4).

Included in the shipment were tools and hardware for building the Shediac supply depots as well as the three buildings de Léry built at the mouth of the Memramcook River (see Appendix A, paragraph 11). Also included was enough food to provision the soldiers stationed in Shediac for the winter of 1749-50.

As well, a considerable portion of the cargo included trade goods, probably destined for Abbé Le Loutre, who used them to pay his force of aboriginal mercenaries. Some of the weaponry may have been used to arm Le Loutre's forces as well (Brun 1995:4).

Basically, the entire French military effort to retain control of New Brunswick hinged on protecting the cargo stored in Shediac over the winter of 1749-50. Under these circumstances, the supply depot at the port must have been protected by a palisade. Although de Léry does not mention building a palisade in his *memoire*, neither does he mention building a wharf. It may have been that both were so obviously essential and routine for any military outpost of this sort that mentioning them in a report would be redundant.

Another archival document found and published by Brun (1994) provides evidence of yet another shipment of munitions and supplies sent from Quebec to Shediac in 1750 aboard the French vessel "*le London*." As mentioned earlier, this entire consignment was signed for by Abbé Le Loutre on June 14, 1750. Two months later, *le London* was captured by the British ship HMS Trial in the Northumberland Strait near Wallace, Nova Scotia, (Brun 1994:20). Based on this, we may assume there was a sufficient threat to security to warrant construction of a simple defensive work around the depot in the port of Shediac.

To summarize, a wide range of evidence can be marshalled to support the hypothesis that the fort on Skull Island was built to protect the supply depot built by de Léry in 1749-50, even though his map places it on the mainland.

Since de Léry built both the supply depot at Shediac and Fort Gaspereau, and they are roughly the same size, the general appearance of the ruins of both should be relatively similar, provided the supply depot was surrounded by a palisade. W. F. Ganong mapped the ruins of Fort Gaspereau in 1897, and since we have a plan of that fort from 1751, we can see in figures 17, and 18 that they compare favourably.

Likewise, the appearance of the ruins of Fort Gaspereau are virtually identical to those of the Skull Island fort, mapped by Ganong in the same year (figure 6). Both feature an earthen wall surrounded by a shallow ditch. At Fort Gaspereau, the palisade posts or pickets were outside the earthen wall. Webster (1930:43) describes it, based on Franquet's notes: "Inside the palisade was a banquette of earth, used by

the soldiers when they wished to fire through loopholes between the tops of the pickets.”

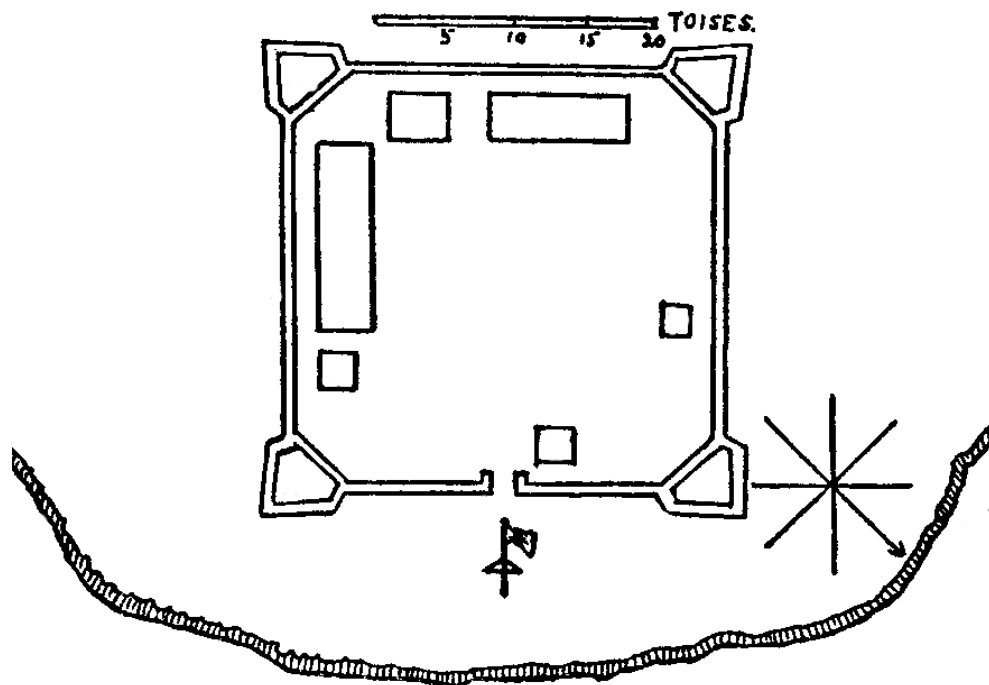


Figure 17. Plan of Fort Gaspereau by Franquet, 1751 (in Webster 1930:44)

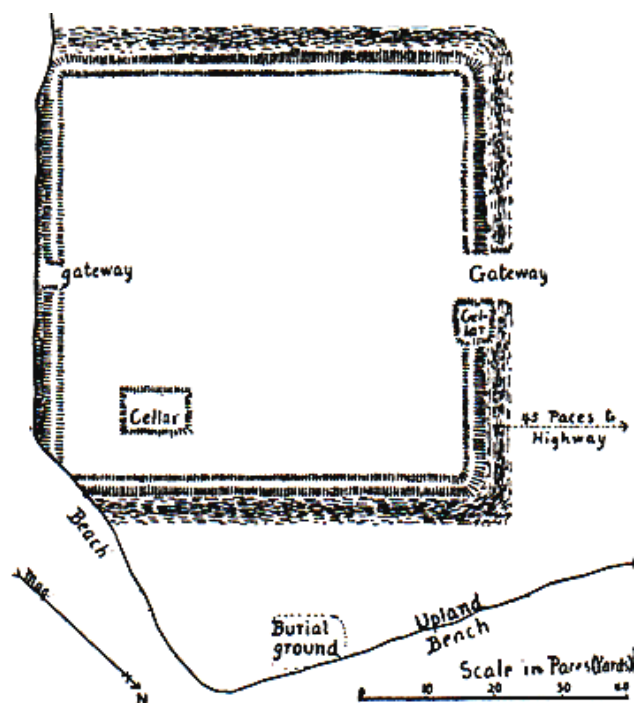


Figure 18. Ruins of Fort Gaspereau mapped by Ganong (1899:290).

On June 28, 1993 while on a regular visit to Skull Island to monitor erosion, I found the firing mechanism from a flintlock musket on the beach directly below the remaining earthen rampart on Skull Island. Comparison with muskets in the collection at Citadel Hill National Historic Park in Halifax reveals that it is from a French military musket used in the early to mid-1700's (Kevin Robbins, personal communication). The artifact was conserved by Maureen Williams, at the Parks Canada Conservation Laboratory in Dartmouth. It is shown in figures 19 and 20.

Curiously, it is frozen in the fully cocked position. Normally, the hammer is drawn back into the fully cocked position only in the act of firing the weapon. When a soldier was on guard, the hammer would be kept half cocked. When a round is fired, the hammer is drawn back to fully cocked position and the trigger is pulled, propelling the hammer forward. The gunflint in the hammer strikes the frizzen, creating a spark which ignites the priming charge. This artifact may have been dropped by someone standing on the "banquette of earth" firing through a loophole in the palisade. However, he may have been wounded before he could squeeze the trigger, dropping the musket in the fully cocked position.

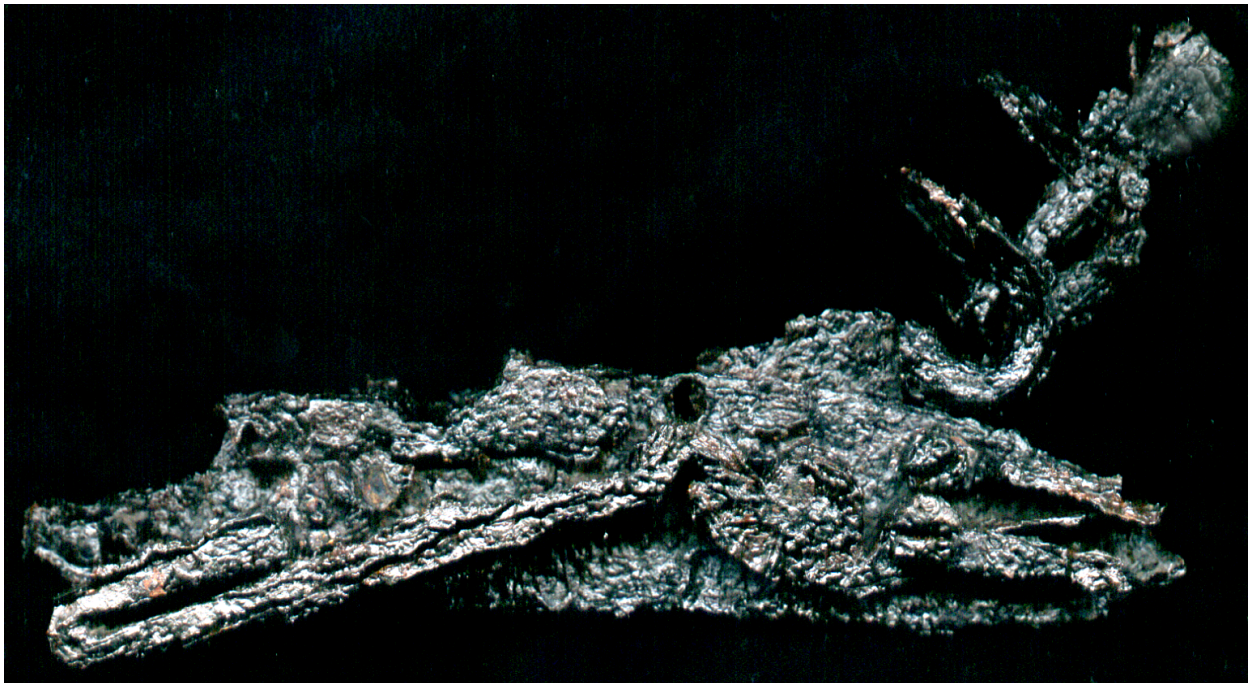


Figure 19. Flintlock mechanism found on Skull Island, interior view.

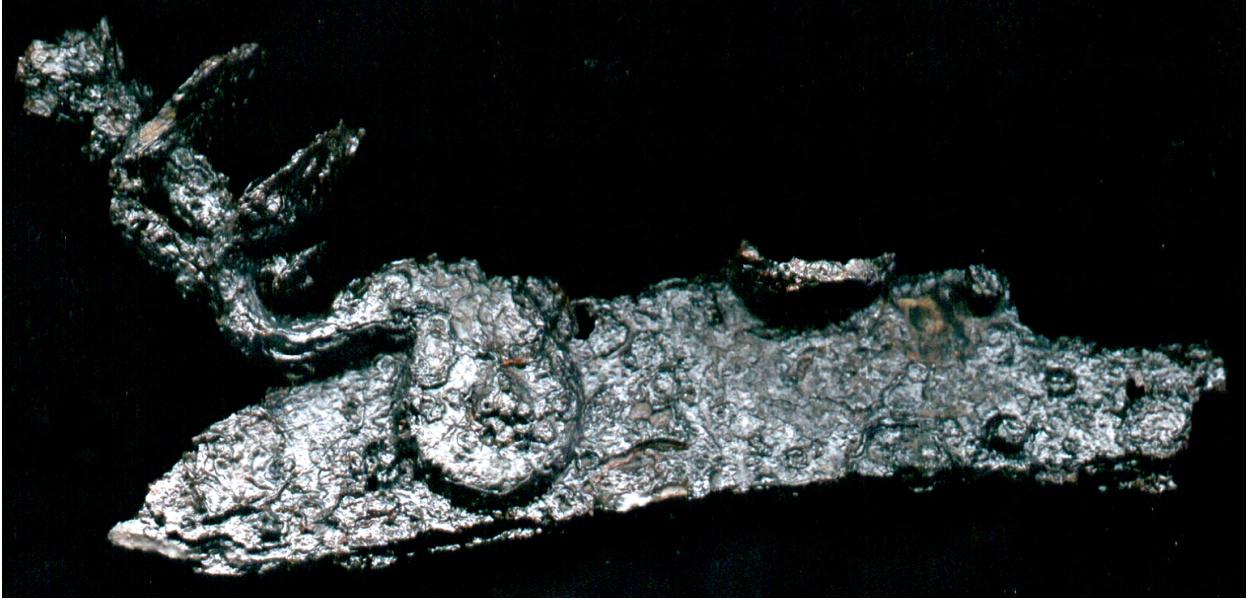


Figure 20. Flintlock mechanism found on Skull Island, exterior view.

In May of 1990, I observed a piece of wood protruding from the soil at the top of the cliff on the same side of the rampart face where I had found the flintlock mechanism three years later. The piece of wood was badly decomposed but was unlike naturally occurring wood debris that erodes out of the bank in two respects. Firstly, it is a softwood species, and currently, only deciduous trees grow on Skull Island (Hinds, in Leonard 1996: Appendix B). Secondly, it did not have any roots protruding from it, as tree stumps that erode out do. After photographing it *in situ* (figures 21 and 22) I collected it and took it to the Musée Acadien at the Université de Moncton, where it is stored, courtesy of museum director Bernard LeBlanc.

Could a softwood post survive for 250 years in the soil on Skull Island? Comparison with a similar site, Fort Temiscamingue on the southeastern shore of James Bay, reveals that it has happened elsewhere in a similar ecological zone. The photographs in figures 23 and 24, of eroding pickets at Fort Temiscamingue, are courtesy of Pierre Drouin, Senior Archaeologist, Quebec Service Centre, Parks Canada.

Fort Temiscamingue was occupied by the French from 1720 to 1760 and the palisade is “clearly from the earliest occupation of the site by non-Aboriginal people” (Pierre Drouin, personal communication, 2001).

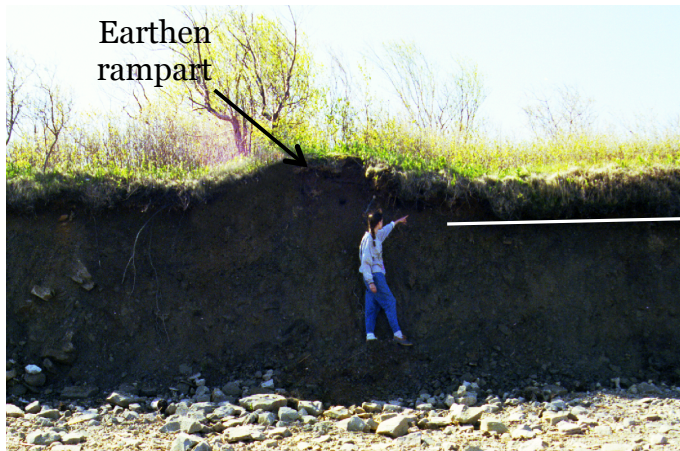
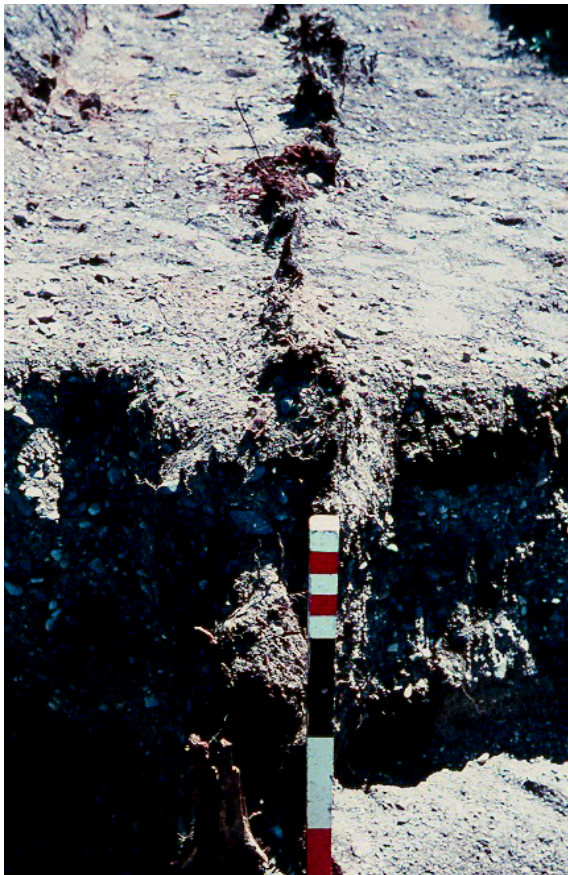


Figure 21. Location of post on Skull Island, 1990.



Figure 22. Post *in-situ*.



Figures 23 and 24. Palisade posts and row of pickets at Ft. Temiscamingue (Photo: Pierre Drouin)

Le Fort Sauvage

One final complication remains to be explained. That is, if the fort on Skull

Island was built by the French, why is it known locally as “*le Fort Sauvage*?”

Until 1749, the Mi’kmaqs had Shediac all to themselves. Evidence from pre-Contact sites around the bay reveal it was occupied by them for several millennia before Europeans arrived (Leonard 1996).

Although many historians relegate the Mi’kmaq to a role of support troops for the French military, detailed archival work by Olive Dickason reveals the full scope of their independent war waged against the British for over a century, until 1761 (Dickason 1986:14). For example, in 1749, the Mi’kmaq made a formal declaration of war against the British when the latter founded Halifax (Dickason 1986:7).

When de Léry completed Fort Gaspereau in 1751, the supply depots at Shediac were abandoned by the French. However, the Mi’kmaqs in Shediac remained and continued their struggle against the British. Since they shared a common enemy, it would have been in the best interests of the French to give, sell, or trade the fortified Shediac supply depot to the Mi’kmaq chief there.

Even after the surrender of Forts Beauséjour and Gaspereau in 1755, the Mi’kmaq of Shediac continued to wage guerilla warfare against the British-held forts in Chignecto (Webster 1931). In concert with the French commandant, Charles des Champs de Boishébert, they harrassed the troops at both Fort Cumberland (Beauséjour) and Fort Monckton (Gaspereau) until the “Chief of the Jedaick Tribe of Indians,” Claude Atouash, signed a “Treaty of Peace and Friendship” (Appendix C) with King George III of England on June 25, 1761 (UNBA MG H54).

So, if the French gave, sold, or traded the Shediac supply depot to the Mi’kmaq, the latter would have used it for a decade before signing the treaty with the British. When the first Acadian settlers arrived in Shediac in the late 1760’s, they would have learned of the Mi’kmaq’s fort on Skull Island, so beginning the long oral tradition of “*le Fort Sauvage*.”

Conclusion and Recommendations

The French supply depots in the port of Shediac and on the Shediac River have proven to be an elusive target for researchers over the years. Although I was unable to find direct evidence of these depots during a field survey in the fall of 2000, archival research before and after have helped to develop new hypotheses regarding their respective locations, as described in this report.

The house and warehouse at the head of tide may be on the Shediac River, but head of tide on Bateman's Brook merits close attention as well. Foot survey and test excavations should be carried out there in future field seasons.

Efforts to find the supply depot "*au port d'Ejetdaik*" should include the area at the terminus of the Queen's Wharf Road in Shediac Cape. However, test excavations should focus on the "*Fort Sauvage*" on Skull Island. A trench along the outside of the rampart to test for the presence of a palisade should be a fundamental component of the field work. Additionally, the area off the southern tip of Skull Island should be examined by an underwater archaeologist to determine if traces of a wharf exist there.

The Shediac supply route played a brief but critical role in the military drama that unfolded on the Isthmus of Chignecto in the 1750's. The hypothesis developed here, that the fort on Skull Island was built by the French in 1749, then used by the Mi'kmaq from 1751 till 1761, is worth testing. Excavations may lead us to different conclusions, but whatever they might be, they are sure to provide information to help us fill in gaps in our knowledge of this crucial stage in our nation's history.

Time is of the essence. W. F. Ganong's foresight a century ago yields data demonstrating that Skull Island will be reduced to a sand spit by the end of the 21st century. We owe it to the memories of those who fought and died in the wars of the 18th century to rescue this chapter of their story before it is forever lost.

Appendix A

Memoir by Lt. de Léry, 1750

“*Memoire* sur le port et la riviere d’Ejetdaik et du chemin qui prend au refouille de ladite riviere et va aboutirent à celle de Petkoutiak à six lieues² de son embouchure.

“Le port d’Ejetdaik ne peut servient qu’aux petis bâtimens qui ne pourront aller plus avant que la petite isle qui est au milieu du port.

“Le port n’est point avantageux, le chenal est étroit entre l’isle et terre au sud de ladite isle, il y a deux brasses³ et deux brasses et demy d’eau, fond de sable dur et à deux lieues au large il n’y a pas plus d’eaux et mesmes fond.

“Au nord de cette île qui a 3/4 de lieues de long, il n’y a point de chenal, ladite isle formes le port d’Ejetdaik.

“La rivière d’Ejetdaik se décharge dans le port. De son embouchure au refouille elle portent canoct, j’i ait passé le 28 mai et le 20 juillet, j’étais en canoct d’écorse et j’avois de la peine, à certaines pointes, à passer sans toucher.

“De l’embouchure de la dite riviere il y a deux lieues jusqu’au refouille, elle est étroite et borde de mauvais bois.

“Le chemin que l’on appelle d’Ejetdaik, prend au refouille de la riviere et va rendre à celle de Petkoudiak, à sept lieues de son embouchure. Il a cinq lieues de long et est assé droit, mais je n’ay jamais veu un si detestable payis, dans le temps des plus grandes secheresses de l’été les chevaux ont de la paine à se tirer des boubier et nous n’avons pas put nous en servient cette année et il en couterois des sommes considerables pour le rendre practiquable aux charrois.

“Les habitans qui ont esté visiter les terres aux environs du port et de la riviere d’Ejetdaik m’ont assuré qu’ils n’étaient pas bonnes et que d’aillieur il n’y avois pas de pré pour avoir de l’herbe à nourire les animaux.

“L’on a fait en 1749, au port d’Ejetdaik, un magasin de 20 pieds sur 36, une maison de 20 sur 24, deux autres maisons de 20 pieds sur 30 et un fourry de 10 pieds en quarré, le tout de pieux ronds. En 1750 on y a fait 2 magasin de 30 pié sur 20 de pieux couvert d’écorse.

“Au refoule de ladite d’Ejetdaik, il y a une maison de 9 pieds en quarré, un magasin de 30 pieds sur 24 de pieux ronds couvert d’écorse.

“A l’embouchure de ladite de Memramboug il y a une boullangerie de 10 pieds en quarré, une hopital de 18 et une maison de 12, le tous de pieux rond et couvert

² lieue = league, 3 geographical miles

³ brasse = fathom, 5’ 3.77 inches, about 8 inches less than the English fathom.

d'ecorse.

“L'es rums de vent qui court la riviere et le chemin d'Ejetdaik sont marques sur la carte que j'en ai faite.

“Fait a la Point Beauséjour, le 29 octobre 1750

Léry”

(Transcribed from the original manuscript by René Baudry, National Archives of Canada.)

Appendix B

Table 2. Artifacts from Test Pit 16, mouth of Shediac River.

Temp Cat No	Material	Type	Notes
LFD.16.2.1	shell	oyster	
LFD.16.2.2	shell	quahaug	
LFD.16.2.3	ceramic	earthenware	coarse red, cream glaze ext, slipped int
LFD.16.2.4	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, white glaze
LFD.16.2.5	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, glaze msng
LFD.16.2.6	glass	clear	container
LFD.16.2.7	glass	clear	window
LFD.16.2.8	glass	clear	window
LFD.16.2.9	glass	clear	window
LFD.16.2.10	glass	olive	container
LFD.16.2.11	glass	olive	container
LFD.16.2.12	metal	nonferrous	flat
LFD.16.2.13	metal	nail	round
LFD.16.2.14	metal	nail	round
LFD.16.2.15	metal	nail	cut
LFD.16.2.16	metal	nail	cut
LFD.16.2.17	metal	coal	fuel
LFD.16.2.18	metal	coal	fuel
LFD.16.2.19	metal	coal	fuel
LFD.16.3.1	charcoal	softwood	
LFD.16.3.2	charcoal	softwood	
LFD.16.3.3	shell	quahaug	
LFD.16.3.4	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, white glaze
LFD.16.3.5	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, white glaze
LFD.16.3.6	ceramic	earthenware	coarse red, exterior missing
LFD.16.3.7	ceramic	kaolin pipe	stem, no marks, 5/64 in bore
LFD.16.3.8	glass	clear	container
LFD.16.3.9	glass	clear	container
LFD.16.3.10	glass	clear	window
LFD.16.3.11	glass	clear	window
LFD.16.3.12	glass	clear	window
LFD.16.3.13	glass	light green	container
LFD.16.3.14	glass	light green	container
LFD.16.3.15	glass	olive	container
LFD.16.3.16	glass	olive	container
LFD.16.3.17	metal	nail	round
LFD.16.3.18	metal	nail	round
LFD.16.3.19	metal	nail	round
LFD.16.3.20	metal	nail	round
LFD.16.3.21	metal	wire	round
LFD.16.3.22	slag	pebble-size	
LFD.16.3.23	pitch	melted	fragment
LFD.16.3.24	pitch	melted	fragment
LFD.16.4.1	charcoal	softwood	
LFD.16.4.2	shell	quahaug	

Survey for French military supply depots, Shediach

LFD.16.4.3	shell	quahaug	
LFD.16.4.4	shell	quahaug	
LFD.16.4.5	shell	quahaug	
LFD.16.4.6	shell	oyster	
LFD.16.4.7	ceramic	earthenware	coarse red, cream glaze ext, red slip int
LFD.16.4.8	ceramic	earthenware	coarse red, cream glaze ext, red slip int
LFD.16.4.9	ceramic	earthenware	coarse red, red glaze
LFD.16.4.10	ceramic	stoneware	black slip int and ext
LFD.16.4.11	ceramic	stoneware	black slip int and ext
LFD.16.4.12	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, white glaze, rim
LFD.16.4.13	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, white glaze
LFD.16.4.14	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, white glaze
LFD.16.4.15	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, white glaze
LFD.16.4.16	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, white glaze
LFD.16.4.17	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, white glaze
LFD.16.4.18	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, glaze msng
LFD.16.4.19	glass	clear	lantern mantle
LFD.16.4.20	glass	clear	poss. lantern mantle
LFD.16.4.21	glass	amber	container
LFD.16.4.22	metal	nail	cut
LFD.16.4.23	metal	nail	cut
LFD.16.4.24	metal	nail	cut
LFD.16.4.25	metal	nail	cut
LFD.16.4.26	metal	nail	wire
LFD.16.4.27	ceramic	earthenware	fine white, burned glaze
LFD.16.4.28	glass	clear	container
LFD.16.4.29	metal	nail	cut

Appendix C

Treaty of Peace and Friendship

Concluded by the Honorable Jonathan Belcher Esq. President of His Majestys Council and Commander in Chief in and over His Majesty's Province of Nova Scotia or Acadia etc, etc, etc, with Claude Atouash Chief of the Jedaick Tribe of Indians at Halifax in the Province of Nova Scotia or Acadia.

I Claude Atouash for myself and the Jedaick Tribe of Indians of which I am Chief; Do acknowledge the jurisdiction and Dominion of His Majesty King George the third over the Territories of Nova Scotia or Acadia, and we do make submifsion to His Majesty in the most perfect, ample and Solemn manner.

And I do promise for myself and my Tribe that I nor they shall not molest any of his Majesty's Subjects or their Dependants in their Settlements already made or to be hereafter made, or in carrying on their Commerce, or in anything whatever within this the province of His said Majesty or elsewhere.

And if any Insults, Robbery or Outrage shall happen to be committed by any of my Tribe Satisfaction and Restitution shall be made to the person or persons Injured.

That neither I, nor my Tribe shall in any manner entice any of His said Majesty's Troops or Soldiers to desert, nor in any manner afsist in conveying them away, but on the contrary will do our utmost endeavours to bring them back to the Company, Regiment, Fort or Garrison to which they shall belong.

That if any Quarrel or Misunderstanding shall happen betwixt myself and the English or between them and any of my Tribe, neither I nor they shall take any private Satisfaction or Revenge, but we will apply for Redrefs according to the Laws established in his said Majesty Dominions.

That all English Prisoners made by myself or my tribe shall be set at Liberty, and that we will use our utmost endeavours to prevail on the other tribes to do the same, if any prisoners shall happen to be in their Hands.

And I do further promise for myself and my Tribe that we will not either directly nor indirectly afsist any of the Enemies of His most sacred Majesty King George the third, his Heirs or Succefsors, nor hold any manner of Commerce, Traffick nor intercourse with them but on the contrary will as much as may be in our

power disco[ver] and make known to His Majesty's Governor, any ill designs which may be formed or contrived against His Majesty's Subjects. And I do further Engage that we will not Traffick, Barter or Exchange any Commodities in any manner, but with such persons or the Managers of such Truckhouses as shall be appointed or established by His Majesty's Governor at Fort Cumberland or elsewhere in Nova Scotia or Acadia.

And for the more effectual Security of the dice performance of this Treaty and every part thereof I do promise and engage[?] that a certain number of persons of my Tribe which shall not be lefs in number than two persons shall on or by the thirtieth day of September next, reside as hostages at Fort Cumberland or at such other place or places in this province of Nova Scotia or Acadia as shall be apppointed for that purpose by his Majesty's Governor of said Province, which Hostages shall be exchanged for a like number of my Tribe when requested.

And all these foregoing Articles and every one of them, made with

I do promise for myself and in behalf of my Tribe that we will most strictly [obey?] and observe in the most solemn manner In Witnefs whereof I have hereunto put my mark and Seal at Halifax in Nova Scotia this Twenty fifth day of June. One Thousand Seven hundred and Sixty one and in the First Year of His Majesty's Reign.

his

Claude Atouash

mark

Source:

Indian Affairs, 1761-1864, Univerity of New Brunswick Library Archives and Special Collections, MG H54. Material collected for Lord Beaverbrook by R.A. Tweedie in 1956.

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