

A Short History of Port Hill, PEI by William Yeo, Published by Port Hill W.I.

(I don't know which Yeo wrote this – there are a lot of them! Also, I don't know when it was written or published).

Port Hill is a small farming and fishing community of Lot 13, facing on the western shores of Richmond Bay. The first inhabitants of this area were Micmac Indians who fished and hunted for probably many hundreds of years and of whom we have no written records, The descendants of these people still occupy an island in Richmond Bay about one mile from Port Hill wharf. This reservation is known as Lennox Island.

During the summer of 1728, three Acadian families from Beaucasin (now Amherst, N. S.) settled along the shores of Richmond Bay in an area of Port Hill now known as Low Point. They were Pierre and Charles Arsenaault and Jean Lambert and their families. These Acadians named their new home Malpec (English Malpeque). Therefore it should be kept in mind that during the French Period Malpeque was located in Lot 13 rather than in its present location in Lot 18.

The French administration on Isle St. Jean (PEI) had many censuses taken and they illustrate the steady growth in the population of Malpec – from a total of seventeen people in 1728 to fifty-three in 1740, to two hundred and one in 1752.

In 1752 a parish was established at Malpec and a chapel built. It was called La Sainte Famille (The Holy Family). The first pastor to serve the new parish was Pierre Cassiet. He returned to France in 1759 and had a distinguished career as Superior of the Order of the Priests of Calvary, who were located near where now stands the famous shrine at Lourdes, France.

Isle St. Jean became British as a result of the fall of Louisburg, Cape Breton in 1758. The British authorities immediately started removing the inhabitants of Isle St. Jean to France. This was carried out for all settlements except Malpec. Owing to the lateness of the season and distance involved, Malpec was spared In 1759 a ship was sent to pick up the Acadians at Malpec but many families had moved to the mainland – some to St. Pierre and Miquelon and others to Quebec. However a number had hidden in the woods and were never deported. From these few survivors are descended most of the Acadian population of PEI today. The deportation of the Acadians of Isle St. Jean was so complete that the population dropped from 4700 in 1758 to 300 in 173. Of these 300 only a portion would have been Acadians.