

RÉGIONALE OTTAWA - CARLETON

SOCIÉTÉ FRANCO-ONTARIENNE

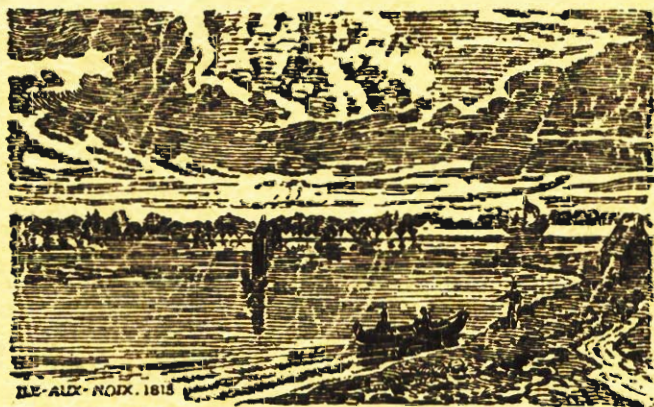
D'HISTOIRE ET DE GÉOGRAPHIE

C.P. 7291

VANIER, ONTARIO

K1L 8E3

GUIDE TO  
**FORT LENNOX**  
ILE AUX NOIX, QUEBEC



ILE-AUX-NOIX. 1815

A WISE NATION PRESERVES • ITS  
RECORDS • GATHERS UP ITS MUNI-  
MENTS • DECORATES THE TOMBS OF  
ITS ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD • REPAIRS ITS  
GREAT PUBLIC STRUCTURES & FOS-  
TERS NATIONAL PRIDE AND LOVE  
OF COUNTRY • BY PERPETUAL REFER-  
ENCE TO THE SACRIFICES & GLORIES  
OF THE PAST • • • JOSEPH HOWE • • •

NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA  
HISTORIC SITES

**HIS  
QUE  
036**

# FORT LENNOX

*Ile aux Noix - - Quebec*

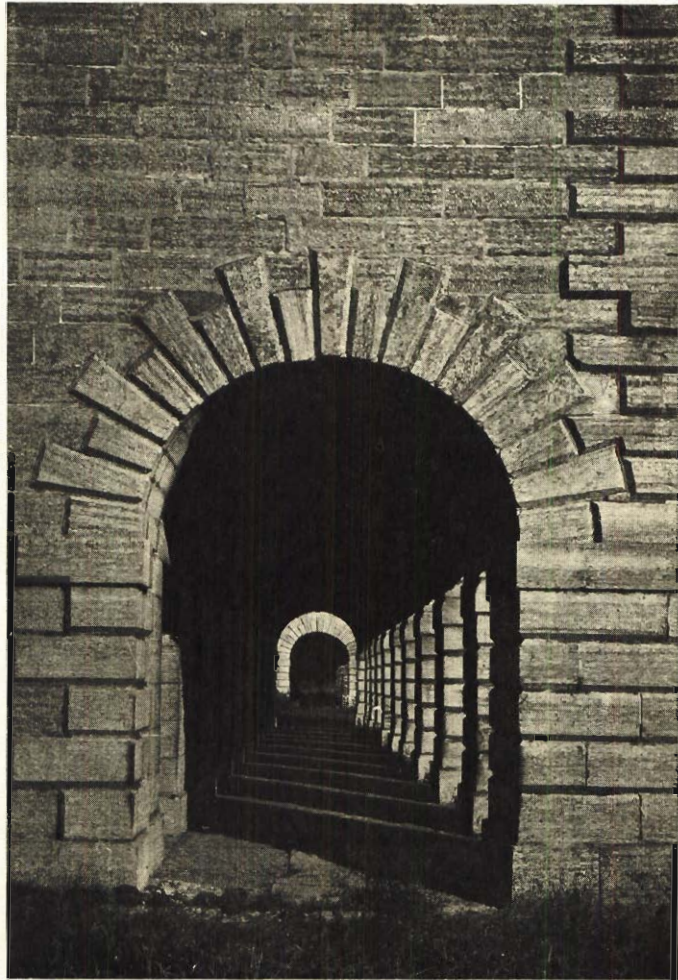
*A Brief History of the Island Fortress  
on the Richelieu River. Battle ground of  
contending Nations for the possession of  
Canada in the Eighteenth Century and  
built by the British at immense cost  
during the early years of the Nineteenth  
Century - - - - -*

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

HON. T. A. CREER - *Minister*                      J. M. WARDLE - *Deputy Minister*  
J. B. HARKIN - *Commissioner, National Parks of Canada,*  
*Ottawa*

---

OTTAWA  
J. O. PATENAUDE, I.S.O.,  
Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty  
1936



FORT LENNOX, ILE AUX NOIX  
COLONNADE, OFFICERS' QUARTERS AND GUARD ROOM BUILDING

## Fort Lennox—Ile aux Noix

### *The Old Fort*

Among the historic memorials of the Dominion that have been from time to time placed under the care of the National Parks of Canada, Department of the Interior, there is none richer in historic interest or more charmingly situated than the massive old fortress that stands in quiet dignity on the southern end of Ile aux Noix. Ile aux Noix, island of velvet sward and majestic elms is set in mid stream like an emerald in the silver belt of the noble Richelieu river. Adequate means have been taken for the preservation of the fort and it will remain for all time as one of the chief monuments of the military struggle of over two centuries for the possession of Canada.

Fort Lennox has stood just within the Canadian border in the province of Quebec for more than one hundred years and owing to the changed methods of warfare in later days the fort has been declared obsolete by the military authorities. After more than half a century of neglect it was placed under the care of the National Parks of Canada for preservation and restoration. Henceforth national piety may come to the assistance of creative beauty and on the spot where the first white settlers fought with Indian savages for the lands of Canada the children of a nation at peace with its neighbours will plant flowers and trees and vines. Out of the welter and the madness of war and the melancholy destruction of beautiful things is born the hope that the national consciousness may manifest itself for many years to come in new creations of constructive beauty.

### *Ile aux Noix*

Ile aux Noix is situated twelve miles below the outlet of lake Champlain and ten miles from the United States border.



MAIN ENTRANCE, NORTH SIDE

It is said that Champlain visited Ile aux Noix in 1609. At least he must have passed it about the 13th of July of that year, while travelling from Saint Therese island, which he had left the day before, to the islands of lake Champlain, which he reached on July 14.

Ile aux Noix forms part of the seigneurie granted to Sieur Chavoie de Noyan in 1733. It appears from a lease, made at Montreal, on April 7, 1753, before Foucher, King's Notary, that the first occupant was Pierre Jourdanet, one of Captain de Lorimier's soldiers; it was he who did the first clearing. The rent stipulated was one bag of nuts from the island.

### *A Line of Forts*

With the French occupation of the Richelieu territory a line of defence for the Richelieu river became a necessity, since the Richelieu was the chief highway from the south to the cities of Montreal and Quebec. In the course



OFFICERS' QUARTERS AND GUARD ROOM

of time a chain of forts was built stretching from Sorel to lake Champlain to cover with their guns the advance of an enemy from the south. In these operations the famous Carignan regiment took a prominent part and the names of many of its officers are still preserved in the place-names of the Richelieu region.

Around these forts the first settlers clustered for protection and thus formed the "French Country" of the Eastern Townships. In the term "habitant" is preserved the literary memorial of the stockaded villages or "habitations" that were the outcome of these defensive posts. After the smoke of battle and the terror of the Iroquois had died away and most of the resplendent "gentlemen of France" had returned to their country these habitants were found with cleared lands and growing crops, the real hope of the new colony, asking only from their superiors peace, justice and the opportunity to cultivate the land whose riches they alone could appreciate.

### *The Island is Fortified*

The struggle between English and French involved the fortification of Ile aux Noix. The island is three-quarters of a mile in length with a swift narrow channel on each side and shores rendered unapproachable for troops on account of wide tracts of treacherous marsh land. These factors made Ile aux Noix an ideal site for the defence of the Richelieu. To the south, where attack might be expected, the river takes a sharp bend and an approaching flotilla coming suddenly around Sturgeon Point could be surprised by a deadly fire from the guns of the fort.

In 1759 the French were forced to abandon the forts of Carillon and St. Frederic which guarded that part of New France situated around Lake Champlain. It appears that this movement had already been foreseen in 1758. On May 13 of that year, Lt. Jean Nicholas Desandrouins, Royal Engineer, left Quebec for Montreal, and in June departed from Fort St. John, where he was under Montcalm's orders, for Forts St. Frederic and Carillon. He must have made a favourable report on Ile aux Noix, for in 1758 a report was made criticizing his appreciation of that site and recommending that Pointe a Margot, on the east bank of the Richelieu, be selected. However, Desandrouins' advice seems to have prevailed, for on April 25, 1759, under instructions from Montcalm, he left Fort St. John for Ile aux Noix, which he examined as a strategic point.

General Bourlamaque decided to entrench himself strongly at Ile aux Noix with the intention of arresting the march of the English commander, Haviland. With 2,000 men of the detachments of "la Reine," of Guyenne and of Berry, Bourlamaque worked so well that his adversary was afraid to attack him immediately. It was only in the month of August, 1760, after having received some reinforcements, that Haviland appeared before Fort Ile aux Noix, then commanded by de Bougainville, who distinguished himself later by his voyages and discoveries and whose body rests in the Pantheon of Paris.

The French had thrown some stockades across the river to close the passage but the English had succeeded in establishing themselves on the peninsula situated on the east side and with their cannon pointed at three sides of the fort. The French commander judged it to be better to retreat than to be obliged to surrender with all his forces and during the night of August 27-28, profiting by darkness, he embarked the greater part of his troops in canoes, leaving in the fort 50 men in order to hide his stratagem. He thus succeeded in evading the enemy and gaining St. Johns and Montreal where he joined Lévis. The morning of the 28th the British commenced to bombard the fort in response to the fire of the few French remaining there. Later, the French offered to surrender, provided they were allowed to leave with the honours of war. Their proposal was immediately accepted but the British realized that a trick had been played upon them and were naturally much chagrined.

The surrender of the island was the prelude to the fall of Montreal and the loss of New France to the French Government. Ile aux Noix was the last defence of the old régime.

### *The American War of Independence*

From the time of the British occupation Ile aux Noix was recognized as a strong position and was constantly garrisoned by troops. With the outbreak of the American War of Independence in 1775 the need for a strong fortress on the island became apparent. In that year the American rebels, commanded by Generals Schuyler and Montgomery, took Ile aux Noix in the course of their advance on Montreal and Quebec. It was from here that they issued their famous proclamation inviting the Canadians to join the Congressional troops. After Montgomery's failure and death before the walls of Quebec the American army retreated to the Richelieu and entrenched at Ile aux Noix under the orders of General Arnold. Fever broke out among the soldiers, the Americans left very hurriedly in order to escape the ravages of the epidemic, and the British reoccupied the fort.

Brigadier-General Fraser was its first commandant. He had just previously on June 8 won a victory over the United States troops, at Three Rivers. He occupied the island with three battalions from July. The Brunswick regiment which he employed to complete de Bourlamaque's fortifications, was sent to him in the month of August. The following year, on October 7, 1777, Fraser was killed while with the unfortunate Burgoyne expedition.

The British government decided in 1782 to build on the island a real fortress. Plans were made and immediately the work of reconstruction was begun under the direction of an engineer named Twiss. A large number of Canadian prisoners who had joined the Americans during the invasion were employed on this work but the major part was carried out by the German mercenaries who were in the British service. The plan was to dig a large moat surrounded by high ramparts in the form of a rectangle with bastions on four corners and then build, in the interior, quarters for the officers and soldiers. This was a gigantic enterprise when one considers the rudimentary means at that time to build large earthworks. The workmen were obliged to make great cribs of timber which they filled with earth brought in wheelbarrows from the ditches. The stone for the casemates and barracks was hauled from the island at Lamothe.



MEN'S BARRACKS—ARCHWAYS ON FIRST FLOOR

It was at this time that General von Riedesel, the commander of Brunswick mercenaries, employed by the British to assist in the campaign against the revolting New England colonists figured in the destinies of the island. The landgrave of Hesse and the Duke of Brunswick had supplied the British with 20,000 troops. In command of 4,000 Brunswickers, General von Riedesel came to Canada and operated between Sorel and lake Champlain and under his supervision the first considerable British fortifications were built on Ile aux Noix. The fortress was advanced before the winter came on but was not completed till the next summer. The expected attack of the Americans did not materialize but Ile aux Noix had been established as a garrison fortress.

#### *The War of 1812*

When trouble once more broke out between the neighbouring countries in 1812 it was found that the fortress built by von Riedesel at the cost of so much labour and suffering was not sufficient to meet the purposes of defence. It was decided to reconstruct the interior and the present buildings were from time to time erected. The island also became a naval station where warships of the lesser class were built. The work was begun in 1812 and was not completed for many years.

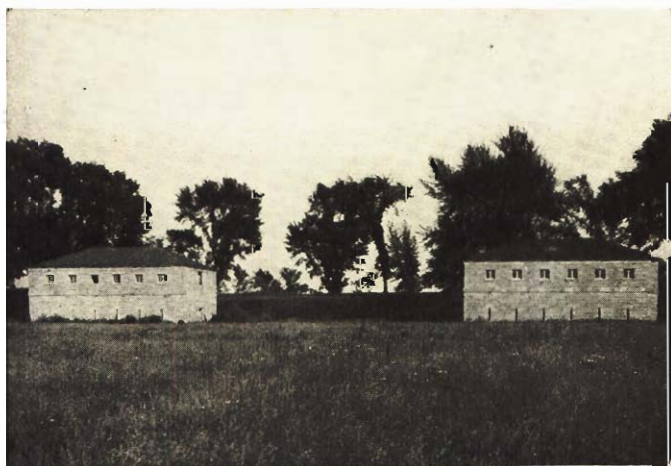
The reconstructed fort was named "Fort Lennox" probably from the family name of Charles, Duke of Richmond, who was Governor General from 1818 until his tragic death in the following year.

On June 3, 1813, two American ships appeared in sight and were successfully captured after two hours fighting. These two ships, having been repaired on this island, were used in the expedition which, under orders from Captain Everard, destroyed the barracks, military stores and the American ships at Plattsburg, Burlington, Swanton and Champlain. In the winter of 1813 and in the spring of 1814, there were constructed in the dry-dock at the island a number of ships of war, among others *La Confiance*, a ship of considerable tonnage. These ships took part in the unfortunate expedition of Sir George Prevost, in 1814, and most of them were sunk in the bay of Plattsburg, by the Americans.

In 1840 additional protection was provided for the island by placing a boom across the river and anchoring gun-boats to command the passage of the river.

### *The Abandoned Fort*

After the war of 1812-14, the fort continued to be garrisoned until the withdrawal of the British troops in 1870. After having been used as a penitentiary it was abandoned and became the free resort of tourists and picnic parties and naturally drifted towards decay. On May 18, 1921, on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, the fortress and adjoining lands were transferred to the National Parks of Canada, Department of the Interior, for preservation and restoration, and later a caretaker was appointed to keep the property in order and prevent further depreciation by thoughtless visitors.



THE ARTILLERY AND COMMISSARIAT BUILDINGS

### *Fort Lennox To-day*

The Fort Lennox of to-day, although showing many signs of its age, presents to the visitor an aspect of proud and magnificent solidity as if it had the power in itself to defy the disintegrating influences of time and weather.

At the entrance is a massive archway of great blocks of hewn stone on which is cut in large letters the name "Lennox." The gateway opens upon a spacious square on three sides of which are arranged the various buildings of the fort: officers' quarters, guard-house, canteen, barracks and commissariat, all of which are constructed of stone on the massive lines adopted by the British authorities at the beginning of the 19th century. The square, with its



buildings, is surrounded by a steep rampart of earth which rises abruptly from the waters of a moat sixty feet wide and ten feet deep, running like a girdle around the whole structure.

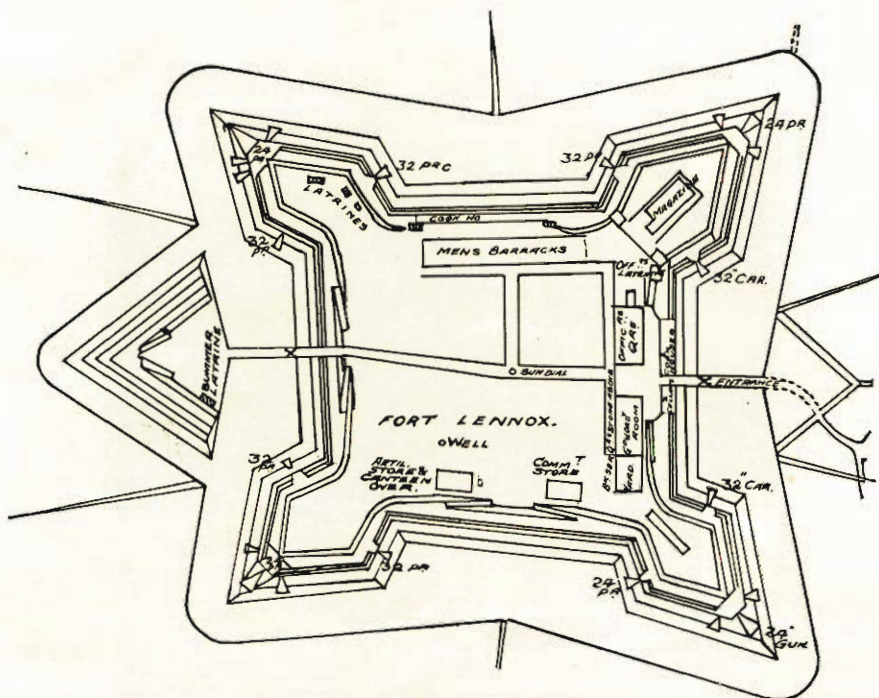
The fortress stands at the south end of the island and occupies about one-quarter of the total area, which comprises 210 acres. Outside the fort may be seen the remains of a church, two graveyards and other ruins. Of the nut trees that attracted the attention of Champlain and gave the island its name, there is no trace, but within the fort are many magnificent elm trees which add a dignified beauty to the scene.

### *Methods of Approach*

#### *(1) From the United States Side*

The Richelieu valley has already established itself as a tourist route of exceptional interest comparable in national interest and historic charm to the famous Niagara frontier. There is a chain of old forts on both sides of the international boundary, reaching on the Canadian side to the waters of the St. Lawrence and on the United States side as far as Albany.

(a) Leaving Rouse's Point on the United States side the motorist may proceed to Fort Lennox by the river road, which is a highway for automobiles. After proceeding about four miles Lacolle bridge, which spans the Lacolle river, is reached. Here may be seen the foundations of the famous Lacolle's mill



PLAN OF FORT LENNOX

where an important engagement took place between the British and the Americans during the War of Independence. The site of the mill is about 100 yards from the bridge where a monument erected in 1927 stands. Immediately opposite is the Lacolle blockhouse. Five miles beyond, St. Paul de Ile aux Noix

is reached. Here a road running east a quarter of a mile leads to the river Richelieu where two summer hotels will be found and boat transportation to the island. At this corner, the Quebec Monuments Commission has erected a tablet which reads as follows:—

“Opposite, on Ile aux Noix, the French fortified themselves in 1759. Here, in 1775, Montgomery issued his proclamation to the Canadians. In 1776 the fort was recovered from the Americans.”

(b) Coming by train from Rouse's Point the visitor will travel to St. Valentin, Quebec, about two and a half miles from St. Paul where taxicabs are available.

(c) Approach from the United States side may be made by motor boat from lake Champlain, down the Richelieu river, landing at the wharf on the east side of the island where the water is deep enough to accommodate a large boat. This journey is very pleasant and picturesque.

### (2) *From the Canadian Side*

Proceeding from Montreal the traveller crosses by one of the bridges to the south side of the St. Lawrence, whence either the King Edward highway or Chambly road may be followed to St. Johns and St. Paul where the approach to the river previously mentioned may be found.



MEN'S BARRACKS

Those who choose the Chambly route may visit Fort Chambly. At St. Johns there is the site of the old Fort St. John. Nothing, however, is left of the fort but the remains of the moat and earthworks, and a small demie-lune built in 1778 by Governor Haldimand. Military barracks occupy the site of the fort at the present time.

(b) Another way is from Sorel, by motor boat up the Richelieu river to Chambly. From this point the travelling is by the canal to St. Johns which is a very beautiful trip. At St. Johns the river is entered again. St. Paul is reached and the objective of the traveller is the east side of the island by the main channel of the river.

(c) The rail journey is from Montreal to St. Valentin. The way thence to the river has already been described.

At present there is no refreshment accommodation on the island. It is customary for travellers to bring light lunches when staying for any length of time or to depend upon local accommodation at St. Paul or at St. Johns, the latter twelve miles distant.



MAGAZINE

*The Fort Without and Within*

Landing on the west side of the island the first object of interest is the encircling moat sixty feet wide, with the mounting rampart on which were formerly mounted the great guns that commanded the reaches of the river. Everywhere the vegetation is luxuriant and beautiful. It is obvious that the earth dug from the moat was used for the construction of the rampart.



THE GATE AND MOAT, SOUTH SIDE

In the old times the means of approach was by drawbridge but of this there is at present no trace. Proceeding through the gateway the visitor will at once be struck by the massive solidity of the buildings. In front of him on the parade ground is a sundial which was erected in 1820. On the right are the

officers' quarters and on the left the guardhouse. Both buildings will immediately attract attention by the beautiful archways and colonnades. The guardhouse was built in 1824, and the officers' quarters in 1826. Within the latter building will be found the museum, containing a collection of historic relics with additions connected with the Great War. Behind the officers' quarters will be seen various buildings, constructed in the ramparts and which were used for kitchen purposes. Further to the right in the northwest bastion will be seen the



STAIRWAY REAR OF MEN'S BARRACKS

magazine where the ammunition was stored. Here the thickness of the side walls will be appreciated. The arch inside is four feet thick while the side walls are eight feet thick. Shell rooms were built on each end of the stone wall, separating the site of the magazine from the other buildings. Next on the west side the men's barracks will be observed, the massive character of which will be appreciated by an examination of the interior. It may be said that the chief feature of all these buildings is the excellence of the construction of the various archways. Behind the barracks and under the ramparts will be observed other buildings once used as bakeries, where the soldiers baked their bread.

The barracks were used as a prison for convicts between 1870-1873, while St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary was being constructed.

On the south side there is another outlet to the water connecting with a curious triangular structure, also surrounded by a moat, which was intended as an additional protection from attack on the south side. Here there is a most beautiful view of the Richelieu river. Proceeding to the east side there are the artillery store, canteen and commissariat buildings. To complete the itinerary of the fort there is the guardroom building which is on the left of the main entrance where will be seen the cells for confinement of refractory soldiers.

Leaving the fort by the main entrance the visitor will see the sally-port, rebuilt in 1913. It was originally much longer and included a protective stockade to the wharf on the east side of the island. Before him is spread out the expanse of the island which, in the summer time, presents a charming vista. About two hundred yards north of the entrance can be seen two cemeteries enclosed by fences. The

names of the soldiers who are buried there are preserved in the records. In some cases the original head-stones had disappeared and the memorials were renewed. Among them were the following:

In memory of  
Sydney Neville Ussher  
aged 17 days,  
Son of W. H. Ussher, Esq.  
and grandson of the  
late Rear Admiral  
Sir Thomas Ussher,  
C.B., K.C.H.,  
who died 9th Dec. 1848,  
at Ile aux Noix, C. E.

To the memory  
of Lieutenant  
William Grimshaw  
of the 76th  
Hindoostan  
Regiment, who  
died the 10th  
November, 1815,  
Aged 25 years.

Sacred to the memory  
of John Duggan,  
Sergeant in the Royal  
Sappers and Miners of  
Wales,  
who departed this life  
on the 8th day  
of Jan. 1835,  
aged 59 years

In memory of  
Thos. Lebrun,  
County of Monagan, Ireland,  
died  
April 10th, 1868.  
Age 35 years.  
Erected by his widow and  
orphan children in  
token of their love.

Near the western landing-place there is a large excavation which once served as a dry-dock. It is approximately two hundred and fifty feet long by fifty feet wide with signs of an entrance from the river about two hundred and fifty feet long by twenty-five feet wide. In the days of naval activity on the island the boats were brought into this enclosure, the gates closed and the water pumped out by hand. Great preparations were made for ship building, but with the conclusion of the war in 1814 the works were closed and the ships under construction were sold.

### *The Museum*

Visitors will find the museum of great interest. In the Indian relics which have been dug up on the island or in the vicinity there is ample proof that Ile aux Noix was used by the Indians long before the 17th century. Among these relics there are thirteen stone axes, sixty flint arrow points, totem stone, spear heads and other curiosities. The relics, military and domestic, of early French and later British occupation are very numerous. Students of regimental history will find a unique collection of military buttons, badges, crests and plates, bearing such names as Hindustan, Peninsula, Malay, Corunna, Royal Miners and Sappers, Canadian Militia, New Brunswick Regiment, Royal Canadian Sappers, Royal Regiment of Artillery and many others. The collection includes an English triangular bayonet dated 1618, Scottish claymore, marine cutlass, guns of early construction, cannon balls, ship axes, ear-rings and trinkets, leg irons, wooden shoes, steel and tinder for striking fires. There is also an extensive collection of old coins including a Portuguese coin dating back to 1530. There are numerous Spanish, French, British and Canadian silver and copper coins bearing the quaint devices of their periods. Relics of the Great War at the island comprise the following: 20 rifles, 1 anti-tank rifle, 6 unmounted machine guns, 1 M.G. (round stand), 1 M.G. (high stand), 1 M.G. (small stand), 1 Austrian M.G., 2 trench mortars, 1 aeroplane, 1 granatenwerfer, 1 sniping plate, 1 breastplate, 20 shells, 1 periscope, 1 rifle stand, 5 bayonets, 2 signal pistols, 10 trench helmets, 1 dress helmet, 12 posters, 2 limbers, 3 trench signs, 1 zeppelin piece.

### *A Public Reserve*

Under the supervision of the National Parks of Canada there has been given full freedom to the public for the use and enjoyment of the island as a holiday resort and historic shrine. Special areas have been reserved for campers and facilities provided for their needs. Good bathing opportunities are afforded. Wharves have been built on the east and west sides of the island, that on the east giving accommodation to steamers of heavy draught such as excursion boats. There is a caretaker in charge who meets visitors and supplies necessary information.



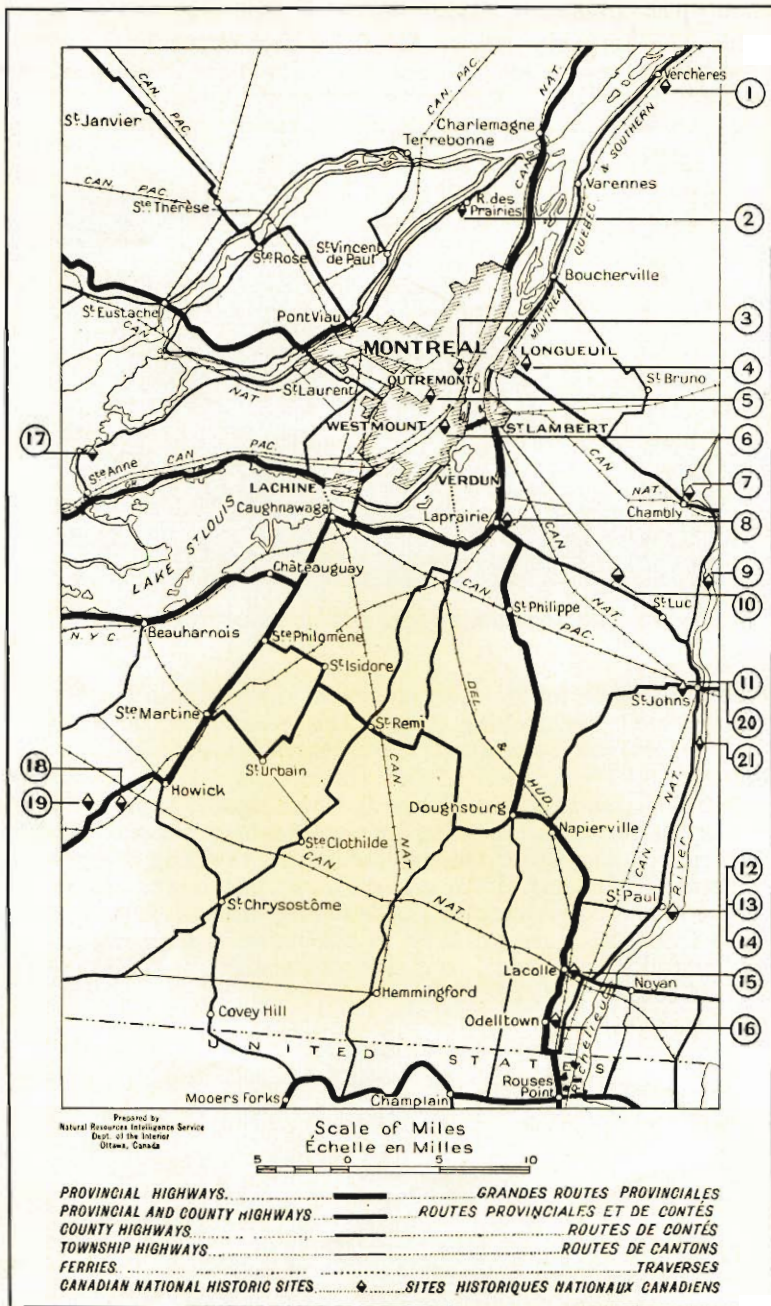
LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM THE SOUTHEAST BASTION

### *Looking Back*

The imaginative visitor standing on one of the bastions which commands a fine view of the river and looking through the trees across the spacious parade grounds of the fort will reconstruct for himself the fevered activity of naval operations which once characterized this placid river. He will hear once more the call of the bugle and see the officers and men issuing from their quarters in the resplendent uniforms of the olden times. Once more he will hear the sharp word of command and picture the vigilant sentry scanning the river for signs of hostile approach. The day of this method of warfare has passed away but it is well that there should be monuments still standing, such as the old fortress on Ile aux Noix, to focus the thrilling story of the nation's early defenders, and to create and keep alive reverence for those who counted not life as dear in the service of their country.



SUNDIAL



## HISTORIC SITES TABLET—INTERPRETATION OF DESIGN

*Design—*

A frame surrounded by a border of pine cones and pine needles.

Surmounted by a crown.

Below the crown, maple leaves.

On either side surrounding circular reliefs, Rose, Thistle, Shamrock, Lily and Leek.

Circular relief on the left; the arrival of Jacques Cartier.

Circular relief on the right in the foreground a harbour with elevator, docks, shipping, etc., at right of panel, a city and in the background, a well-developed agricultural country.

At the bottom, on either side, a shield—on the shield to the left the first arms used in Canada (the fleur de lis and cross). On the shield to the right, the present arms of Canada.

*Symbolizing—*

Our northern climate.

The King and the British Empire.

Canada.

Principal races from which Canadians are descended.

The beginning of Canadian history.

Development of Canada commercially, industrially and agriculturally.

Canada as a Colony and Canada as one of the self-governing nations of the British Commonwealth.

## INDEX TO ROUTE MAP

Name of Site	No.	Nom du site
Heroine of Verchères	1	L'héroïne de Verchères
Battle of Coulée Grou	2	Combat de la Coulée Grou
First Canadian Steamship (Notre-Dame St., E.)	3	Le premier bateau vapeur (rue Notre-Dame Est)
Fort Longueuil	4	Fort de Longueuil
Hochelaga (McGill University grounds)	5	Hochelaga (Terrain de l'Université de McGill.)
Montreal's Birthplace (Youville square).	6	Le berceau de Montréal (Carré Youville.)
Fort Chambly	7	Fort Chambly
Fort Laprairie	8	Fort Laprairie
Fort Ste. Thérèse	9	Fort Ste-Thérèse
Second Battle of Laprairie	10	Seconde bataille de Laprairie
Fort St. Johns	11	Fort St-Jean
Fort Lennox	12	Fort Lennox
Battle of Ile aux Noix	13	Bataille de l'Ile-aux-Noix
The Royal Navy, Fort Lennox	14	La marine royale, Fort Lennox
Battle of Lacolle	15	Bataille de Lacolle
Battlefield of Odelltown	16	Champ de la bataille d'Odelltown
Battle of the Lake of Two Mountains	17	Combat du lac des Deux Montagnes
Defence of Châteauguay Ford	18	La défense du gué de Châteauguay
Battle of Châteauguay	19	Bataille de Châteauguay
First Railroad in Canada	20	Premier chemin de fer au Canada
Battle 6th September, 1775.	21	Bataille du 6 septembre 1775.



