

On the morning of Tuesday, May 29, about half of the settlers began loading on the ships that were to take them to Lunenburg. The Nova Scotia government had chartered most of the available ships down as far as New England to ferry the settlers and their supplies. To minimize the number of ships required, the settlers were to be moved in two separate expeditions, about a week apart. The expeditions were to be accompanied by a small flotilla of British warships and a detachment of Rangers to provide assistance should the settlers encounter Indian or guerilla resistance.

While waiting for the first settlers and their supplies to complete loading and for the warships to be assembled, the wind shifted and the small fleet was pinned in Halifax Harbour for more than an entire week. On June 7, the ships finally escaped the confines of the harbor and, after a short sail, reassembled at Lunenburg. Colonel Lawrence, the commander of the expedition, ordered that the settlers be held on board until the troops and contract working parties had landed, reconnoitered the area for the presence of guerillas, assembled the building materials at the town sites, and erected a temporary blockhouse and palisades for defense.

After being aboard their ships for over a week, the settlers were in no mood to be further delayed. Many disembarked on their own, found their town plots, and began collecting whatever building materials they could as these were being landed — without regard for the precise counts of nails, bricks, and lumber<sup>2</sup> that had been allotted to each family. Colonel Lawrence was only partially successful in having his troops force these settlers back to their ships. In spite of these difficulties, by June 17 both expeditions had landed their settlers, the building materials had been distributed, and the initial work on defenses completed by the troops and their contractors brought from Halifax.

### The Lunenburg Homestead

After the relocation to Lunenburg, Colonel Lawrence continued to be dismayed by the rebelliousness of the settlers and their unwillingness to assist in the erection of the defense works — in spite of their work contracts. The settlers, on their side, were disturbed by the crude conditions at Lunenburg. They had understood that they were to receive full homesteads immediately, in the form of a large plot of cleared land and a fully built and furnished farmhouse. Although some of the discrepancy was due to ambiguous terms used in the translations from the English of the settlers' original contracts, the British authorities were aware that there were some legitimate grounds for the settlers' dissatisfaction in this regard.

In addition, while at Halifax the settlers had been able to supplement their government rations by purchases from the marketplace, which they paid for by odd-jobs performed for local households and merchants. Of course, there were neither a marketplace nor local households and merchants at Lunenburg. Furthermore, any time spent on fulfilling their work contracts competed with the time needed for the building of their shelters and the putting in of a vegetable garden.

Several of the French speaking settlers attempted to leave for the French held areas of Nova Scotia and a few succeeded. To avert a wholesale rebellion, Colonel Lawrence (overcoming the resistance of the Governor and his Council) immediately increased the food ration by "two pounds of bread a week with molasses" per adult (in lieu of an equivalent value in rum), temporarily suspended the enforcement of the settlers' work contracts, and agreed to pay full wages in cash for any work voluntarily performed. He hoped (correctly, as it turned out) that the cash wages paid would attract merchants from Halifax who might be able to provide additional foodstuffs — as well as other personal goods, such as clothing, additional building materials, etc.

By the time cooler weather arrived in the autumn of 1773, the settlers had erected their first homes and put in root crops for the winter. ( In spite of the fact that almost all of the settlers had indebted themselves to the Board of Trade and Plantations for the cost of their passage, many of them had retained sufficient savings to purchase the additional materials and contract labor to built large framed houses.) Colonel Lawrence's efforts and the progress that had been made contributed to taking much of the edge off of the settlers' ire. Deep dissatisfaction with the perceived failure of the British Government to meet fully the terms of their contracts, however, persisted among them. Petitions for the redress of these grievances were prepared and sent to the Governor in Halifax and the Board of Trade and Plantations in London.

In September 1753, Colonel Lawrence returned to Halifax, leaving a small garrison of British troops and the armed militia of settlers under Colonel Sutherland to defend Lunenburg. By the end of November, morale among the settlers had begun to seriously deteriorate. A rumor had arisen among the Montbeliardians that one of their number, John Petrequin, was hiding a letter from a relative in London that concerned the petitions that had been sent to the Board of Trade and Plantations. By the time the rumor had spread among the German speaking settlers, it had taken a ominous turn. The alleged letter was now believed to have confirmed their suspicions that the efforts of the Board to make concessions to the settlers had been thwarted by the Governor and his Council in Halifax. Angered by the denial by Petrequin that any such letter existed, the settlers seized him and imprisoned him in the town's blockhouse.

When Colonel Sutherland attempted to intervene, the settlers called out their militia and shots were exchanged with the British troops, wounding two settlers. An armed standoff ensued, neither side willing to yield. Upon hearing of the situation, the Governor promptly dispatched Lieutenant Colonel Moncton with a force of two hundred regulars with orders to restore the government's authority, disarm the militia, and arrest the ringleaders for trial in Halifax. Moncton landed at Lunenburg on December 22, 1753. Faced with this formidable force, the militia soon capitulated.

By December 24, Moncton could report that he had completely accomplished his mission. An officer of the settlers' militia, John William Hoffman, was arrested and charged with tricking the illiterate Petrequin into believing that some pieces of paper were a letter from Petrequin's cousin in London and then using the subsequent uproar to mount a treasonous rebellion. The government, however, lacked substantive evidence, other than the contradictory and self-serving testimony of Petrequin himself, and Hoffman was ultimately convicted of only lesser misdemeanors. He left Nova Scotia after serving some time in prison at Halifax.

After the rebellion of 1753 had been put down, things became calmer at Lunenburg. By March 1754, the thirty acre plots had been assigned by lot. After the lots had been drawn, trading of plots occurred among the settlers prior to their occupation. Many of the Montbeliardians, who had been scattered randomly among the more numerous German speaking settlers, traded their plots (often disadvantageously) so as to be concentrated into one area along the distant North West Range section of Lunenburg, from three to six miles from the town's center.

During that spring and summer, the settlers began to occupy the thirty acre plots as they were properly surveyed and staked out. For the most part, the plots were wooded and required clearing before a house could be built and the land farmed.

In order to encourage the settlers to occupy and begin farming the plots as soon as possible, the British authorities extended the free rations an additional year beyond the one year originally agreed to and offered to distribute free seed and livestock throughout the year, as it became available to them. The amount of seed and livestock to be distributed to each settler would depend, at least partially, on their participation in the uprising, on the use previously made of the small garden plots and town lots, and on the progress made at clearing their new thirty acre plots. Married men were also to be favored over single men in the distribution of the seed and livestock. By June 28, 1754, the Council in Halifax had let contracts valued at \$400,000 for the purchase of livestock and seed from New England. Shipments began arriving in September. By December, 1754, it was reported to Halifax that over one hundred families were already settled on their thirty acre plots.

Given the amount of labor that was required to prepare the plots, unmarried men were at a double disadvantage. Not only would their progress be slower in clearing the new land, they were to be discriminated against in the distribution of seed and livestock.

Unfortunately, the fall of 1754 was unusually dry and the winter of 1754-1755 was unusually severe. Most of the livestock died, due partially to the lack of shelter and partially to the lack of sufficient stored fodder. Early in 1755, the Board of Trade and Plantations authorized another \$400,000 to be spent, if absolutely necessary, on free livestock for the settlers. This money was never expended, however, because a more economical source of livestock for the Lunenburg settlers soon appeared.

Although war was not to be officially declared until 1756, the armed skirmishes between the French and the English had increased over all of North America by early 1755. The French had driven the American colonists from disputed land in western Pennsylvania in July 1754 and the British had brought troops from England to retake the area. In mid-July, 1755, this force under General Braddock was routed from the area of Pittsburgh. Just a few weeks prior to that, however, a British force had eliminated the French bases from the disputed areas of the western mainland part of the Nova Scotia province.

At the end of July 1755, believing that full scale war was now imminent, the Council at Halifax made its infamous decision to deport all the "disloyal" French inhabitants from the British controlled areas of Nova Scotia. The deportations began almost immediately and, by September 1755, had progressed sufficiently to permit contingents of settlers from Lunenburg to be authorized to proceed to Minas to seize the livestock and other possessions that had been left behind by those French inhabitants who had already been deported. A similar expedition was authorized in June of the following year.

Progress on the clearing of the heavily wooded land in Lunenburg was slow and the farms that had been established by mid-1755 still did not produce nearly enough food for the inhabitants of Lunenburg. Accordingly, the Governor — again prevailing against the strong opposition of the Board of Trade and Plantations — authorized the extension of free rations for the settlers for an additional year until the summer of 1756, albeit at a somewhat reduced rate and excluding those few settlers who were deemed to be well established.

The first Indian raid on Lunenburg occurred on May 8, 1756 — just before the formal declaration of war between England and France. The raid was made by the Micmac Indian allies of the French and resulted in the deaths of four settlers, some destruction of property, and the taking into captivity of one adult woman and four of her children. Similar raids occurred every few months over the next three years. Although never more than a small number of settlers were killed or carried off in any of the individual raids, the constant threat of lurking Indians and the consequent need to be continuously on guard drove some of the settlers from their distant thirty acre plots into their better defended town lots and seriously restricted the activities of those who chose to remain on their plots. In addition, French privateers operating out of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island frequently commandeered the ships from Lunenburg that were carrying lumber to be sold at the Halifax market.

The last Indian raid on Lunenburg occurred on April 20, 1759. The threat from bands of Indians operating in the Lunenburg area did not cease, however, until early in 1760 when the various tribes surrendered at Halifax. Due to the unusual circumstances of the war, the Governor had been repeatedly able to convince the British Board of Trade and Plantations to extend, albeit grudgingly, the provision of rations to the settlers until the summer of 1760, when they were finally terminated.

With the end of French and Indian resistance in North America in 1760, Lunenburg began to flourish — and agitation among the settlers about the failure of the Board of Trade and Plantations to honor their original contracts resumed. Finally, in the autumn of 1763, the authorities began offering three hundred acre plots, primarily woodland, to those original settlers who had kept possession of their thirty acre plots and had improved them. A relatively modest "survey fee"<sup>3</sup> would have to be paid in advance and commitments made regarding improvement of the land before one could participate in the drawing of lots for a three hundred acre plot. A majority of the eligible families took advantage of the offer in the several distributions that were made up through April, 1766.

By all external appearances, the Bizet family had well established themselves in Lunenburg by this time. The father, Jacques (who would have been 57 years old in 1766), had just sold his town lot but apparently retained his thirty acre farm. Jean George had married twelve years earlier and already had five children. In addition to his own town lot, he also owned two thirty acre farms and a large 300 acre farm. Yet, just six years or so (and three additional children) later, the family sold off their Lunenburg holdings and moved to Tatamagouche.