



The opportunity for a new life free from poverty and European conflicts looked promising.

But the lengthy voyage across the stormy North Atlantic in crowded transport ships was the first of a number of challenges and potential dangers faced by the settlers who arrived in Chebucto/ K'jipuktuk (the big harbour) in 1749 and the early 1750s. For

many who would settle Halifax and Dartmouth it would not be the last of their difficulties.

As historian Winthrop Bell has noted (The Foreign Protestants and the Settlement of Nova Scotia): “The emigrants had left their homes (in Britain and on the Continent) with a golden vision of the New World before their eyes and the blandishments of the recruiting agent still echoing in their ears.”

A year after Governor Edward Cornwallis arrived in June 1749 with 2,500 settlers to establish Halifax, the 112-foot transport *Alderney* sailed into the harbour with 353 settlers (mostly English and some of Swiss and German origin). Cornwallis directed the new arrivals be settled on the east side of the harbour in an area near a big cove. For the *Alderney* settlers the next several years would indeed be challenging.

Recalling the story of the early settlers is timely as Nova Scotians reflect on how to commemorate historical figures like Cornwallis and recognize and commemorate Indigenous history.

Dartmouth’s founding has been chronicled by a number of historians and writers, including John P. Martin (*The Story of Dartmouth*) and Harry Chapman (*In the Wake of the Alderney*). As well, the Halifax Military Heritage Preservation Society has produced papers on Nova Scotia’s early settlers.

The settlement of Dartmouth occurred during the lull between the ending of the War of the Austrian Succession (1748) and the lead up to the Seven Years War (1756-1763). The ongoing conflict between the British and French also involved the Mi’kmaq and other Indigenous groups in Acadia—all of whom were allied with the French. The early settlers -- as non-combatants-- were caught in the middle

of the conflict, leading in some cases to violent death.

The Mi’kmaq viewed the settlers as squatters on their traditional seasonal fishing and hunting sites. Between 1749 and 1759, and starting with the killing of four woodcutters and taking a fifth prisoner near Dartmouth Cove September 30, 1749, Indigenous forces -- sometimes supported by Acadian insurgents-- carried out eight raids on Dartmouth. The September raid led Cornwallis and the newly established Nova Scotia Governing Council to issue a proclamation offering 10 guineas for every Mi’kmaw warrior taken (captured) or killed (similar to the bounty provided by the French to Indigenous warriors for british prisoners and scalps. Three more raids would follow in 1750 with resultant deaths.

As Martin notes by the fall of 1750 the town site had been laid out, “...comprised of 11 oblong-shaped blocks, mostly 400 by 200 feet... (with) each building lot 50 by 100 feet...” (184 lots) encompassing an



Nearby stood the first structures in Dartmouth, a sawmill and guardhouse. In this vicinity occurred the first massacre 30th September 1749.

area including street names familiar today: Wentworth, King, Queen, Edward and Dundas. With a blockhouse completed on a nearby hill (Dartmouth Park) and a guard posted the new arrivals settled in for their first winter.

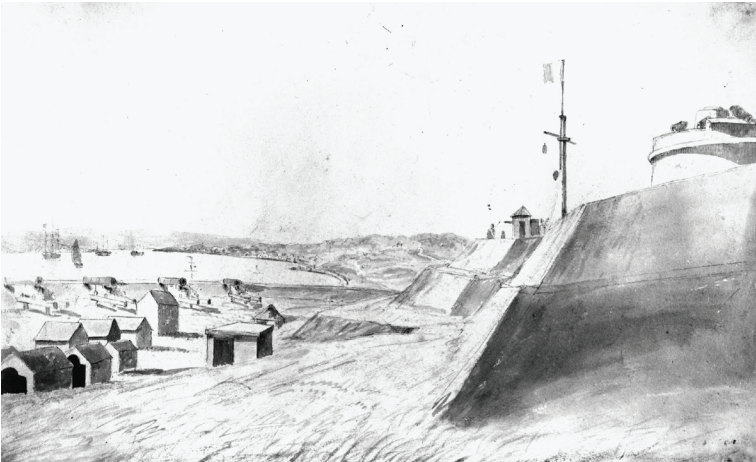
But the spring of 1751 proved tragic as the settlers experienced two raids in March and one in May that resulted in the deaths of men, women and children. The May 13 raid became known as the ‘Dartmouth Massacre.’ The sounds of gunfire and the cries of the terrorized inhabitants along with flames of burning houses were heard and observed in Halifax.

Reverend William Tutty of St Paul’s Church in Halifax reported in a July 1751 letter to his superiors, “...the savages, instigated by French treachery have committed many outrages and most unnatural barbarities in Dartmouth, the last of which (ye of 13 of May)...have so intimidated the inhabitants that they have now deserted it.”

John Wilson, an inspector of stores in an account of the raid (A *Genuine Narrative of the Transactions in Nova Scotia 1749-1751*) noted, “...15 persons killed, including women and children; seven wounded, three of whom died in hospital; six men were carried away...” Several Mi’kmaq were reported killed.

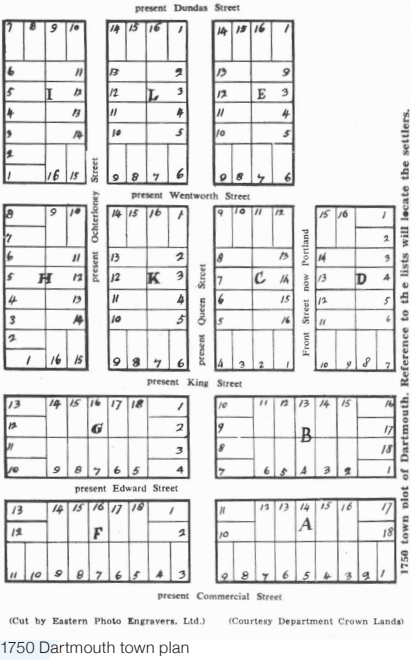
The settlers and soldiers killed during the raid were brought to the Old Burying Ground in Halifax for interment. The names listed in St Paul’s Burial Register for May 1751 include a larger than normal number of burials for the month starting with the 13th of May.

In early 1752 the Dartmouth-Halifax ferry service was started in part to help defend the new settlement but the May 13 raid would have long-term repercussions.



Eastern Battery/Fort Clarence

Colonel Peregrine Hopson who had succeeded Cornwallis as Governor (after the latter had rescinded the bounty in July 1752 in hopes of making peace with the Mi’kmaq) reported in 1753: “At Dartmouth there is a small town well picketed in, and a detachment of troops to protect it, but there are not above five families residing in it, as there is no trade or fishing to maintain the inhabitants and they apprehend the danger from the Indians in cultivating any land on the outer side of the pickets.”





# DARTMOUTH'S EARLY YEARS



## REFLECTING ON HISTORICAL EVENTS AND FIGURES

Third in a series of general interest folders on the early settlement and defence of Halifax and other communities.

### “How Dartmouth Has Grown” marker

Within three months of the first permanent settlers arrival in Halifax in 1749, Governor Cornwallis ordered that a saw mill and a shelter be set up in a cove near this location. Fir and spruce trees were abundant; the plan was to turn them into lumber for the first buildings across the harbour. Water for the mill came from a stream flowing out of a chain of lakes which were then and as now a distinguishing mark of Dartmouth.

In August 1750, the 504 ton ship Alderney arrived after a month's sail from England with 353 settlers, who made their first landing near the saw mill site. They laid out 184 building lots, 50 feet by 100, and named the settlement after the Earl of Dartmouth.

From such beginnings Dartmouth grew, with arrivals of Quaker whalers, Irish and Scots stonemasons and workers in the manufacture of rope, skates and candy, and in ship repair, world-class oceanography, research, oil refineries, nearby Autoport, Shearwater Air Station and Burnside Industrial Park. Incorporated as a Town in 1873, thereafter a City in 1961, Dartmouth is now part of the amalgamated Halifax.

In 1754 a road was built from Dartmouth to a new settlement in nearby Lawrencetown but the settlement was attacked with resultant deaths and no new settlers were brought to Dartmouth. As one account notes, “many settlers simply gave up and moved away.”

Also in 1754 the British constructed Eastern Battery (later renamed Fort Clarence) across from Georges Island to help protect the eastern side of the harbour against attack. The last native raid was in 1759 when five soldiers were killed near the battery. Peace was still several years away.

The 1766 census for Dartmouth showed a population of 39 and as Chapman notes: “Dartmouth was virtually a ghost town and would remain so for another two decades before the (Nantucket) whalers and Loyalists would arrive (1780s) to breathe new life into the town.”

In spite of the early adversities the young settlement did survive and thrive as chronicled by the Halifax Foundation historical marker of distinction in Alderney Landing: *How Dartmouth Has Grown*.

As we reflect on our collective past let's not forget the challenges of the early settlers.



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